Lenguas en contexto

TexLER
Texas Language Education Research Conference

Lenguas ET contexto

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Editorial

This special issue of TexLER (Texas Language Education Research Conference) in *Lenguas en Contexto* is the result of binational collaboration between the School of Languages of the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP), México, and the TexLER 2018 committee, which is a student organization of the Bicultural and Bilingual Department (BBL) of the University of Texas-San Antonio (UTSA).

While the main goal of TexLER is to bring together students, educators and researchers to discuss prominent findings in the fields of linguistics and foreign/second language education, attendees and presenters to previous conferences suggested having a peer-review space for publication as a way to extend TexLER's objectives. For this reason, when Dr. Araceli Salas, professor of the School of Languages, BUAP, visited UTSA in Fall, 2017, the TexLER committee decided to invite her and the editorial team of *Lenguas en Contexto* to be part of this joint venture. On behalf of the School of Languages, Araceli kindly accepted our invitation because it aligns with the internationalization goals of current administration of the School of Languages, BUAP.

Regardless of the bureaucratic processes and the prospective cultural misunderstandings, we knew we would face while trying to put together a *binational* publication, Araceli and I committed to publish the current issue as a reaction to the political situation between Mexico and the United States. In other words, the ultimate purpose of this special issue is to contribute to the *binational* understanding of Mexican and U.S. scholars during times in which the mainstream discourse encourages division.

Araceli and I would like to thank everyone that made this publication possible in terms of administrative procedures. We would like to thank the authors who trusted in us and submitted their original research works. We would also like to thank those who reviewed and edited articles for this issue, as well as the members of the scientific committee of the issue.

With this special edition and through the collaborative work, we want to state that no symbolic or real walls should exist between our countries, for which we hope this special issue of *Lenguas en Contexto* can help consolidate bridges of solidarity and understanding between our communities and institutions.

La edición de TexLER (Texas Language Education Research Conference) en Lenguas en Contexto *es el resultado de la colaboración binacional entre la Facultad de Lenguas de la Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP) en México*

y el comité de TexLER 2018, la cual es una organización estudiantil del Departamento de Estudios Biculturales y Bilingües (BBL) de la Universidad de Texas en San Antonio (UTSA).

La principal meta de TexLER es acercar a estudiantes, educadores e investigadores para discutir resultados valiosos en el campo de la lingüística aplicada y la adquisición de segundas lenguas. En nuestras conferencias, los ponentes y asistentes nos han hecho ver la necesidad de publicar nuestros trabajos en una revista de investigación. Sin duda, una edición de esta naturaleza nos permitiría cumplir de mejor manera nuestra misión en TexLER. Con este objetivo, nuestro comité decidió invitar a la Dra. Araceli Salas, profesora de la Facultad de Lenguas de la BUAP, quien visitó UTSA en el otoño del 2017 a ser parte de esta publicación conjunta. En nombre de la Facultad de Lenguas, Araceli amablemente aceptó nuestra invitación. Con ello, además, la doctora y su equipo dan cumplimiento al proceso de internacionalización en el que se haya inmersa la Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla.

A pesar de que Araceli y yo sabíamos del proceso burocrático y de los probables malentendidos biculturales, nos comprometimos a organizar una edición binacional. Nuestro deseo es que un producto de esta naturaleza sea una respuesta de colaboración a la actual situación política entre México y Estados Unidos. Es decir, el propósito fundamental de esta edición especial es contribuir al entendimiento entre académicos de los Estados Unidos y México en tiempos en que el discurso dominante promueve lo contrario. Queremos mostrar la importancia de trabajar unidos, y hacer evidente que ambos países ganamos más si cooperamos cotidiana y académicamente.

Araceli y yo agradecemos a quienes han hecho posible esta publicación. Agradecemos a todos aquellos que nos han ayudado en cuestiones administrativas, pero sobre todo a los autores que confiaron en nosotros para enviarnos un artículo producto de sus investigaciones y por supuesto, a los dictaminadores y editores. Evidentemente, nuestro agradecimiento se extiende a los miembros del comité científico.

A través de esta edición especial y del trabajo conjunto, queremos dejar claro que ningún muro, real o simbólico, debe existir entre México y Estados Unidos. Por tanto, esperamos que esta edición especial de Lenguas en Contexto *ayude a consolidar puentes de entendimiento y solidaridad entre nuestras comunidades e instituciones.*

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Presentación

En vista del contexto social e ideológico promovido a partir de la actual situación política, se hace imperativo multiplicar los esfuerzos de colaboración entre México y Estados Unidos. Entre otras acciones, este marco político y social demanda la diseminación de estudios que evidencien el potencial de la diversidad cultural y lingüística como forma de resistencia ante las ideologías anti-migratorias, plagadas de sentimientos racistas y separatistas para así, darle importancia a la educación multilingüe y multicultural. La presente edición especial de Lenguas en Contexto, en colaboración con TexLER (Texas Language Education Research), es el producto de esfuerzos transnacionales, interinstitucionales y multimodales que han abierto un espacio para la integración de académicos, educadores y lingüistas que por medio de su trabajo investigativo se enfrentan a la idea del nacionalismo conservador, el monolingüismo, la asimilación cultural y la competencia individualista. Este volumen está compuesto por los trabajos de investigadores de diferentes estados y países, de varios niveles académicos, múltiples bagajes culturales y lingüísticos, así como de campos y temas interdisciplinares.

El tema global de esta edición especial va de la mano con el eslogan de TexLER 2018: "*Multilingual Education in Action: Advocating for the Future*" ya que el lector puede encontrar textos investigativos en español e inglés acerca de contextos educativos donde el multilingüismo es la norma y no la excepción. Las siete investigaciones que componen esta edición tienen un objetivo común: resolver problemas reales que educadores y estudiantes enfrentan día a día, entendiendo estos actores como agentes con el poder de transformar sus vidas y su contexto social usando la guía, los instrumentos y el conocimiento adecuados. De este modo, mediante la promoción de prácticas pedagógicas fundadas en la investigación interdisciplinar y transcultural, así como con la puesta en escena de esfuerzos académicos colaborativos, se asegura que el futuro de las nuevas generaciones evoque la analogía del jardín lingüístico de Ofelia García (1992) en lugar de la existencia de un mundo globalizado monocromático falto del color de las lenguas, las culturas, las ideas y cosmovisiones que hacen del mundo un lugar interesante, rico, y lleno de posibilidades de progreso mancomunado.

Las investigaciones que se encontrarán a continuación se caracterizan por su policromada diversidad en relación con sus enfoques temáticos y metodológicos. Primeramente, los artículos de Gasca-Hernández y de Liu y Turner le apuestan al cambiante paradigma de la literacidad, ahora concebido como el conjunto de prácticas situadas socioculturalmente, y caracterizadas por su multiplicidad, hibridez, multilingüismo y multimodalidad (Kress, 2013; Dyson, 2003; Hornberger & Link, 2012), para validar las múltiples formas de crear significado de grupos excluidos como los estudiantes bilingües de familias inmigrantes y escuelas públicas. Motivado por su preocupación por identificar los factores que obstaculizan la obtención de puntajes altos en los estándares internacionales de lectura crítica de los estudiantes de bachillerato de México, Gasca-Hernández comparte su análisis crítico de dos programas de lengua en relación con sus objetivos y actividades, develando un desajuste entre estos programas y las necesidades de los estudiantes. Este análisis merece la atención de las entidades competentes encargadas de la creación y actualización de programas de educación pública. Ya que Gasca-Hernández nos muestra un problema latente en los programas formales educativos, de forma complementaria, Liu y Nat Turner ofrecen un acercamiento no solo a las características sino también a los beneficios de un programa que resiste discursos monolingües y prioriza la inclusión y desarrollo de las literacidades y lenguas minorizadas de estudiantes bilingües. Este estudio contribuye considerablemente al campo de la educación, ya que devela un marco de referencia exitoso para la creación y formalización de programas de inclusión que promuevan el avance académico de estudiantes con variados bagajes lingüísticos y culturales que poseen literacidades normalmente invalidadas o ignoradas por las instituciones educativas.

La siguiente temática de esta edición es el aprendizaje y enseñanza de la lengua, un campo investigativo que, a pesar de contar con un desarrollo extenso en términos teóricos e investigativos, aún requiere responder varias preguntas esenciales de aplicación en contextos específicos. Así, Hernández-Trejo evalúa el grado de efectividad del método Rassias para incrementar la motivación y el mejoramiento de habilidades de habla del inglés como segunda lengua en estudiantes universitarios, quienes suelen experimentar altos índices de inseguridad y poca disposición para usar la lengua inglesa en actividades comunicativas por el riesgo de cometer errores y ser juzgados. Este estudio proporciona herramientas pedagógicas útiles para resolver el problema de la desmotivación causada por contextos artificiales y la falta de recursos propios de la enseñanza de segundas lenguas y lenguas extranjeras, además de aportar formas en que podemos ayudar a estos estudiantes a avanzar de niveles receptivos a orales-productivos en la adquisición de segundas lenguas. Zapata y Mesa-Morales profundizan su análisis en la evaluación de metodologías no-tradicionales y relativamente nuevas de la enseñanza de la lengua, mediante el estudio de la aplicación de lectura social llamada *eComma.* Su estudio sugiere el uso de esta herramienta para resolver el problema expuesto en el primer artículo de esta edición, por sus beneficios del desarrollo de habilidades primordiales en el siglo XXI y por su equivalencia con el marco de las literacidades múltiples. Informar acerca de este tipo de herramientas y ventajas resulta de gran valor para maestros y maestras que buscan herramientas prácticas, eficientes y actualizadas para promover las literacidades de sus estudiantes.

Posteriormente, la sección de literatura bicultural amplía nuestro espectro pedagógico y nuestra perspectiva acerca de las implicaciones de ser un niño o una niña bilingüe y bicultural en un país donde las leyes y estructuras de poder se concentran en asimilar, promover la singularidad y oprimir la diversidad. Castrillón-Costa y Randez realizan una revisión crítica de la literatura de René Colato Laínez, escritor salvadoreño de literatura infantil que explora algunos de las experiencias de niños y niñas en ambientes bilingües y biculturales. Este trabajo de análisis del discurso resulta útil en la examinación e identificación del discurso de materiales pedagógicos que valoren y legitimen la diversidad cultural, racial

y lingüística, elementos frecuentemente marginalizados pero que maestras, maestros y familiares pueden usar e incorporar a la vida de los niños y niñas.

La sección de desarrollo profesional aborda las problemáticas y necesidades de las maestras y los maestros de lengua. En primera medida, en reacción a la falta de parámetros para la evaluación y observación de la competencia intercultural, Temoltzin-Espejel y Despagne-Broxner proponen tres instrumentos y los incorporan en la evaluación de esta competencia con docentes en formación, resolviendo así dos problemas recurrentes/presentes en el campo de la educación bilingüe: satisfacer la necesidad de desarrollar la competencia intercultural que ha sido poco tenida en cuenta entre los docentes y estudiantes de lenguas, y equiparnos con instrumentos evaluativos de esta competencia, los cuales han sido escasos hasta ahora. Por último, Salas-Serrano, luego de un análisis discursivo de las prácticas discursivas de docentes de inglés, resalta la necesidad de crear, reconocer y apoyar la legitimización de los maestros y las maestras de inglés como una comunidad de práctica para la sociedad, los administradores, así como entre ellas y ellos mismos/as. En su artículo, Salas-Serrano reporta las prácticas discursivas de docentes de inglés en México y reclama la falta de identidad profesional propia y la discriminación de esta labor docente, reportando situaciones como las condiciones laborales, el quehacer docente, preparación y desempeño. La autora ahonda en cómo sus participantes defienden su labor docente y piden la valorización de su profesión, lo que contribuiría al progreso y evolución de la comunidad donde ejercen su labor pedagógica.

Estos siete artículos tienen en común una orientación aditiva hacia el multilingüismo y multiculturalismo, su afán por suministrar herramientas pedagógicas que animen a los docentes a continuar y mejorar su rol como formadores de agentes cambio, así como el interés en promover en los estudiantes, independientemente de su nivel escolar, una perspectiva crítica que desafíe el estatus quo de la normativización de una sociedad monolingüe, mono-racial y mono-cultural. Cada uno de estos autores ha contribuido para que esta edición especial de *Lenguas en Contexto* se enriquezca de variadas perspectivas y dimensiones, implicadas en la educación multilingüe. Esta es una apuesta actuar y abogar por una educación cada vez más inclusiva y equitativa. Esperamos

que esta edición especial no solo informe a nuestros y nuestras lectores, sino que también los anime a tomar acción en el marco de las condiciones sociopolíticas de nuestros países. En el estado actual de las cosas, donde unos cuantos líderes buscan triunfar en su afán por imponer una visión intolerante a la pluralidad, la resistencia y la unión de conocimientos se hace necesaria para hacer de nuestras naciones jardines coloridos que luchan juntos por el progreso de la sociedad, con la educación y la investigación como ejes fundamentales.

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ENGLISH AND SPANISH LITERACY IN THE MEXICAN SECONDARY SCHOOL PROGRAMS

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Abstract

The present investigation attempts to compare and contrast the National English Program in Basic Education (NEPBE) and the *Aprendizajes clave para la educación integral: Lengua materna español* (Spanish program) for public secondary school in Mexico, in respect to the inclusion of new literacies. In this mixed-methods investigation, the programs' objectives and practices were analyzed and categorized into two rubrics: literacy and new literacies. Literacy was regarded as a sociocultural reading and writing practice, while new literacies as the inclusion of technology, interdisciplinarity and post-typographic texts in efforts to develop literacy. The NEPBE's and the Spanish program's practices and objectives showed a similar tendency with a higher inclusion of literacy. However, new literacies practices in the NEPBE were higher due to the consideration of contexts outside the language classroom to generate learning environments. This investigation concludes by stressing the importance of including new literacies in schools, for they are more in accordance with the communicative practices that students perform in outside-of-school contexts.

Keywords: NEPBE, Spanish program, new literacies, New Literacy Studies, interdisciplinarity, post-typographic texts.

Resumen

La presente investigación está enfocada en comparar los programas de español e inglés de secundaria pública establecidos por la Secretaria de Educación Pública, en cuanto a su inclusión de nuevas literacidades. *En esta investiga-ción cualitativa y cuantitativa, se analizan y comparan los objetivos y prácticas que los programas proponen. Además, se categorizó la información bajo dos rúbricas: literacidad y* nuevas literacidades. *Para literacidad se consideraron las menciones de lectura y escritura como una práctica socio-cultural. En cambio, para* nuevas literacidades *se consideraron las menciones de tecnología, interdisciplinariedad y textos post-tipográficos en contextos delimitados para el desarrollo de literacidad. Los resultados mostraron que ambos programas, el NEPBE y el de español, consideran con mayor recurrencia la literacidad. Sin embargo, el NEPBE consideró con mayor frecuencia las* nuevas literacidades *al incluir distintas disciplinas en ámbitos para desarrollar literacidad. Como conclusión, se resalta la importancia de implementar* nuevas literacidades *en contextos educativos, ya que, como se ha demostrado, son más cercanas a las competencias comunicativas que los estudiantes utilizan fuera del salón de clases.*

Palabras clave: NEPBE, programa de español, nuevas literacidades, *Nuevos Estudios de Literacidad, interdisciplinariedad, textos post-tipográficos.*

Introduction

In Mexico, since the institutionalization of school, educational programs have been a fundamental component to which the complete educative system adheres. The *Secretaría de Educación Pública* (SEP) developed the English and Spanish programs to provide a sound academic experience in language learning to secondary school students. In 2017, the SEP released the *Aprendizajes clave para la educación integral: lengua materna español,* a program of Spanish

for basic education in public schools in which educational goals and objectives are portrayed. A few years earlier, in 2011, the publication of the National English Program in Basic Education (NEPBE) was groundbreaking in Mexican education, since for the first time, the effort of institutionalizing English as a mandatory subject was becoming a reality. These language programs are an important part of the public education of Mexico. In a certain way, these documents play a significant role in molding individual and national identities; they transmit values, and help configure Mexican society. However, the purpose of the programs is to ensure Mexican students experience an adequate academic life and are well-prepared to become competent professionals.

A study carried out by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2015, which assessed 15-year-old "students' ability to use written information in real-life situations" (OECD, p. 147, 2016), shows that Mexican students rank among the lowest participants out of 72 participant countries (OECD, 2016). This means that in Mexico most adolescents are capable of decoding a text, but are unable of interpreting it, let alone reading it critically (López, Tinajero, and Pérez, 2006, pp. 2, 3). The difference in performance, between the most proficient students—from Singapore, Hong Kong, Canada, and Finland—and Mexicans, is equivalent to three years of school (OECD, 2016). These alarming results might be related to cultural and historical factors. A study carried out by Narro and Navarro (2012) shows that there are 8.8 million analphabets in Mexico; women, the elderly and indigenous communities being the most affected by this problem. The problem of analphabetism is founded in the systematic reproduction of social inequality and if the conditions of poverty and economic status remain unchanged, it will not be easily eradicated (Narro and Navarro, 2012). Other factors are related to the populations' reading habits. According to an article by *El Universal,* the *Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía* (INEGI) reported that the number of readers in Mexico in 2018 decreased compared to the statistics in 2015 (Notimex, 2018). In a similar note, a study carried out by UNESCO, concerning citizens' reading habits, places Mexico in the second to last position out of 108 nations (Villamil, 2013). These studies show that Mexico's institutions, researchers, teachers, and society in general need to face the problem which is deeper than what it seems; low language performance and analphabetism reflect not only the need to transform the public education system, but also the profound social inequality that affects the vast majority of the population. Analyzing the language programs is a good starting point to understand part of the problem, some of its causes, and to suggest alternatives for improving the linguistic competence of students attending Mexican public secondary schools.

Theoretical Framework

As has been noted, Mexican students' performance in Spanish has become problematic. Low scores in PISA tests shows only part of what this problem entails. To explain this situation, it is necessary to analyze the concept of literacy, its role in the language programs, and its implementation in the classroom. According to the online Oxford and Cambridge dictionaries, literacy is "the ability to read and write" (English Oxford Living Dictionaries, *n. d.*; Cambridge Dictionary, *n. d.*). This definition is closely linked to the problem of analphabetism in which reading and writing are the main concern. However, this notion was challenged in a groundbreaking article by Gee (1987) in which literacy is defined as the "control of secondary uses of language (i.e., uses of language in secondary discourses)" (p. 56). For this author, secondary discourses are those that are practiced outside the family circle (Gee, 1987). From a psycholinguistic point of view, literacy is a "process including letter recognition, encoding, decoding, word recognition, sentence comprehension, and so on" (Brisk & Harrington, 2007, p. 2). On the other hand, from a sociocultural perspective, literacy is "a collection of *social practices*, which can be inferred from *written acts,* which in turn are mediated by *written texts*" (Barton & Hamilton, 2000 as cited in Cassany, 2012, p. 3). The conceptions of literacy that emerge from a sociocultural perspective conform to the theoretical background for literacy and new literacies, concepts which will be adopted in this investigation to analyze the English and Spanish programs for public secondary schools.

The concept *new literacies,* was first utilized by Gallego and Hollingsworth in 1992 (Leu et al., 2014). Since its appearance, the concept has had many different implications, but "typically… suggests that literacy is rapidly changing and transforming as new

information and communication technologies emerge and as additional discourses, social practices, and skills are required to make use of these technologies" (Leu et al., p. 2, 2014). To understand new literacies, we must consider their practices are ontologically different and are considered to convey a different *ethos* from those regarded in New Literacy Studies (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011). The ontological aspect refers to the material in which new literacies are performed or practiced. New literacies "consist of a different kind of 'stuff' from conventional literacies… [and are related to] digital-electronic technologies and… post-typographic forms of text and text production" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011, p. 28). Being made from "different stuff" gives way to the conformation of a *new ethos* which means that, contrasting with traditional conventions that constitute literacy, new literacies are considered to be "more participatory, more collaborative, and more distributed; less published, less individuated, and less author-centric than conventional literacies" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011, p. 29). This conceptualization will allow analyzing the programs' objectives and practices to understand the extent to which they include new literacies in developing literacy in secondary school students.

There is considerable literature regarding how fostering literacy increases reading comprehension and writing, among other skills. For instance, Elizabeth Moje, whose main focus is adolescent literacy, has discussed about the benefits of developing reading, writing, and critical thinking skills across the curriculum, that is, integrating different subject areas in an interdisciplinary effort to develop literacy (Moje, 2007; Moje, 2008). Furthermore, as it is becoming evident that the practices students perform outside the school are inherently dissimilar to classroom literacy practices, she proposes *extending* the literacies, to "include 'everyday' settings" (Moje & Ellison, 2016, p. 27) in the classroom. For Moje et al, literacy "plays an important role in the development of adolescents' individual and social identities" (Moje, *et al.,* 2000, p. 402). On a similar note, the New Literacy Studies movement, rooted in Freire's theories literacy is utilized for empowering the disadvantage (Street, 1994, 2001, Barton & Hamilton, 1998 as cited in Connor, 2011; Street, 1993, Gee, 1996, 2000 as cited in Lankshear & Knobel, 2011; Moje *et al.,* 2000; Cassany, 2012). The importance of focusing on and developing

critical thinking skills in the learner is stressed. Moreover, a trend that mainly focuses on integrating technology and post-typographic texts in the Language classroom, is the denominated 21st century literacies (Thoman and Jolls, 2003; Collier, 2007; Lankshear & Knobel, 2011) which are the practices that mainly conform to new literacies.

There are relevant studies regarding literacy in Mexico; however, their focus is essentially dissimilar to the one adopted in the present investigation. *Reading and Writing Pedagogies: Insights for an ELT Undergraduate Program in Mexico* by Olmos and Criollo (2017) is concerned with the reading and writing practices of ELT educators in Puebla. Further, *Desde la literacidad acad*émica (Hernández, 2016) focuses on literacy and discourse analysis in Spanish in higher education in Tlaxcala. On a similar note, a research paper by López, Tinajero, and Pérez (2006) analyzes programs and practices in preparatory schools in Baja California adopting a New Literacy Studies perspective. In addition, an investigation carried out in Baja California focuses on the theoretical conceptions of literacy and *alfabetización*; furthermore, it raises an important question regarding the appropriateness of teaching disciplinary literacies to secondary school students (Montes and López, 2017). Finally, a study performed in Toluca argues that secondary school students' low proficiency in English is related to underdeveloped literacy skills in their mother tongue; in addition, it recognizes that the power relations exercised inside and outside the classroom narrow the possibilities for sound development of literacy (Nava-Gómez & Hessen-López, 2016). Nevertheless, no significant study related to new literacies in Mexican secondary school programs has been found.

This study attempts to understand how new literacies are regarded in the Spanish and English programs, thus, the following research question is proposed: To what extent do the English and Spanish programs of first grade of secondary school compare and contrast with respect to including new literacies?

Methodology

For answering this question, coding based on Kripppendorff's (2003) Content Analysis methodology will be implemented. Coding is a process that allows systematically organizing and categorizing the information related to literacy contained in the lan-

guage programs. As this investigation is considered the first stage of a larger study, the focus here will be delimited only to the programs' learning objectives and the means—practices—to achieve them. In addition, the data selected from the objective and practice sections will be analyzed and categorized into two different themes: 1) literacy and 2) new literacies. Under literacy, all the objectives and activities that regard literacy as a psycholinguistic or sociocultural process will be included; in new literacies, all the objectives and activities that consider post-typographic texts, technology and literacy (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011), and literacy and interdisciplinarity (Moje, 2007, 2008) will be included. The justification for categorizing psycholinguistic and sociocultural perspectives under the same label is to outline the elements concerning new literacies, which will provide the information needed to answer the research question.

As can be noted, this investigation will be carried in a mixed-method approach. This is justifiable because: a) Content Analysis allows both qualitative and quantitative studies; b) although quantifying the recurrence of a term in a document is not precisely the objective of Content Analysis, the method of coding provides reliable information upon which evidence can be contrasted and finally, c) this is only the first stage of a larger study, during next stage the findings will be contextualized by interviewing teachers and performing class observations. The focus here is to generate the data by analyzing the programs quantitatively and providing some conclusions from a qualitative perspective.

The material for the study included two key documents, the National English Program of Basic Education (NEPBE) published in 2011, and the *Aprendizajes Clave para la Educación Integral: Lengua maternal español: Educación secundaria* (which from here on will be addressed as the Spanish program) released in 2017, both, by the *Secretaría de Educación Pública.* In a broad sense, the programs provide the pedagogical foundations for teaching English and Spanish respectively. These documents also outline educational goals and the means to accomplish them by fostering the needed competences for participating in the 21st century. Here, it is important to note that the SEP's current effort to standardize English teaching is under the *Programa Nacional de Inglés* (PRONI) released on 2016. However, the release of this program was not accompanied by an official syllabus for it is focused on improving structural deficiencies, such as the lack of English teachers and English materials, or the funding for schools were English teaching is starting to become a reality. In fact, as the official website of the PRONI shows, the syllabus remained unchanged. For this reason, this investigation studies the NEPBE, a bilingual document aiming at the implementation of English as a mandatory subject in public education. This program contains: Curricular Standards; English Teaching Approach; Assessment; and Content organization (which is subdivided to address the three levels of secondary school). On the other hand, the Spanish program, besides providing the educational goals for the 21st century, outlines different social environments, scopes, and teaching practices suggestions.

For each program, a chart was developed to categorize the data into literacy objectives and new literacies objectives; literacy practices and new literacies practices (see appendixes A and B). Following, are some examples to illustrate how the information was categorized: "*Utilizar el lenguaje para organizar su pensamiento y discurso; expresar lo que saben y construir conocimientos,*" this excerpt, obtained from the Spanish program, was categorized as literacy objective; firstly, because it was taken from the objective's section, and secondly, because it follows a more traditional view of literacy. From the NEPBE, "Organizes sentences to make a paragraph," was also categorized under literacy objective for the reasons expressed above. Some examples of new literacies objectives were: "Identify some conventions of audiovisual media, for example, sound effects, camera angle, among others," "use visual resources to complement the general meaning of oral and written texts," "*utilizar los acervos impresos y digitales con diferentes propósitos.*" These objectives were categorized under new literacies due to the inclusion of technology and post-typographic text. Some excerpts categorized under literacy practices were: "*Participa en la presentación pública de libros,*" "Write sentences to give and receive information," these were taken from the activities section of the Spanish and the NEPBE respectively. Finally, under new literacies practices were categorized: "Write dialogues and interventions for a silent short film," "*Elige un tema de su interés. Puede estar relacionado con el lenguaje o con otras asignaturas.*" These

excerpts were considered new literacies due to the inclusion of technology and disciplines outside the Language class.

Results and discussion

Table 1 shows the inclusion of literacy and new literacies in the objectives and practices of the Spanish program and the NEPBE. As can be seen, the inclusion of literacy is significantly higher than the inclusion of new literacies in all the categories, with the only exception of the practices in the NEPBE, where new literacies are included one-third of the time. Although a few practices in the NEPBE were difficult to categorize, and hence disregarded, they did not represent a significant variation in the results. This considerable increase might be due to the nature of the English class where technology and subjects outside the Language class are utilized to expand the students' vocabulary, and to generate contexts in which they can express orally (e.g. using a video camera to record themselves speaking). However, the remarkably low recurrence of new literacies in the remaining categories shows that technology, post-typographic texts, and subjects unrelated to the language class are not considered for developing the students' linguistic competence. This omission might be one of the causes why Mexican adolescents score low on the PISA test, which focuses on the ability of using language in real life situations.

High recurrence of literacy in both programs' objectives, around 90% of the time, shows that language teaching is still considered from an overwhelmingly traditional perspective. To some extent, the NEPBE's objectives portrayed a psycholinguistic perspective of language, in suggesting grammatical aspects, sentences, and text structure within a tradi-

tional learning context. Some objectives taken from the program that illustrate this point "Organizes sentences to make a paragraph," "Punctuation: period, colon, indentation," "Writes expressions to produce opinions," "Verb tenses: progressive forms, past." The recurrence of these types of objective does not mean that the program should be regarded as obsolete. It could be the reflection of a number of factors. The NEPBE, being the first English program to cover all basic education in Mexico, portrays some of its objectives from a traditional perspective, to overcome the aggregated difficulty that, for example, including new literacies would imply. Another reason could respond to the nature of second language teaching. Explicit grammar and syntax objectives are characteristic of up-to-date second language textbooks and represent a helpful guide for structuring the course. However, a traditional approach to language teaching no longer suffices. This is reflected in the program's description of reading and writing: "Reading is not decoding, it is giving meaning, it is understanding; writing is not copying or having good handwriting; writing is creating a text." (Rodríguez, 2011, p. 101). Further, the author states,

> "there is always a functional context for reading and writing…, for instance, checking the students list to see who is absent, writing down the name of their favorite games and some characteristics, preparing a greeting card, re-writing a story, describing an animal or completing a table to register the growth of the plants in the classroom." (Rodríguez, 2011, p. 101).

Table 1. Literacy and new literacies in the Spanish program and the NEPBE

Program	Section	Total	Literacy	%	New literacies	%
Spanish	Objectives	16	14	87.5	2	12.5
	Practices	100	92	92	8	8
NEPBE	Objectives	66	61	92.42	5	7.57
	Practices	133	87	65.41	46	34.58

This effort to contextualize literacy practices was influenced by the conceptions of New Literacy Studies. Literacy communities, their symbolic productions and their respective practices, constitute the context, according to this school,

> "each literacy community (country, discipline, institution, gang) creates its own written artefacts (parchment, tables, books, notebooks, fora) that are used to develop the social practices that require writing (copying, reciting, signing, filling forms, composing poems) and that have been created throughout history." (Cassany, 2012, p. 3)

Some of the objectives in the NEPBE are in accordance with this perspective. For instance, "Text distribution: verses, stanzas and chorus", "Structure of dialogues: opening, body, and closure" and "… to be able to use the receptive and speaking skills and, eventually, to start using the written ones while participating in social practices of different communicative contexts," to name a few. From this point of view, the NEPBE does not regard reading and writing merely as "…an integrated text-level process that involves word-level skill". Reading also makes use of cognitive abilities, such as WM [working memory], linguistic awareness, and attention or higher order skills, including planning, metacognition, strategy use, and self-regulation" (Berninger & Richards, 2002; Wong 1997 as cited in Lesaux & Geva, 2006, p. 57), but as a sociocultural practice.

Although a similar tendency is found in the Spanish program, as both consider objectives of literacy and new literacies almost identically. New Literacy Studies notably influence its conception of language and language teaching. In the program's description, it is stated that "Reading and writing practices are cultural ways of utilizing written language, and, although it is individuals who acquire and use them, they constitute social processes by connecting people and creating shared social representations and ideologies" (Bonilla, 2017, p. 171). Furthermore, it takes from Barton and Hamilton, pioneers of New Literacy Studies, the conceptions of alphabetization and reading practices (Bonilla, 2017). Some of the program's objectives that reflect this perspective of language are "*Usar el lenguaje de manera analítica y reflexiva para in-*

tercambiar ideas y textos en diversas situaciones comunicativas," "*Utilizar y recrear el lenguaje para participar en actividades lúdicas y literarias*," among others. It is important to note that this program's vision of language, unlike the NEPBE, does note portray in its objectives a traditional—in a psycholinguistic sense—vision of language. This means that in the Spanish program, linguistic aspects such as grammar, syntax, and vocabulary, among others, acquire a secondary role, for they are not regarded as the culmination of the learning activity, but as the means to improve the students' performance in a particular social practice.

The low recurrence of new literacies in both programs' objectives may be a reflection that technology, interdisciplinarity, and post-typographic texts are not being regarded within the realm of literacy. Furthermore, it might show that language is considered a written code with sociocultural functions that must be taught within the context of the Language class. This shows a lack of awareness of the literacy practices that students perform outside school contexts, and that are as important as other skills, since they are reconfiguring the notions of literacy. This is what Moje et al. (2000) define as *adolescent literacy*:

> "[it] is more complex and sophisticated than what is traditionally considered in school-based literate activity. Adolescents have multiple literacies… they have multiple texts and an expanded notion of text; that is, they transcend adult-sanctioned notions of text forms." (p. 402)

These practices mostly involve technology and post-typographic texts. Students' everyday activities revolve around technological contexts, such as search engines, social media, apps, among others, that have transformed social interactions and communication. The communicative environments and linguistic aspects that emerge from technological contexts should justify the implementation of technology in literacy development objectives:

> "English Language Arts teachers must increasingly focus on problem solving, collaboration, and analysis, as well as on skills with word processing, hypertext, LCD's, Webcams, digital streaming podcasts, smartboards, and

social networking software, all of which are central to individual and community success." (NCTE, 2007 as cited in Lankshear & Knobel, 2011, p. 24)

To some extent, technology is included in the objectives of the NEPBE: "Identify some conventions of audiovisual media, for example, sound effects, camera angle, among others" (Rodríguez, 2011, p.109). In addition, different types of texts are considered in this program, although discretely, for example, "identify differences between graphic and textual symbology of similar situations" (Rodríguez, 2011, p. 109). This means that secondary school students should be able to interpret the meaning from sources other than conventional text, which is one of the purposes of new literacies. On the other hand, it is important to note that in the Spanish program there is a single specific mention of technology, and this, as a basic notion of information resource: "*Utilizar los acervos impresos y digitales con diferentes propósitos*" (Bonilla, 2017, p. 166). A possible explanation for the scarce inclusion of technology is the existence of the *Ciencia y Tecnología* in the *Educación secundaria* (2017) program, which is specifically for science and technology. Although a closer look into this document could shed light on how literacy is considered in relation to technology, the low recurrence of technological contexts and devices in the Spanish program, as a means to develop literacy, should be studied in depth.

There are other reasons of importance for considering technological contexts as an opportunity to develop literacy. First, there is a series of skills that could be integrated from literacy and technology in a single effort to provide sound learning opportunities. For instance, the implementation of critical thinking skills to analyze and discriminate information resulting from an inquiry in a search engine or being shared through social media. As Kriflik and Kriflik (2006) stated, "The reliability and value of much of the information found from web sources should be questioned as much of the content is not subject to stringent peer review or other forms of verification" (p. 130). For this problem, implementing information literacy becomes a necessity because it is considered "a means of personal empowerment which enhances a person's ability for lifelong learning" (Lupton, 2004 as cited in Kriflik & Kriflik, 2006,

p. 130). Moreover, as Lupton states (2004, as cited in in Kriflik & Kriflik, 2006, p. 130), "It is the process of analyzing and resolving issues through the effective use of information that facilitates constructive learning." This means that integrating information literacy practices in secondary school contexts, could not only enhance how students interpret and utilize information retrieved from the Internet, but also, become a means to the construction of knowledge. It is important to highlight one of the objectives of the Spanish program since it regards information literacy: "*Analizar, comparar y valorar la información generada por diferentes medios de comunicación masiva, y tener una opinión personal y actitud responsable sobre los mensajes que intercambia*" (Bonilla, 2017, p.167). However, this competence is not explicit in the NEPBE: "value the use, benefits and risks of scientific and technological development" (Rodríguez 2011, p.110). The current communicative context and information adolescents can access, should be addressed in the programs more explicitly and through the lens of information literacy since education must be integral, sound, and should provide individuals with the proper values and skills for a healthy development.

In addition to integrating technology and literacy to foment critical thinking skills to make the Internet a safer environment for students, they can be implemented in the development of writing skills; for instance, teaching to write using a word processor will allow students to know and utilize all the available tools and formats to develop formal writings. Moreover, these types of software, that allow easy text reconfiguration and what could be considered an efficient correction process, provide an environment that promotes the learning of structures from different genres as well as adopting essential practices for writing, such as, revising, correcting, rewriting, among others. It is important to note that technology applied to literacy development not only regards computer related environments, but also considers videogames, cellphones, and other electronic devices such as camcorders, TVs, and even the radio. As stated by Lankshear and Knobel (2011) "blogging, fanfic writing, manga producing, meme-ing, photo-shopping, anime music video practices, podcasting, vodcasting, and video gaming are *literacies*" (p. 50). As such, these devices expand the contexts where individuals interact, they conform spaces that demand

a particular set of skills for appropriate participation, and they generate the need of fostering new literacies.

Regarding interdisciplinary efforts to promote literacy development, the results show that the context where reading and writing practices are carried out are within the Language classroom. Although the practices in the NEPBE considered contexts outside the language subject, (e.g. "Rewrite information to explain how a machine or device works," and "Select and check charts of human body systems."), they were not considered in the objectives section of either program. This is not only a missed opportunity for providing contextualized challenges for students to develop meaningful competencies, it may represent a contradiction on the programs' view of language, since both claim to hold a sociocultural perspective. Interdisciplinarity provides contexts that are necessary since, as has been mentioned, the reading and writing practices that students perform on a daily basis extend beyond the Language classroom.

In what concerns to the programs' literacy and new literacies practices, they portray a consistent trend in relation to their objectives, being literacy practices recurrent in both cases. However, new literacies practices in the NEPBE were 25% more recurrent than in the Spanish program. The results show that the practices suggested in the English program are more inclusive of interdisciplinary contexts than those proposed in the Spanish program. Some of these activities are: "Write dialogues and interventions for a silent short film"; "Understand and write instructions to face and environmental emergency"; "Structure sentences to express opinions about the radio program". It is important to note that in the Spanish program, the activities that integrate subject areas outside of the Language class do so moderately; for example, "*Elige un tema de su interés. Puede estar relacionado con el lenguaje o con otras asignaturas.*" Integrating diverse disciplines in generating learning contexts for literacy development in Spanish is not one of the strengths of this program and, as has been stated, this could represent an omission in the students' development.

Conclusion

The present investigation has shown, to some extent, the status that literacy and new literacies hold in educational programs. The analysis of the programs provided some insights as to the extent in which new literacies are regarded in the programs. They are mentioned more in the practices than in the objectives section. Although both the Spanish program and the NEPBE showed similar tendencies, the latter is more inclusive of interdisciplinary practices, that is, activities that consider diverse disciplines to generate contexts for developing literacy. Several studies have addressed the importance of reading across the curriculum practices (*disciplinary literacy, content literacy*) in fostering reading and writing skills that conform to the communicative needs of the 21st century:

> "…knowledge and skill in the subject area is essential to supporting young people in becoming active participants in a democratic society. Although literacy educators and researchers acknowledge the value and power of the knowledge, practices, and texts young people bring to school, it is also critical that we work to expand youth knowledge, practices, and texts as a function of education. Young people do not need to go to school to learn what they already know; content literacy instruction can help youth gain access to the accepted knowledge of the disciplines, thereby allowing them also to critique and change that knowledge." (Lee, 2007 as cited in Moje, 2008, p. 97)

As mentioned in the introduction of this article, PISA test results evidenced that Mexican students' low performance should be regarded as a problem. For this reason, the teaching of "the accepted knowledge of the disciplines" as a means to develop literacy seems, for now, an unrealistic objective. However, this does not exclude the possibility of including material from other subject areas to develop literacy, or even promoting literacy development in areas outside the language classroom.

The results also showed that new literacies related to technology or post-typographic texts are not common in the programs. A reason for the low recurrence of technology could be the awareness of the limited availability of such resources. However, new literacies promote vast and diverse learning possibilities that do not depend on technology, such as "conventional text productions produced in the course of

enacting fan-oriented identities around media like manga comics or TV shows, popular cultural literary texts, and popular contemporary card games like *Pokémon, Dragon Ball Z,* and *Yu-Gi-Oh!* (Pahl, 2002 as cited in Lankshear & Knobel, 2011, pp. 31, 32). Education in Mexico does not stand alone in omitting these types of resources for developing literacy, as stated by Lankshear and Knobel "to a larger extent it is literacies in this post-typographic sense that school have identified as their main challenge as far as incorporating 'new literacies' into their programmes and as media for learning are concerned" (2011, p. 29).

This study found that both documents promote a sociocultural approach to language learning. The impact that literacy—as conceptualized in New Literacy Studies—had on education, along with new communicative contexts, evidenced that psycholinguistic approaches to teaching language were no longer sufficient. This means that the programs of the public education in Mexico are consistent with the most relevant research concerning language teaching. Nonetheless, results from international tests and national studies show that there is an urgent need to understand the situation of public education in Mexico. Although the reasons for low performance in reading and writing may be rooted in different causes, it is undeniable that those involved in the education system should pay attention to this problem. Comprehending 21st century communicative needs is to know that language teaching, without new literacies, is incomplete.

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Appendix A: Sample of the Spanish program

	Literacy	New literacies
Spanish program: **Objectives**	1. Usar el lenguaje de manera analítica y reflexiva para intercambiar ideas y textos en diversas situaciones comunicativas 2. Utilizar el lenguaje para organizar su pensamiento y discurso; expresar lo que saben y construir conocimientos 3. Reflexionar sobre la forma, la función y el significado del lenguaje para planear, escribir y revisar sus producciones, así como para mejorar su comprensión de los mensajes 4. Conocer una diversidad de textos literarios para ampliar su apreciación estética del lenguaje y su comprensión sobre otras perspectivas y valores culturales 5. Utilizar y recrear el lenguaje para participar en actividades lúdicas y literarias 6. Participar como individuos responsables e integrantes de una comunidad cultural y lingüística diversa, capaces de asumir posturas razonadas y respetar la pluralidad de opiniones desde una perspectiva crítica y reflexiva	1. Utilizar los acervos impresos y digitales con diferentes propósitos 2. Analizar, comparar y valorar la información generada por diferentes medios de comunicación masiva, y tener una opinión personal y actitud responsable sobre los mensajes que intercambia.

	7. Reconocer, valorar y comprometerse con el cumplimiento de derechos y obligaciones de hablantes, autores, comunidades y otros actores que se vinculan con los usos orales y escritos del lenguaje 8. Ampliar su conocimiento de las características del lenguaje oral y escrito y utilizarlo para comprender y producir textos 9. Utilizar la escritura para organizar su pensamiento, elaborar su discurso y ampliar sus conocimientos 10. Interpretar y producir textos para responder a las demandas de la vida social, empleando diversas modalidades de lectura y escritura en función de sus propósitos	
Spanish program: **Practices**	1. Participa en la presentación pública de libros 2. Elige un material que considere de interés general y elabora una reseña 3. Justifica por qué eligió dicho material y expresa por qué invita a otros a leerlo 4. Utiliza recursos léxicos para distinguir entre la información recuperada de los textos y la propia; por ejemplo, *en palabras del autor, según, en contraste con, en mi opinión, considero*, etcétera 5. Construye un título breve y claro, relacionado con el tema y atractivo para el lector 6. Elige un tema y hace una pequeña investigación 7. Elabora una lista de preguntas sobre lo que desea saber de un tema 8. Localiza información pertinente para responder sus preguntas 9. Distingue ideas relevantes de acuerdo con los propósitos de búsqueda. 10. Identifica enunciados que introducen información (como las oraciones temáticas o las definiciones) y enunciados que la amplían (como las explicaciones y los ejemplos)	1. Plantea un propósito para emprender una búsqueda en acervos impresos o digitales 2. Selecciona y lee textos impresos o electrónicos relacionados con el tema que seleccionó 3. Relaciona la información que se presenta en los recursos gráficos y la que se expone en el texto 4. Comprende y utiliza gráficas, diagramas, tablas y cuadros sinópticos. 5. Diseña apoyos gráficos, como líneas de tiempo, cuadros sinópticos, mapas, tablas, gráficas o diagramas para complementar sus explicaciones. 6. Elige un tema de su interés. Puede estar relacionado con el lenguaje o con otras asignaturas 7. Elabora un esquema con los temas y subtemas que desarrollará en su texto (tema libre) 8. Consulta fuentes de información sobre la literatura (prólogos, artículos de divulgación o crítica literaria, páginas electrónicas especializadas o blogs de fans) para enriquecer sus apreciaciones sobre los aspectos estructurales y temáticos relevantes del subgénero

Appendix B: Sample of the NEPBE program

	Literacy	New literacies
NEPBE: **Objectives**	1. …they will have developed the necessary plurilingual and pluricultural competencies to successfully face the communicative challenges of a globalized world… 2. Also, oral production and, to some extent, written production. 3. Participate successfully in interactions that involve production and interpretation of oral and written texts in the English language within different social learning environments (Familiar and community, Literacy and Ludic, Academic educational). 4. It involves assuming that students have the knowledge and skills in oral and written language and that they are able to become true language users 5. It is necessary that teachers make the classrooms attractive and interesting places for learning, so that all students can have opportunities to share their experiences and knowledge about reading, writing, and oral exchanges in the English language. 6. Reading is not decoding, it is giving meaning, it is understanding, writing is not copying or having good handwriting; writing is creating a text. 7. The purpose of English language teaching in Basic Education is for students to get the necessary knowledge to engage in social practices with written and oral language to interact with native and non-native English speakers 8. It is necessary to have a variety of individual and collective experiences that include different ways to participate in oral exchanges and in text reading and writing 9. In which they understand and produce, in general way, oral and written texts about different topics. 10. It is important to establish that, being English a compulsory second language in the curriculum, receptive skills (listening and reading) are particularly important. Therefore, listening and reading get a different status than speaking and writing.	1. Identify some conventions of audiovisual media, for example, sound effects, camera angle, among others 2. Identify differences between graphic and textual symbology of similar situations 3. Use visual resources to complement the general meaning of oral and written texts 4. Infer topic and addressee of outlines through graphic or textual components 5. Value the use, benefits and risks of scientific and technological development

NEPBE: Practices	1. Write sentences to give and receive information	1. Write dialogues and interventions for a silent short film
	2. Determine topic, purpose, and intended audience	2. Interpret and write instructions to perform a simple experiment
	3. Use different comprehension strategies (e.g., skimming, scanning, adjusting speed and rhythm)	3. Write notes to describe the components of different human body systems in a chart
	4. Identify key events	4. Rewrite information to explain how a machine or device works
	5. Recognize the general meaning	5. Write a short report about a historical event
	6. Determine number and order of key events	6. Retells events using images
	7. Rewrite sentences of key events	7. Recognize graphic and text arrangement
	8. Rewrite key events	8. Predict contents based on graphic and text components
	9. Put together and illustrate the big book	9. Retell events from illustrations
	10. Rehearse the oral reading out loud of the text and practice pronunciation	10. Recognize graphic and text components
	11. Select and check bilingual dictionaries	11. Examine numbers and special characters and determine their use
	12. Identify text organization	12. Formulate questions about the content of a program
	13. Point out sections assigned to each language	13. Structure sentences to express opinions about the radio program
	14. Identify entries and subentries	14. Identify sentences that express future situations and conditions, and their composition (in forecasts)
	15. Understand the use of the textual components in bilingual dictionaries	15. Classify sentences according to the future verb form (forecasts)
	16. Locate words in English and in the mother tongue	16. Compare sentences that express future situations to those that express past and/or present situations (forecasts)
	17. Read the definitions for words in English and in Spanish	17. Write sentences that express future sentences, in order to make a forecast
	18. Understand the use that is given to lower and upper-case letters	18. Write words that express future tense (forecast)
	19. Establish type of word from an abbreviation	19. Write questions about future situations (forecast)
	20. Understand the instructions to use a bilingual dictionary	20. Complete sentences with the future verb form (forecast).

ANALYZING BILINGUAL STUDENTS' USE OF LANGUAGE IN AN AFTER-SCHOOL MULTILITERACIES PROGRAM

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Summary

This ethnographic study reports on an after-school program in Western Massachusetts that incorporates different genres of multiliteracies such as social media productions. Through an on-going nine-month investigation, it leads to implications for the literacy development of young bilingual students in an after-school setting. The after-school program takes place in a regional public middle school and is structured to offer enrichment activities and popular literacies to develop students' ability to more critically understand the world (Freire, 1995). The program welcomes bilingual students and gives them the opportunity to share their stories with the local community by taking pictures, producing newsletters and self-reflecting on special experiences. This ethnographic study uses qualitative methods including participant observation, interviews, the collection and analysis of students' artifacts. For all of the data collected, the researcher uses open coding for repeating, emergent themes and argues that bilingual students develop literacy in both their first language and English from every aspect of their entire learning experience, not simply from schooling. The article contributes to our understanding that formed and transformed identities, socially and culturally situated learning, and skills used in the production of meaning are major factors that influence bilingual students' literacy development in an after-school setting.
Keywords: bilingual, multiliteracies, after-school, identity, skills, situated learning.

Resumen

Este estudio etnográfico reporta como un programa extraescolar en Western Massachusetts incorpora diferentes géneros de multiliteracidades tales como producciones de medios sociales. Por medio de una investigación de nueve meses de duración se consideran las implicaciones para el desarrollo de la literacidad de estudiantes bilingües adolescentes en un contexto extraescolar. El programa extraescolar se lleva a cabo en una escuela pública regional y está estructurado para ofrecer actividades de enriquecimiento y de literacidades populares para desarrollar la habilidad de comprender el mundo de manera crítica (Freire, 1995). El programa da la bienvenida a estudiantes bilingües y les da la oportunidad de compartir sus historias con la comunidad local a través de la fotografía, la producción de boletines, y la reflexión sobre experiencias especiales. Este estudio etnográfico usa métodos cualitativos que incluyen participación observante, entrevistas y la recolección y análisis de artefactos de estudiantes. Para analizar todos los datos recogidos, el investigador usa codificación abierta, para encontrar temas emergentes. Se argumenta que los estudiantes bilingües desarrollan literacidad en su primer idioma tanto como en inglés, no solo desde la escuela formal sino desde toda la experiencia de aprendizaje. El artículo contribuye con nuestro entendimiento de las identidades formadas y transformadas, el aprendizaje social y culturalmente situado, y de las herramientas usadas en la producción de significado que son factores relevantes que influencian las literacidades bilingües de los estudiantes del programa extraescolar.
Palabras Clave: Bilingüe, multiliteracidades, extraescolar, identidad, habilidades, aprendizaje situado.

Introduction

This ethnographic study reports on an after-school program, V-Scholars (Pseudonym) in Western Massachusetts that incorporates different genres of multiliteracies such as social media productions. Literacy was long ago defined as a set of skills used to read and write (Street, 2009). However, Gee (1996), Street (1984, 1993) and other scholars have challenged more traditional orientations that see literacy as relatively autonomous abilities to read and write in a given language. This notable movement or "social turn" in the last several decades has moved from a focus on individual behavior and individual minds towards a focus on social and cultural interaction. This "social turn" has made the study of literacy purposeful and embed in broader social goals and cultural practices (Barton, Hamilton & Ivanič, 2000). Patterned by social institutions and power relations, literacy practice today is considered as the general cultural ways of utilizing language which people draw upon in their lives (New London Group, 1996).

Multiliteracies, according to Gee (2005), refer to the multiplicity of communication channels, which include two key elements: cultural hybridity and multimodality. The approach of multiliteracies starts from a premise that recognizes complexity, diversity, change and the reality of global connectedness (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). More recently, the multiliteracies project has paid attention to the importance of teaching students how to produce and design multimodal texts. Knowing that literacy projects can empower students and their communities (Freire, 1970), contributions to this study have attempted to apprehend the factors that affect bilingual students' literacy development in an after-school program as they are engaged in multiliteracy practices through an analysis of their use of language.

The participants in this study are two focal students. In this paper, bilingual is used to indicate individuals who do not speak English as their first language. The reason to use "bilingual" instead of labels such as English Language Learner (ELL) or English as a Second Language (ESL) is as labeling might be associated with negativity that can result in certain challenges for bilingual students involving actively in mainstream social practices (De Korne, Byram & Fleming, 2007). Using the term "bilingual," however, highlights the ability that student participants can master two or more languages despite in different proficiency levels.

Research question

The study presented in this paper attempts to explore the following question:

What factors influence bilingual students' literacy development in an after-school context as these students are engaged in multiliteracy practices?

Exploration of this research question assumes that the development of literacy beyond schooling does not occur "as nature" for bilingual students but connects to and is influenced by a range of external elements because of differences in identities, cultures, skills, and perceived power relations. Scholars, such as Mahiri and Sablo (1996), have argued that developing literacy for their own purposes, in their own mediums could be a powerful and meaningful way for students to capture their experiences. Morell and Duncan-Andrade (2004) believe contemporary popular youth culture such as media production and hip-hop music can be used as vehicles for students to develop and express critical literacy skills in a "non-academic" setting. Likewise, Gee (1996) views literacy as socially, culturally, historically, and politically situated practices that integrate a variety of disciplines through which people's identities are formed and transformed and through which institutions are produced and reproduced. Knowing that bilingual students develop literacy from every aspect of their entire learning experience, the question raised in this study is to uncover the potential crucial factors that may affect students' literacy development as they are engaged in multiliteracy practices in an after-school context.

Socio-political and historical context

This ethnographic study reports on an after-school program, which takes place inside a regional public middle school in Western Massachusetts. The program is structured to provide students with en-

richment activities and popular literacies to prepare them both academically and mentally for high school life. In order to create a comfortable atmosphere for all students regardless of race, class and gender to actively exchange ideas, share wisdoms and critically read their world, the program encourages its participants to bring home languages and cultures into the classroom for brainstorming and interaction. Building such a multilingual and multicultural after-school community is a reaction against English-only ideologies, which perpetuate inequities at the intersections of race, class, gender, language and ability (Viesca, 2013). As a fact, English-only has become a movement in Massachusetts since the ballot initiative and the passage of Question 2, 2002[1], and there are several negativities associated with the launch of such a kind of restrictive language policy (de Jong, Gort, & Cobb, 2005).

Johnson (2012) looks at language policy as a sociocultural process; he believes anti-bilingual education policy has been enacted in schools where the majority of students come from linguistically diverse background. However, multilingual learners may experience difficulties in forming their identities when restrictive language policies are carried out in schools (Mitchell, 2010). Under the influence of these policies, students' practices are shaped by the way the school conceptualizes and interprets the law (de Jong, 2008). This may prevent bilinguals from developing their literacies in the classroom. From the researcher's perspective, to resist English-only is to maintain a discourse and practices in education that value bilingualism and the use of the native language of multilingual learners. Papapavlou and Pavlou (2005) support this notion that education is more successful if it is conducted in the learners' home language. In this regard, the "V-Scholars" program has considered creating not only a safe space resisting monolingual ideology but also promoting the value of multilingualism in an after-school setting.

School setting and the after-school program

This research took place during the 2017-2018 academic year at a regional public middle school in Western Massachusetts. It is a 7th and 8th-grade school serving students from the neighboring towns. This focal site considers itself a culturally rich and linguistically diverse community, which involves approximately 440 students including both native-born students and a large number of international students.

This ethnographic study reports on V-Scholars After-School Program inside the middle school. V-Scholars is a granted funded program, which is designed to offer students enrichment activities and popular literacies from Monday to Thursday on a weekly basis during Fall, Spring, and Summer terms. During the 2017-2018 academic year, the program began in late September 2017 and ended in late May 2018 with an optional summer program, which took place in July. On Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, the enrichment classes start at 3 p. m. and end at 4 p. m.; on Wednesdays, the program also starts at 3 p.m. but ends at 5 p. m. All the activities offered by V-Scholars are directed and supervised by program staff. These activities vary from day to day including: Food Farming and Fun (M. T. W. Th.), Dancing for Change (Thurs. only), Out Loud: Our Story to the World (M. T. W. Thu.), Climbing to the Sky (Wed.), and Youth Leadership in Hip Hop Culture (Tues. & Thurs.). Students who enroll in V-Scholars can choose any activity to take in a class based on their interests by reporting to the program coordinator at the beginning of each term. In addition to students' participation, the program also opens its door for family engagement. Parents are encouraged to observe and join once a month in any of the enrichment activities that are offered.

As a granted funded after-school program, V-Scholars is structured to provide students with additional skills and knowledge beyond what they usually learn from the curriculum. This study particularly reports on students' participation in one of the popular literacy activities in the program: Out Loud: Our Story to the World from September 2017 to May 2018. The main goal of "Out Loud" is set to develop students' skills in creating their own stories through the lens of young bilingual learners.

Participants

The focal participants in this study are two bilingual students. In this paper, all names of people have been changed to pseudonyms. Their demographics is shown in the table below:

Figure 1. Demographics of Student Participants

Name (Pseudonym)	Race	Gender	Language(s)	Grade
Andy	African	Male	Egyptian/English	6
Mina	Latino	Female	Spanish/English	7

The two student participants were enrolling in the activity of Out Loud: Our Story to the World during Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 in the V-Scholars after-school program. Both of them speak a second language other than English at home, and they present varying degrees of English language proficiency at school.

Andy is a 6th grade boy who was born and raised in Egypt. His family migrated to the United States when Andy was in elementary school. Andy considered himself a "good writer" in both Egyptian and English and he was proud of his Egyptian heritage. In "Out Loud," Andy was one of the most active members in the group. He always attempted to draw people's attention to himself by behaving hilariously. As a bilingual, Andy could speak and write in English fluently.

Mina is a 7th grade girl whose first language is Spanish. She was born in Mexico but came to live and learn in the Unites States at the age of 8. Mina was fluent in Spanish until her family moved to the United States. In the V-Scholars after-school program, Mina had her "small intimate group" in which every individual had a Spanish language preference. In this small group, Mina always spoke Spanish to her close friends although she could also perform proficiently in using English to communicate with her peers and teachers.

Methodology and methods

This ethnographic study uses qualitative methods including participant observation, interviews, the collection and analysis of students' artifacts. The researcher edited and analyzed data on a weekly basis in consultation with the second author of this article, who also served as one of the sponsors of the study. After receiving permission from student participants, research sponsors, school principal, after-school program coordinator, and school district superintendent, the researcher agreed to weekly observations for one hour on each Tuesday in the V-Scholars since September 2017. By May 2018, nine months, in total 30 hours had been spent on data collection at the focal site. After each week's observation, the researcher took field notes or a quick memo regarding the bilingual students' interaction and participation in the activity.

In addition, semi-structured interviews with the student participants were conducted outside of the V-Scholars program and recorded using a mobile phone. The use of semi-structured interviews gave a certain degree of flexibility so that as the interview progressed, the researcher was able to ask participants follow-up questions for clarifying and elaborating (Barkhuizen, Benson & Chik, 2013). For all of the audio data recorded, the researcher used verbatim transcription to convert certain sections of oral discourse data into texts. This indicates that grammatical accuracy was not edited, and the transcription might include non-standard grammatical utterances (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Lastly, this ethnographic study involves the collection and analysis of students' social media productions including newsletter and poster. The researcher examined the texts on these artifacts to learn how meaning was produced and situated, within specific social practices and discourses following Barton, Hamilton & Ivanič, (2000).

Data analysis

In this ethnographic study, the researcher did a discourse analysis of all of the data collected by employing Gee's (2014) Linguistic Criteria. To group the data, open coding was used for repeating, emergent themes. The use of this "grounded theory" approach enabled the researcher to categorize and classify data that helped to answer research question (Creswell, 2003). As the study progressed, several codes surfaced to examine the following themes:

· *formed and transformed identities*: actions by bilingual students to enact and reexamine socially significant roles through a combination of language, actions, and interactions

· *situated learning*: actions by bilingual students to engage in an array of literacy practices that vary significantly from context to context

· *skills:* a series of skills developed and used in the production of meaning

Findings

Through open coding, three major themes emerged in the data collected for this study. These themes guided to answering the research question in this study.

"Being kinds of people:" formed and transformed social identities

The excerpt below is a piece of text taken from a poster designed by Mina for a nationwide event celebrating after-school programs during the Fall of 2017.

> ENCIENDETE V-SCHALORS! The XXX School celebrates *Lights On Afterschool* to draw attention to the many ways afterschool programs support students by offering them opportunities to learn new things – such as Farming, HipHop, Leadership, Rock Climbing and Dancing – and discover new skills. The events send a powerful message that millions more kids need quality afterschool programs. For more information, please contact XXX (Poster, November 18, 2017).

As can be seen from this excerpt, the text begins by a Spanish word "ENCIENDETE" with all letters capitalized. The phrase "ENCIENDETE V-SCHALORS" which in English means "lights on V-Scholars" highlights the main theme of the poster, namely that more attention needed to be paid to this particular after-school program. Focusing on context and word choice, it is interesting but significant to assume why this poster employs a phrase in Spanish to hit the theme. With an absence of key information, a series of questions can be raised regarding to Mina's word choice in this case. *What is the context for this production? Who are the audiences?*

Gee (2014) sketches out an equation to illustrate how important the context within the relation-ship between discourse and communication is: "*What the speaker says* + *Context* = *What the speaker means*" (p. 11). Here, context does not simply include the physical setting in which the communication takes place and everything in it but also refers to any shared cultural knowledge in the communication. Regarding the poster, what is not expressed overtly but assumed to be known is the designer's background and to whom this artifact is created for. Knowing that people use language to be recognized as taking on a certain identity, it is reasonable to relate Mina's word choice in this case with her Mexican heritage: Mina used her first language to highlight the main theme of the poster as a method to establish or maintain her Latino identity. However, her use of English in creating the rest of the text indicates her bilingual identity which at the same time addresses her ability in mastering two languages in producing her own text.

In everyday communication, people use languages in different forms under different conditions that may cause different effects (Johnstone, 2008). Gee (1999) employs the term "social language" to specify the different forms or varieties of language but also highlight the importance of considering identity issues in the use of language and discourse. The excerpt below demonstrates that a speaker can enact socially recognizable identities in discourse in multiliteracy practices and position himself or herself in the community by "inviting" other people to take up these identities (Gee, 2014). The excerpt was taken from a field note documenting Mina's engagement within another literacy practice in the activity of "Out Loud." In this practice, Mina, as well as her peers were playing the game "Taboo." The analysis of Mina's discourse reveals the social identity that she was trying to establish in the community in which she was engaged.

"Taboo" is a game that players in each team take turns to give the clues of given cards either by orally describing or using body languages. This is the kind of practice that requires tacit teamwork between the player who "performs out" the given word on a "Taboo" card, and the rest of the players who make guesses. In this event, I observed and recorded how Mina used language as a medium through which her bilingual identity was highlighted.

As an ethnographer who is interested in documenting bilingual students' use of language in multiliteracy practices, I was particularly focusing on what sort of words, ways of expression, and gestures students employed to make their meanings clear and straightforward within a short amount of time. I noticed that Mina asked the instructor whether or not she could use her **L1** (Spanish) to play the game. I assume her purpose of doing this could be: 1) She knew expressing the target word in her **first language** would be easier than using English would; 2) She knew someone in her team also speaks Spanish. To me, Mina's asking for permission revealed her uncertainty to some degree regarding if she would be allowed to use **another language** to play this game (Field note, March 20, 2018).

Reflecting on the field note, I specifically stressed key words such as "L1," "first language," and "another language" by using a bold font because I considered these words significant in delineating Mina's bilingual identity. "Assume" here in the text reveals that I was making assumptions regarding Mina's asking for permission of using "L1" in participating the game by relating to her linguistic and cultural background. The assumptions were made based on my observations and my familiarity with the student participants: Mina wanted to use Spanish to communicate with her close friends in the V-Scholars after-school program. Soon after Mina agreed to play the game in Spanish, she used it in her next turn. However, this caused a chaos in her team.

When Mina spoke Spanish to her team members, I heard someone in her team yell "say something we understand." Mina paused for a little while in low spirits but still used English to finish the rest of the game. To me this scenario highlights a dilemma or a contradiction with respect to Mina's enacted social identity as a bilingual student (Field note, March 20, 2018).

This excerpt records a conflict between Mina and one of her team members who could not understand Spanish. In this text, the word "something" does not indicate another way of expression but "in English." Mina continued to play the rest of the game in English although she was reluctant to do so (in low spirits). This single case reveals an existing barrier for some bilingual students to take part in multiliteracy practices using a home language. The barrier was not set by the V-Scholars after-school program but by the clash between monolingual and bilingual ideology which associate with participants' social identity.

Gee (2015) introduces the Big "D" Discourse Tool to elaborate the importance of asking how a person is using language, as well as ways of acting and interacting in any communication. In thinking of the question what kind of person (what identity) Mina was seeking to enact or be recognized by people, my attention was specifically focused on the "enaction" and "reexamination" of her identity. According to Sutton (2004), literacy involves an attitude of creation and re-creation that becomes self-transforming. In this case, Mina had her social identity formed and transformed due to an existing conflict between contrary language ideologies, which permeated the social institution of school.

Situated learning: students as the providers of knowledge

Lave and Wenger (1991) argued that historical and political forces affect learning. They also stated that learning is situated because it depends on the situation in which it takes place. In an interview with Andy, he shared his experiences and reflections regarding how students learned knowledge from each other as they were engaged in the social and cultural practices in the V-Scholars after-school program.

Andy: So like, sometimes we go outside the classroom to play but I also think we learn new things from that. There was a day we went to the playground to play a drone and use it to take photos and make video. Some of us never played a drone before, so it's kind hard to get started. I asked Trend (Pseudonym, another student in the group) cuz he knows how to play it.
Interviewer: Was Joe (Pseudonym, the instructor of "Oud Loud") staying there with you?

Andy: Yes, he was there, but he wanted us to figure it out. Um, so yeah, there are many modes, you know, so we were trying to figure out which is best for selfies and which is best for a video. We also need to record our voice and add music to it (Interview, December 5, 2017).

In this interview excerpt, Andy and his peers were gaining knowledge and experience with respect to how to operate a drone within a specific situated context and embedded within a particular social and physical setting. The students in "Out Loud" were working on media productions by using a drone as tool to collect photos and videos. Instead of teaching how to operate the device, the instructor created an opportunity to let students be the producers of knowledge, leaving a space to let them decide which mode could be a good fit for their own task. In the following excerpt, Andy reflected on his learning experiences as he was engaged in this literacy practice.

I like this activity because it's not only fun but also challenging. We finally had the drone flying and had it taking photos. For some reasons we cannot record any voice that day, but we tried at least. The drone was out of power and we didn't have a backup (Interview, December 5, 2017).

By using the word "challenging," Andy intended to state his opinion that learning how to operate a drone was difficult for him at least for the first time. This process of learning was considered "challenging" because Andy could not solve a series of problems by relating to his prior knowledge and experience.

According to Stein (1998), situated learning involves students in cooperative activities where they are challenged to use their critical thinking. The following excerpt was taken from a field note documenting bilingual students' debriefing and brainstorming in "Oud Loud" after they were brought to visit a local police station the week prior. Given a specific context, both Andy and Mina produced knowledge and critically reflected on ideas regarding the purpose of being brought to the police station by integrating their life experiences.

Andy: So, do you want us to know how bad it was? So, like when you get older you're not going there. Oh, yeah, I just want to add that you went to a police station to see what they do.
Mina: Do you want us to show appreciation? Or maybe to build a relationship with them (Field note, February 6, 2018).

In this excerpt, Andy considered the police station a "bad" place to stay. By stressing, "when you get older you're not going there," Andy believed what could prevent people from "going there" was to visit as early as possible to know how bad it was. In contrast, Mina interpreted their visit of police station as to show appreciation and to build the relationship with police officers.

Andy and Mina came from different families. They had different cultural background and life experiences. In this case, it was possible that they gave opinions to the topic by connecting with prior knowledge regarding what community-police relationship had been like in their own cultures. Within this literacy practice, Andy and Mina produced knowledge and grounded their learning in the specific context that accounted for the possibility there could be tension between police and historically marginalized communities of color. However, according to Mina, it was important to "show appreciation" and "to build" that relationship, which demonstrated her own critical thinking and the reflection on the topic.

Developing skills to critically read the world
Mahiri and Sablo (1996) have promoted a conception of literacy that defines it as culturally connected "skills used in the production of meaning from texts in a context" (p. 166). In exploring the nature and function of skills applied for producing texts, attention in this ethnographic research was not simply paid to examine bilingual students' skills in reading and writing (Street, 2009), but also to their ability to more critically read their world (Freire & Macedo, 1987).

In one of the interviews with Andy during the Fall of 2017, he responded to the questions regarding what skills he considered important to develop in the V-Scholars after-school program as he was engaged in multiliteracy practices and how those skills were different from what he learned in the classroom.

I think "Out Loud" is very different from the classroom. I mean… you can always learn different things at the same time, and they are always interesting. I like the time when we go to the computer lab in the library. The teacher teach us how to create characters with *Hero-Machine*. Then, I design another "me" on the screen. I learn some computer skills when I am doing this. I also type some words to describe myself. When class finish, the teacher ask us to copy the codes and save in a place. But, next time when I come to the lab, I always make some change because I feel different things each time… (Interview, November 7, 2017).

In this piece of text, Andy gives an example to demonstrate the skills that he is developing specifically in "Out Loud" not in his traditional classroom setting. More importantly, Andy believed learning these skills "are always interesting" as he pinpointed in the interview. What is significant here is that Andy's instructor created a certain degree of freedom to let the students design their own digital character after teaching the prerequisite computer skills. The notion of "design" in this case connects powerfully to the sort of creative intelligence Andy develops to be able to continually redesign his productions as an active designer of linguistic, visual, audio, and multimodal patterns of meaning in the very act of practice (New London Group, 1996).

According to Turner (2012), looking at students' language and meaning-making in their productions is a way to identify the change in the development of social consciousness. In the interview, Andy explained that he always makes changes because he feels different things each time. Although Andy did not clarify what "different things" really indicate, speculations could still be made to assume the intangible "things." These could be attitudes, emotions, feelings, or ways looking at himself.

The excerpt presented below is a piece of text taken from a digital newsletter designed by Mina. The newsletter consists of both images and texts. The production was intended to inform parents and people who were interested in learning about what student participants did in the V-Scholars after-school program each month. Like Andy, Mina learned the skills for producing digital production in "Out Loud." She took a lot of pictures while students were participating in different genres of multiliteracies. For each picture, Mina used a few sentences to describe the event, what activities students were engaged in and how they were engaged. The text presented below was produced to describe students' dancing in the program.

> The students learned a warm up routine, the **Cha Cha Slide**, the **Tinkling**, a traditional folk dance from the Philippines, and there is always time for **Freestyle dancing**. **WE ARE DANCING FOR CHANGE!** (Newsletter, October 2017).

Analyzing a text on vocabulary level, according to Gee (2014), is the beginning for understanding language and its effects. As can be seen from this excerpt, Mina highlighted the name of all forms of dance, and capitalized every single letter in the sentence: "we are dancing for change." The use of "change" in this text was significant since it contributed to the purpose of communicating. "We are dancing for change!" conveyed a certain radical tone that implied Mina was unsatisfied with the conditions she was encountering. Audience who read this piece of text might relate to the struggles and challenges in the schooling lives of young bilingual students, the barriers historically marginalized students of color face in actively participating in the mainstream classroom, or simply academic stress. By visually emphasizing this sentence, Mina intended to inform people that something needed to be changed right away and dancing could be the medium through which change could happen.

To track Andy and Mina's use of language and images in the design of productions could be a way to understand how they had been reading the world and themselves differently from time to time. According to Janks (2010), critical media production implies taking seriously the relationship between design, identity, and power. For this reason, encouraging students to design and produce their own production provides them an opportunity to choose what meanings they intend to make, what kind of "self" they will promote or disrupt, and how they will position themselves as well as their potential audiences.

Given the opportunities to create and redesign digital productions, Andy and Mina made the V-Scholars after-school program an ideal place for literacy learning, where they had a lot of fun but also developed skills in more critically reading themselves.

Conclusions & implications

This ethnographic study reports on an after-school program in Western Massachusetts that incorporates different genres of multiliteracies such as social media productions and brainstorming. The paper explores bilingual students' literacy development through after-school multiliteracy practices by examining three distinct yet interrelated factors: social identities, skills, and situated learning. Through a discourse analysis of all of the data collected including interviews, fieldnotes, and student participants' artifacts, a dynamic relationship between literacy development and the factors can be concluded and illustrated by the model below:
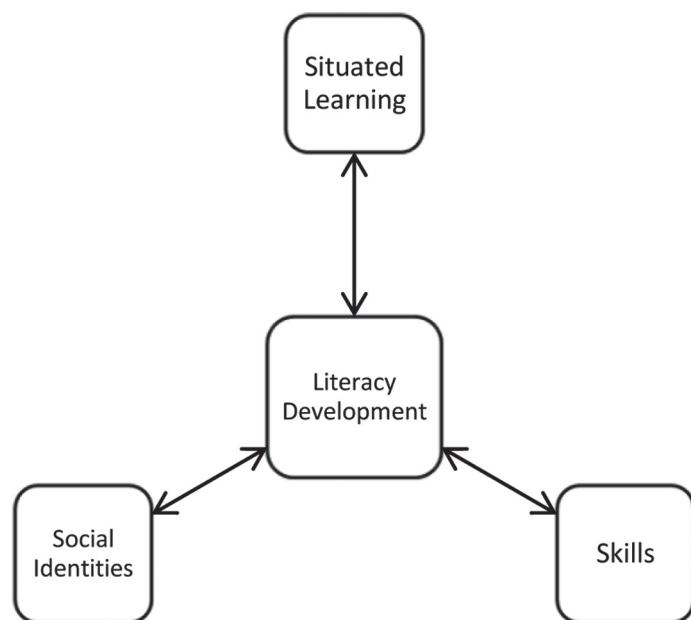
Figure 2. The Model of Literacy Development in After-School Multiliteracy Practices

According to this model, formed and transformed identities, socially and culturally situated learning, and skills used in the production of meaning are major factors that influence bilingual students' literacy development in multiliteracy practices. At the same time, the development of literacy can also adjust the way bilingual students enact and reexamine social identities, promote skills in reading the world, and produce knowledge in any situated literacy learning practice. The discovery and discussion of the three factors presented in this article contribute to our understanding that after-school multiliteracy practices are quite different from more traditional classroom practices regarding how knowledge is produced and shared. In this study, the two focal student participants did not passively accept knowledge from their instructors. Instead, they took full advantage of the V-Scholars after-school program to actively exchange ideas and promote critical awareness in both their first language and English.

The model summarized in this research has several pedagogical implications for instructors developing bilingual students' literacy in an after-school setting. (1) Teaching students to be critical includes advancing students' skills in creating their own productions; (2) Using social media productions as a way of understanding students; and (3) Promoting literacy in a non-academic setting requires students to be the producer of knowledge.

On the first point, teaching students to be critical includes advancing students' skills in creating their own productions. It is important for teachers to gain the knowledge that students' critical awareness and social consciousness can be developed and embodied in the making of their own social media productions. More importantly, students, especially those who have historically been marginalized from the mainstream classroom, need to be informed about how powerful their social media productions can be in the struggle of social justice. As teachers, instructing students merely in the skills of reading and writing does not go far enough in developing students' ability to critically read the world. Students need advanced skills in linguistic, visual, audio, and other multimodal domains to produce their powerful productions.

Secondly, it has been demonstrated that social media production can be as a great tool for bilingual students to share stories, struggles, and success with the local communities. Reciprocally, schools can utilize social media productions to understand bilingual students and their cultures. That is, social media productions can be used as medium to more closely connect schools and students. Using these productions, schools will be able to better support bilingual stu-

dents by creating a more comfortable zone for their enaction and reexamination of social identity.

Finally, promoting literacy in a non-academic setting requires students to be the producer of knowledge. Although a well-designed curriculum can always develop literacy learning by having students passively accept knowledge, literacy development takes place in every aspect of students' lives regardless of whether they consciously engage in such curriculum or not. Instead of delivering curriculum content exclusively from the teacher in the classroom, inviting students to bring their own passion and expertise into the after-school setting can help teachers understand and identify what skills students are specialized in and what knowledge students can produce to contribute to the community.

Notes:

1. Question 2 was a ballot initiative in Massachusetts in 2002 that obligated teachers to restrict the medium of instruction to English even if learners have languages other than English as a primary language. A language other than English could be used for clarification purposes but not as the medium of instruction.

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USING THE RASSIAS METHOD® TO DEVELOP STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS

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Abstract
English language learners start their studies since an early age and continue them up to University. However, when they have to use the language spontaneously in a real social interaction, they are not able to communicate. The objective of this study was to develop students' speaking skills by using the Rassias Method ®, which is a combination of dramatic techniques, rhythmic drills, and energetic reinforcement strategies to make learning an engaging activity (Beall, 2000). An Action Research was implemented to find out: To what extent will the use of the Rassias Method increase students' motivation to learn English in order to develop their speaking skill. The intervention was carried out with undergraduate students of the bachelor degree in Maintenance of the Technological University of San Juan del Rio, Queretaro, Mexico. The results show that most of the students successfully performed the real-life situations such as buying something from the store or asking for food and serving food in a restaurant. Moreover, the students' self-assessment and their journals indicate that they increased their motivation and confidence, and as a result, they perceived an improvement in their speaking skill.
Keywords: Rassias Method®, speaking skill, undergraduate students, motivation, authentic activities.

Resumen
La mayoría de estudiantes de inglés empiezan sus estudios de esta lengua extranjera en una edad muy temprana y los continúan hasta la Universidad. Sin embargo, cuando tienen que usar el idioma espontáneamente en una interacción social real, no son capaces de comunicarse. El objetivo de este estudio fue desarrollar la habilidad del habla en inglés de los estudiantes usando el Método Rassias®, que es una combinación de técnicas dramáticas, drills rítmicos y estrategias energéticas de reforzamiento para hacer del aprendizaje una actividad interesante (Beall, 2000). Una investigación acción fue implementada para encontrar respuestas a: ¿En qué medida el uso del Método Rassias aumentará la motivación de los alumnos para aprender inglés con la finalidad de desarrollar su habilidad del habla? La intervención se llevó a cabo con estudiantes universitarios de la carrera de Mantenimiento de la Universidad Tecnológica de San Juan del Río, Querétaro, México. Los resultados muestran que la mayoría de los alumnos realizaron satisfactoriamente las actividades auténticas tales como: comprar algo en la tienda o pedir y servir comida en un restaurante. Además, la autoevaluación de los estudiantes y sus diarios indican que aumentaron su motivación y confianza, y como resultado, percibieron una mejora en su habilidad del habla.
Palabras clave: Método Rassias®, habilidad del habla, estudiantes universitarios, motivación, actividades auténticas.

Introduction

The aim of this research study was to seek for strategies to develop undergraduate students' oral skills to prepare them to be able to communicate in English in the real world outside the school. To achieve the aim of this study, I decided to use the Rassias Method ®. This method is a system for teaching the use of conversational second languages that John Rassias developed while training Peace Corps volunteers in the early sixties. Then, he adapted it to teaching languages at Dartmouth University in 1967. It combines "unpredictability of maneuver, humor and dramatic 'spontaneity' to keep

the student locked in the learning cycle" (Shannon, 2005, p.2).

Since 2007, training programs to teach the Rassias Method have been conducted to more than 2,300 Mexican English teachers of public schools and they in turn have taught English using this Method to over 2.5 million of Mexican students (IAPE, Educando by Worldfund, 2017). I had the opportunity to participate in the the Inter-American Partnership for Education (IAPE) Teachers' Collaborative USA 2013. This was a fifteen-day intensive course where Professor Rassias and other teachers explained the philosophy of the Method, its techniques and drills. Besides, it was a total immersion program with cultural activities included.

The Rassias Method®

"The goal of the Rassias Method is to help the student feel comfortable and natural with a new language in a short period of time. This is accomplished through a specific series of teaching procedures and dramatic techniques which seek to eliminate inhibitions and create an atmosphere of free expression from the outset."

Rassias (2013, p.4)

The Rassias Method includes elements from the Communicative Language Teaching Approach because it agrees with the philosophy of learning a language to accomplish communicative tasks. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001, p.155) the aims of the CLT are "to make communicative competence the goal of language teaching" and "to develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication". To achieve these aims, teachers should provide learners with opportunities to use English to communicate as well as to acquire the language through communication; "learning to use English" and "using English to learn it" (Howatt, as cited in Richards & Rodgers ,2001, p.155).

Professor John Rassias agrees with Howatt´s ideas by basing his method on the premise that "you don´t learn a language to speak it; you speak a language to learn it" (as cited in Shannon, 2005, p.2). The objective of this research was to provide students with opportunities to use the language to communicate and to teach them how to develop their communicative competence through the use of strategies and techniques from the Rassias Method.

As Professor Rassias mentioned "the medium of oral communication has proved to be the best method of acquiring the language" and his Method mainly focuses on the speaking skill (Beall, 2000, p.11). Besides, Rassias makes students speak since the very first class through the drills and his techniques "the excitement and the power of being able to communicate, even at a basic level, is the heart of the Rassias Method" (Shannon, 2005, p.3).

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) completed a randomized control trial (RCT) evaluation of the IAPE Intensive English program. The independent evaluation sought to measure the effects of IAPE training on students and teachers' English skills and teachers' pedagogical practices. The study was conducted with the cooperation of the Mexican States of Puebla and Tlaxcala and it involved 144 high school and middle school teachers and their students. Related to the Student Learning Outcomes, the results showed that after an average of 7.5 months of exposure, students of IAPE teachers progressed 10 more weeks in reading, speaking, and listening skills than students with non-IAPE teachers (Bando & Lia, 2014). From the evidence that this study reported, I decided to use the Rassias Method to explore the impact it has on helping to develop the speaking competence of my chosen group.

Methodology

The present study consisted in a small-scale action research involving a group of second term undergraduate students from the Technological University of San Juan del Rio, (UTSJR), Queretaro, Mexico. 25 students of the bachelor degree in Maintenance formed the chosen group.

The questions underlying this research were:

1) To what extent will the use of the Rassias Method increase students' development of speaking skill?
2) To what extent will the use of the Rassias Method increase students' motivation to learn English?
3) To what extent will the use of the Rassias Method reduce students' fear of making mistakes?

A variety of qualitative and quantitative data collection instruments were used, including a diagnostic TOEIC Bridge test, a diagnostic speaking test, a questionnaire, a teacher's and a student's journal, ob-

servation, self-assessment, and a final evaluation in a simulated real-life scenario. The Diagnostic TOEIC Bridge consisted only in the Listening and Reading section, and it was used to identify the students' level of English according to the CEFR.

The Diagnostic Speaking Test was based on Rassias material, which is usually used to be able to place students in a proficiency English level. It consists on a series of questions classified in three levels: novice, intermediate and advanced. The participants completed a questionnaire aimed to find out their perception on speaking skill, their preference on speaking activities and to know about their feelings when talking in English.

Another tool that was used during the first days of the intervention was a self-assessment questionnaire. In this questionnaire, students rated in a scale of 1 to 10 how good they consider they are in the speaking skill. A Likert-type scale with the notations 1 (Very low), 5 (Medium) and 10 (Very High) will be used. They also filled in a chart of "can do" statements related to their ability to do some tasks. They chose if they could do those activities: very well, well or not at all. For example, "I can describe how to make a dish" (Appendix 1).

Formative assessment was used throughout this study through classroom observation and the teacher´s journal in which the students´ performance on learning tasks was described and registered. Moreover, at the end of each week, students wrote a journal to describe the way they felt with the activities and to express their perceptions of the class.

Intervention

The intervention was done during one of the three periods of their four-month term. It lasted for three weeks, which in total were 15 hours of instruction. In each session of 1-hour class, the content of the school program was given using some Rassias Techniques and Rassias drills. Throughout the intervention, students were provided with simulations of real-life scenarios in which they had the opportunity to use the language in a context similar to real life and for communicative purposes.

One of the goals of the Rassias Method is "to replicate the urgency relevant to life-like situations encountered in the target language" (Rassias, 2013, p.5). This research study focused on teaching the students to perform three activities that they will very likely encounter at some point in their real lives: "buying something from the store, asking for food and serving food in a restaurant".

The Rassias® techniques used during the intervention were the following:

- **Ball game:** To practice colors and numbers. The teacher threw the ball to a student and the student had to say the color or number which his/her thumb touched.
- **Misplaced concepts**: To discriminate which food item does not belong to a given category and to justify the choice by describing the color, size or flavor.
- **Illustrated Vocabulary:** To teach new vocabulary of food packages and to teach cooking verbs, by showing pictures of the words and using drills (repetition of the words).
- **Face-off:** To relate the picture with the word. Different students passed to the board to draw the cooking verb given by the teacher and to write it correctly.
- **Pyramid:** To review vocabulary by describing words using as many words as possible (color, shape, taste, a brand or name related, etc.) They were divided in two groups and they competed against each other. One volunteer student had to guess five words that the other members of his team described in less than one minute.
- **Dots:** Students learned how to say the price by joining different set of numbers provided by the teacher to form the word 'PRICE'. Then, the dots contained words related to a restaurant. Teacher said a definition or description of the word to indicate the dots they had to join which at the end formed the word 'MENU'.
- **Commands:** To follow instruction about how to prepare a dish.
  For this technique, all the ingredients to prepare a sandwich are taken to the classroom, as well as the needed utensils. Each one of the students passed to the front of the classroom, listen to the instruction, and then perform the action. For example, 'Slice a tomato', 'Spread the mayonnaise on the bread'.

- **Detective work**: For this activity, students had to ask to each other different questions related to their food preferences and habits. Students answered using adjectives that describe the five senses: sight touch, taste, smell or hearing.

Rassias ® Drills

The "**Backwards build-up drill**" technique consists in having a sentence divided into three or four parts, the teacher elicits from students oral repetition of each of the parts of that sentence beginning with the last part, and adding each one of them so that at the end the student repeats the whole sentence. This drill was used to practice dialogues of a conversation in a store and in a restaurant. In the role-play, students based their dialogue in the conversation they had practiced in the drill; however they adapted its content according to the conversation they had to undertake in the simulated situations they had.

The "**Substitution drill**" technique was used to practice new vocabulary and structures. For example, to differentiate between the use of how much and how many. The teacher explained the model sentence: How many apples are there? Then, a list of words were given to students, who had to substitute using the same sentence.

The "**Transformation drill**" was used to practice grammatical structures, such as the formation of questions and negatives. For example, the teacher said: "There is an apple. There isn't an apple". Then the teacher said a new sentence and a student had to change it to negative and so on.

As expressed by Walters (1982, p.93), "students learn language more effectively by use than by analysis". The practice of grammar through the drills was done every day and students did not feel overwhelmed with long explanation of the grammar points, instead they practiced the formation of questions, negatives, countable and uncountable nouns, etc. with the drills. Even though the focus of the intervention was on developing the speaking skill; all of the other skills (listening, reading, and writing) and the sub-skills (grammar and vocabulary) were also practiced.

Findings and discussion

The results of the Diagnostic TOEIC Bridge Test showed that only one student (4%) got B1 level, 12 students (48%) got A1 level, and the rest of the students did not achieve any level because they got a very low score. Even though these results did not correspond to the Speaking skill, they served as a basis to identify that most of the participants had a beginner level.

In the Diagnostic Speaking Test, the majority of the students (72%) achieved the Novice-Low level, some of the students (16%) got to the next level: Novice-Mid. Two of the students (8%) got an Intermediate-High Level. Finally, one of the students (4%) got an Advanced level. Due to the short length of the intervention, the Diagnostic Speaking Test was not used at the end of the study to compare the results. However, the test will be done at the end of the school year to verify student´s improvement in their development of their speaking skill.

Questionnaire answers

The questionnaire answers revealed important information about participants' opinions related to the speaking skill. Speaking is the students' least preferred skill, this might be a factor which affect the students' willingness to talk as they already have a bias against speaking in English. Most of the students (84%) said that they feel uncomfortable when they talk in English. The question specified "nervous" as part of the 'uncomfortable' option. The students expressed that they feel very nervous when they talk in English. Only a few students (16%) said that they feel comfortable when talking in English.

Self-assessment

The self-assessment was used to identify how the learners' perception of themselves as foreign language speakers of English evolved over a three-week period of intervention. At the beginning of the study, students rated in a scale of 1 to 10 how good they consider they were in the speaking skill. They also filled in a chart of "can do" statements related to their ability to do some tasks. They chose if they could do those activities ranking them: very well, well or not at all. The initial self-assessment made by the students showed that 64 % of the student rated themselves in less than "5"; 16% of the students rated themselves in

"6" and "7" respectively; and only one student who represents the 4% rated himself in "8".

On the other hand, the results of the final self-assessment that students completed showed an increase in students´ self-perception of their speaking skill. A small number of the students (12%) gave a "6" to their speaking skill; 16% of them rated themselves in "7";the majority of the students estimated that their speaking skill after the intervention finished was "8" (64% of students); and 8% chose that they have "9" in their speaking skill. The results clearly show that all of the students perceived that they had an improvement in their speaking skills. (Appendix 2)

The CAN-DO Chart showed a significant increase in the students' self-perception of what they were able to do before the intervention took place and what they believe they achieved after the intervention. It can be seen how in the initial CAN-DO chart; almost half of the students expressed their inability to: buy something from the store, describe how to make a dish, and order food in a restaurant. Moreover, 17 out of 25 students reported that they were not able to serve food in a restaurant. In contrast, the final CAN-DO chart shows that all the students assessed themselves as being capable of performing all of the tasks, either well or very well. (Appendix 3)

Classroom observation and Teacher´s journal
They were closely related because what was observed in the classroom provided the information that the teacher used to fill in her 'Teacher´s journal'.

Students' journal
Students wrote about their perception of both, their previous and their current English class (Intervention). All of the students reported that during the intervention they felt excellent in class. Some of them said that they learned in a fun and practical way. Student A said 'There was more communication and interaction this term'. Student H said that he participated more and was more engaged in the activities. Student P expressed: 'I felt more confident to talk in this class and I did not feel embarrassed to speak in English'.

Greenspan (1990, p.7) suggests that using the Rassias Method helped her students to develop their oral, writing, and reading skills because they "actively participated in learning a 'living' language". My

students expressed that during the intervention, they were highly involved with the activities and they were eager to participate.

Besides, the students reported that they felt confident to ask questions to the teacher and this made them feel secure. As Malu (1991, pp.36, 92) describes, "The Rassias Method enables students to feel the energy, commitment, and concern a teacher feels for her students". Most of the students agreed on the following: ´There was more communication, participation, confidence, security and we lost the fear to speak in public'. A student also mentioned that he learned much faster. Other students expressed that they were very motivated during the classes.

The competences that students expressed they developed during the intervention correspond to the positive results of the impact of the Rassias Method as stated by Wolff (2012, p. 50) "students who have been taught via the Rassias Method demonstrate more motivation, enthusiasm, and eagerness to use their language skills". By comparing the students' perception they had about their class before the intervention and then after the intervention, I found out that students expressed they have learned more now with the use of the Rassias Method. I attribute this to the fact that during the intervention students learned by experience, by doing the things as opposed to just answering exercises of the book. As Rassias mentions: "It is in doing that you learn, rather than learning how to do it" (Beall, 2000, p.13).

Rassias admitted that he was inspired by the Chinese philosopher Confucius when he said, "If I hear something, I forget it; if you show me something, I remember it; but if you make me do something, I will never forget it because I will understand it" (as cited in Bacon, 1993, p. 46). The results from this study show that students learned and understood because they performed the activities. For example, they touched the food and learned the vocabulary; they prepared a recipe and they learned the cooking verbs; they went to a real store and bought products, the scenario of a restaurant was set and they were able to order and serve food. That is, students learned the language by performing real life activities.

Description of Final Evaluation
After the three weeks of the intervention, students were divided into three groups. Each group was eval-

uated by another English teacher of the University. The evaluation was made in three parts: the first one -buying something from the grocery store-, the second one -ordering food at a restaurant- and the third one -serving food at a restaurant- (Appendix 4).

For the first part, students went to a grocery store, which is outside the school. The teacher, who was in charge of evaluating them, was the clerk of the store and each student went to the store individually and bought something by talking to the clerk in English. The clerk (teacher) responded in English and at the end filled in a rubric to check how well the student did the tasks to be able to buy in a store.

The results of the task "Ask for food" (using food quantities, measurements or packages) show that the majority of the students did it "Very well", over a quarter of them did it "Well" and only student N was not able to do it. In relation to the tasks "Ask for the price" and "Buy something from the store" half of the students did it "Very well", a great number of them did it "Well" and only student N did not do it. The tester reported that student N was very nervous and that he was unable to speak; he just said 'Hello' and then went out of the store.

For the second and third part of the evaluation, a table was arranged in the cafeteria. First, the teacher was the waiter and the student sat down and acted as the customer. After that, they exchanged roles .The teacher filled in another rubric to verify how well the student asks for food and another rubric to evaluate how well he acted as a waiter. When the students acted as customers, 52% of them asked for food "Very well" whereas 48% did it "Well". The task "Ask for the bill" represented a problem for some of the students as 12% forgot to do it. Nonetheless, 40% did it "Well" and 48% did it "Very well".
On the other hand, when students acted as waiters, they had some difficulties in finding out what the customer wanted in order to serve the food; only 24% of them did it "Very well", 60% of them did it "Well", and 16% of them were unable to do it. Describing how to make a dish was a task where 48% of them did it "Very well", 44% "Well", and 8% did not perform that task The graphs show how in the task " Use greeting expressions", 60% of the students scored "Very well", while the other 40% scored "Well". In contrast, the results of the task "Use farewell expressions" were slightly lower, 52% of the students were scored in the category

"Very well", 44% in "Well", and only one student (4%) did not use phrases to say thank you and good-bye.

Comparison of the Final Evaluation results with the Final CAN-DO self-assessment
By comparing the results of the students' self-assessment, which they completed at the end of the intervention with the results of the Final evaluation made by the three external teachers who participated in this study, it can be seen that the results are consistent. The greatest improvement was shown in the task "Serve food" because in the Initial CAN-DO chart seventeen students (68%) reported that they were not able to find out what a customer wants in a restaurant. In contrast, the Final Evaluation shows that fifteen (60%) of those seventeen students now can serve food "Well", six (24%) can do it "Very well" and only four of them (16%) did not demonstrate their ability to serve food as reported by testers.

Conclusions
The findings in this study suggest that the Rassias' Method had a positive impact in the development of the students' speaking skills.

1. Students achieved the objectives of the course by the end of the intervention where all of them demonstrated in the final evaluation that they were capable of performing orally three daily activities which they might probably encounter in their real lives:

   - Buying something from a store.
   - Asking for food in a restaurant.
   - Serving food in a restaurant.

2. Students reported an increase in their motivation by describing that they enjoyed the classes, and expressing that they believe they learned a lot during the intervention.

3. Students improved their affective factors by increasing their confidence and reducing their fear of making mistakes. As a result, they increased their participation in class.

As stated in the description of the problem, many students find it difficult and tedious to learn to com-

municate effectively in the target language; however, as Rassias (2013, p.4) expresses "it should be stimulating, entertaining and fun". The results from this study achieved these Rassias' principles as students learned to communicate in the target language and they enjoyed the process.

The final evaluation made by external teachers indicate a positive impact of the use of the Rassias' Method to develop the participants' oral skills, because most of the students successfully performed the authentic activities such as: buying something from the store, asking for food and serving food in a restaurant. Furthermore, the students' self-assessment and their journals indicate that students perceived an improvement in their speaking skill. An important finding is that students reported that now they are more motivated and feel confident and eager to participate in class.

Suggestions for further research

This study can provide a valuable source of ideas for teachers who may be willing to use the Rassias' Method in their classes to teach English. It can also be used as a reference for further research in the area of the development of the speaking skill to help students gain the communicative competence they need in order to use the language orally in a real life context.

Limitations

A limitation of this study was the time devoted to the intervention. It would have been desirable to implement the intervention in a longer period of time, such as a complete year (three four-month periods) to be able to see a more significant impact in the development of the students' speaking skills.

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Appendix 1. Initial and Final Self- Assessment

I. How good are you in the speaking skill?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Very ---Medium--- Very
low   high
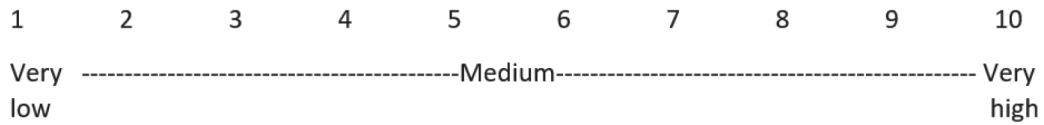
II. How well can you do these things (orally)?

I can….	Very well ☺	Well 😐	Not at all ☹
Give information about food quantities			
Describe food packages			
Use greeting expressions			
Ask for and give prices			
Buy something from a store			
Describe how to make a dish			
Order food in a restaurant			
Serve food in a restaurant			

Appendix 2. Self-Assessment Speaking Skill

Appendix 3. CAN-DO Chart

Initial CAN-DO chart
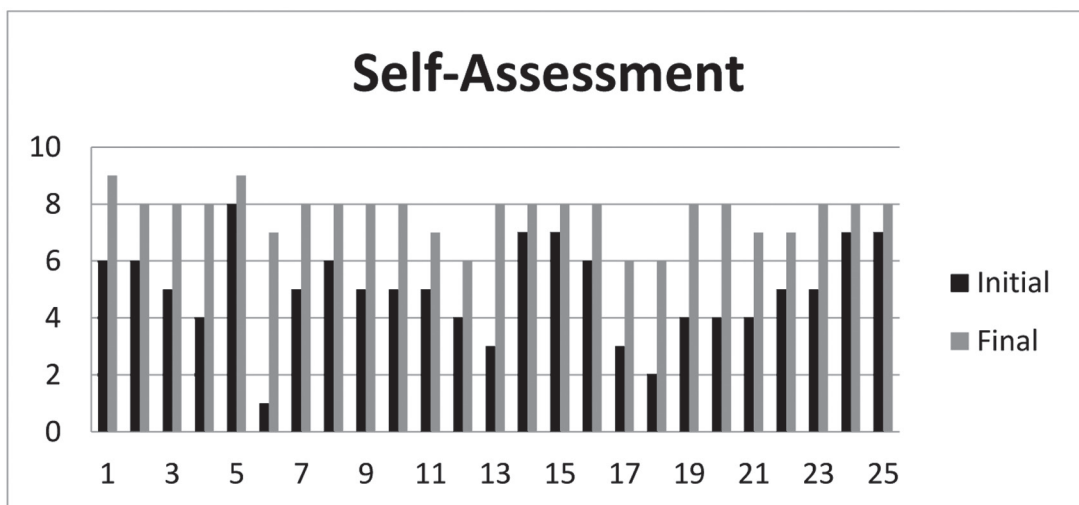
Final CAN-DO chart
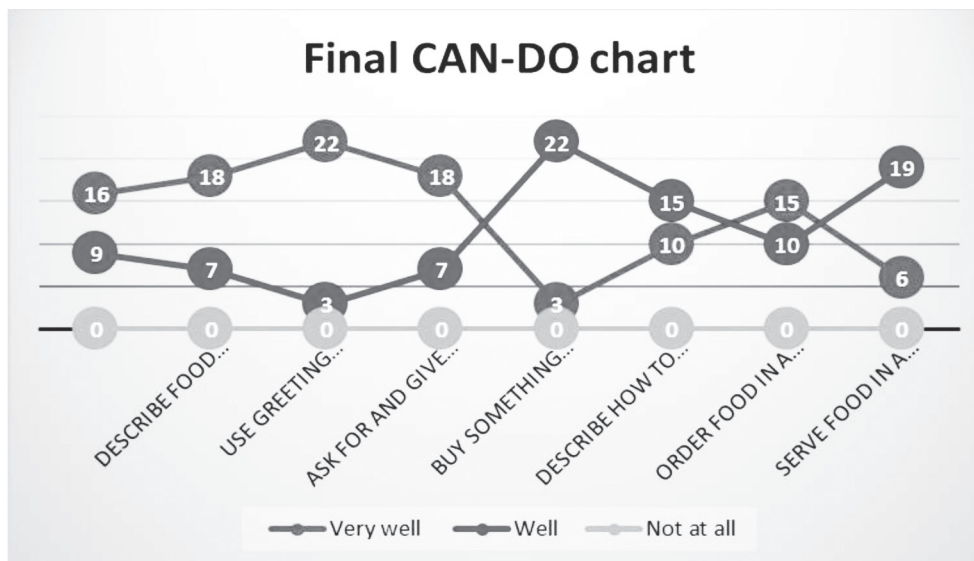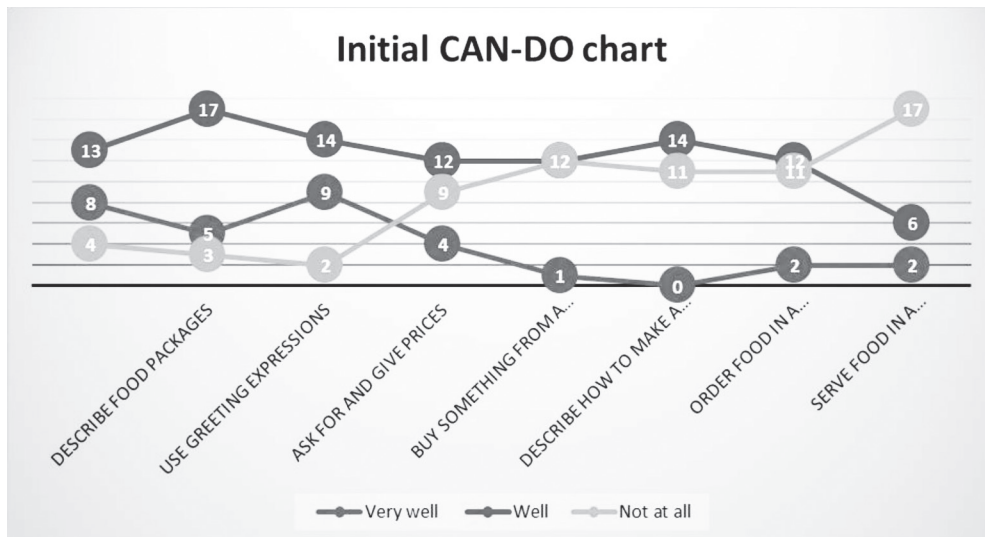
Appendix 4. Final Evaluation
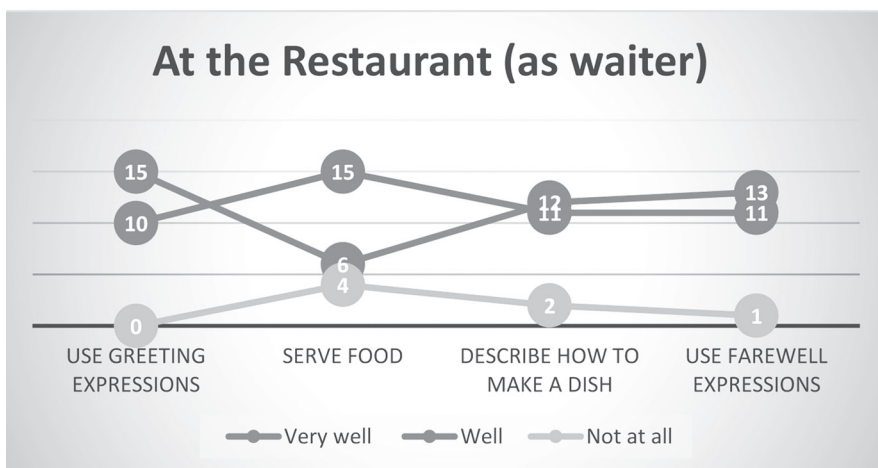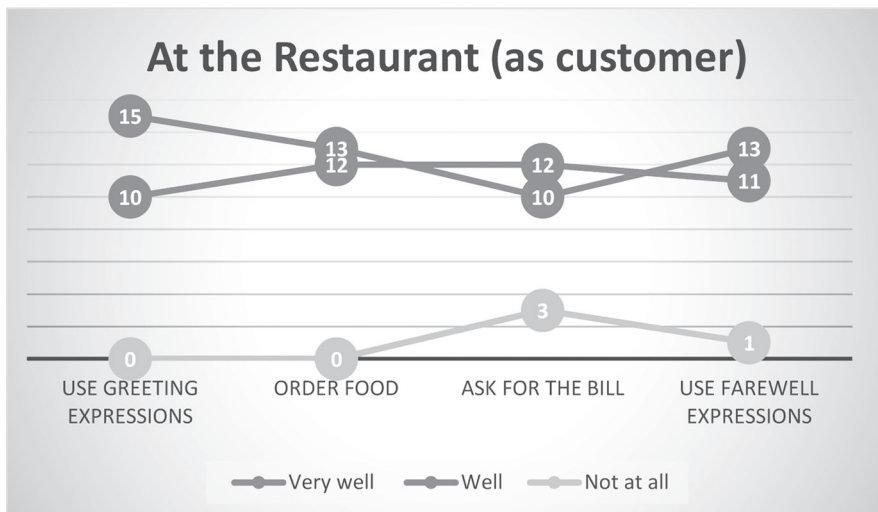
THE BENEFICIAL EFFECTS OF TECHNOLOGY–BASED SOCIAL READING IN L2 CLASSES

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Abstract

This work investigates the instructional benefits of the digital social reading application *eComma* for the comprehension and interpretation of authentic texts in intermediate second language (L2) Spanish classes in a university in the Southern United States. The study examines 44 students' collaborative work on two poems connected to the themes of the class's instructional units. Data are based on the analysis of the participants' digital annotations and responses to a survey that probed into their opinions of *eComma*. The results show a similar number of student-generated comments on either lexical queries or contextual interpretations in both poems. However, there were differences in the kind of annotations that originated in each text. In addition, the findings suggest that working with *eComma* allowed students to develop their L2 reading performance, and it resulted in their collaborative construction of knowledge, which might have facilitated their interpretation process. In the survey responses, the participants identified various social and instructional benefits, even though they also reported some technical difficulties. Overall, the study mirrors the positive results reported in previous work, and it points to the effectiveness *eComma* for the implementation of the kind of comprehensive L2 practices currently recommended in the field of L2 pedagogy.

Keywords: Digital social reading, *eComma*, performance, interpretive mode, collaborative construction of knowledge, L2 Spanish university students.

Resumen

El objetivo de este trabajo es investigar los beneficios didácticos del uso de la plataforma digital de lectura social eComma para el desarrollo de la comprensión e interpretación de textos auténticos en clases intermedias de español como segunda lengua (L2) en una universidad en el sur de los Estados Unidos. Esta investigación examina el trabajo colaborativo llevado a cabo por 44 estudiantes al analizar dos poemas temáticamente conectados con las unidades de instrucción de la clase. Los datos recolectados están basados en el análisis de las anotaciones digitales realizadas por los participantes y en sus respuestas a un cuestionario diseñado para recoger sus opiniones sobre eComma. Los resultados indican que, en los dos poemas, los estudiantes originaron el mismo número de comentarios sobre el vocabulario y su interpretación del contenido. Sin embargo, se registraron diferencias en el tipo de comentarios que originó cada texto. La información recolectada también parece sugerir que los participantes pudieron mejorar el desempeño de su lectura en la L2 y además lograron colaborar en el desarrollo de sus conocimientos, lo cual podría haber beneficiado el proceso de interpretación. En las respuestas al cuestionario los aprendices hicieron referencia a una serie de beneficios sociales y didácticos, aunque también reportaron algunas dificultades técnicas. El estudio en su totalidad parece confirmar los resultados positivos aparecidos en publicaciones previas y además apuntan a la posible efectividad de eComma para la implementación del tipo de práctica exhaustiva de enseñanza de L2 recomendada actualmente por el campo de la didáctica de segundas lenguas.

Palabras claves: *Lectura social digital,* eComma, *desempeño, modo interpretativo, construcción colaborativa de conocimientos, estudiantes universitarios de español como L2*

Introduction

The recent anniversary issues of two of the most influential journals in the field of instructed second language (L2) acquisition, *The Modern Language Journal* and *Foreign Language Annals*, are characterized by articles that emphasize the important role that technology (e.g., Chun, Kern, & Smith, 2016) and multiliteracies-based frameworks (e.g., Warner & Dupuy, 2018) can play in L2 instruction. In particular, scholars highlight the benefits of teaching practices that free L2 students from the limitations on language use imposed by constrained methods such as communicative language teaching (CLT) (Allen & Paesani, 2010; Byrnes, 2006). Instead, these newer approaches create opportunities for active use of the target language in a variety of social environments (face-to-face and digital), through both the exposure to and development of a diversity of texts (i.e., belonging to different genres and modes). These scholars advocate a more comprehensive L2 teaching approach, one that "embraces multiple modes [of communication, including reading and writing] and media, [which incorporate] the many *new* literacy practices enabled through digital communications" (Warner & Dupuy, p. 123, emphasis in original). This type of instruction would not only allow learners to collaborate on the construction of knowledge but also help students "develop a set of social skills and cultural competencies, vitally connected to…the social networks through which [they] operate" (Kelley & Jenkins, 2013, p. 48).

One way of realizing this type of instruction in the L2 classroom is through digital social reading practices (Blyth, 2013, 2014). The goal of this article is to investigate the beneficial effects of these practices in intermediate L2 Spanish university classes. To do so, we present a case study of 44 L2 students who collaborated with each other using the open-source, social reading, web-based application *eComma* (Blyth, 2014; Thoms, Sung, & Poole, 2017). We focus on their comprehension and interpretation of two poems connected to the themes of the class's instructional units. We analyzed both the annotations the participants made while interpreting the poems collaboratively,

as well as their overall opinions of *eComma* and its instructional benefits. What makes the current analysis unique is its focus on L2 Spanish, which seems not to have a precedent in the literature.

This work is organized as follows: The first section reviews previous work with *eComma*. The subsequent four sections describe the present study: the research questions; participants; materials; and protocols. The final two sections present and discuss the results of the study.

eComma in L2 classes

eComma (https://www.coerll.utexas.edu/ecomma/) is an open-source, web-based application designed at the University of Texas at Austin in 2009 for English literature students and later expanded to L2 classes through the Center for Open Educational Resources and Language Learning (https://www.coerll.utexas.edu/coerll/). *eComma* engages students in the practice of digital social reading (Blyth, 2013, 2014). In this type of activity, learners collaborate synchronously or asynchronously using digital annotation tools (DATs) while trying to comprehend and interpret a given text in the target language. Students can digitally share their thoughts, queries, and knowledge on a text with their classmates and, as a result, help one another gain a deep understanding of its language and content (Blyth, 2014).

Even though various studies have investigated social reading practices in L1 instructional environments (e.g., Mendenhall, Kim, & Johnson, 2011; Wu & Wu, 2017; Zarzour & Sellami, 2017), not much work has been done with L2 students. To the best of our knowledge, only two studies have looked at social reading, and particularly at the application of *eComma*, in L2 classes: Blyth (2014) and Thoms, Sung, and Poole (2017)[1]. Blyth (2014) focuses on the *eComma* experiences of two L2 French instructors. The first case centers around a first semester L2 French class at a private university on the US East Coast. Students in this class analyzed a selection of poems from a Haitian author detailing his experiences as a refugee in Canada. Learners worked asynchronously in an *eComma* environment, reading the chosen poems while commenting on vocabulary and offering their personal interpretations. Annotations were provided in English. The instructor reported on a variety of reading strategies that could be extrapolated from

her students' work, such as "evaluating the meaning of foreign words, reflecting upon cultural differences, interpreting the meaning of textual features, connecting reading to personal experience, and co-constructing meaning" (Blyth, p. 215).

The focus of the second case described by Blyth (2014) was a fourth-semester L2 French course in a public university in the US Mid-West. Like the first reported case, students' work was asynchronous and centered around a poem. In this case, however, the nature of the students' annotations was different. Learners were instructed to use either French or English in their comments of the poem. However, some students went beyond verbal comments by putting forward images from surrealist paintings to express their perceptions of the text. By doing so, they established connections between surrealist literature and painting, which was not expected by the instructor. Based on these case studies, Blyth proposed a variety of affordances deriving from this application. For example, he feels that *eComma* facilitated learners' collaborative construction of knowledge, which might have either benefitted less proficient readers, or assisted with the distribution of the cognitive load, or both. In addition, he notes that *eComma* allowed for the incorporation of other hypermedia tools (such as Wikipedia), which can enhance students' multimodal learning experience.

Similar beneficial effects with *eComma* were reported in another L2 university class. Thoms and his colleagues (Thoms, Sung, & Poole, 2017) describe an exploratory study in which 11 university students in a second-semester L2 Chinese class at a public institution in the US West worked with two digital texts in an *eComma* environment. The participants were instructed to collaborate on interpreting the texts, but were also asked to answer a variety of vocabulary and comprehension questions on their own. Thus, work was not only synchronous and asynchronous, but also independent. Two types of data were collected. One was based on the analysis of students' annotations during their synchronous, collaborative reading. The other was derived from interviews conducted with four focal students. The results showed that most student comments concerned vocabulary (61.7%), followed by content (23.4%), and then grammar (10.6%). They also found that the "features of students' annotations/comments were primarily

positive in terms of students' L2 linguistic development and understanding of the two literary texts" (p. 46). Finally, the researchers noticed that the participants had used mostly Chinese and Pinyin to express their views, an indirect instructional benefit.

In addition to these apparent benefits, Thoms, Sung, and Poole (2017) also discussed the technical and linguistic difficulties their participants had experienced. For example, some of the students in the study felt that *eComma* could be more user-friendly, while others described problems with the annotation functions. In addition, some participants believed that it was at times not easy to find their classmates' responses to their queries/opinions among the myriad of comments recorded. Also, Thoms and his colleagues felt that limited proficiency had constrained the depth of the comments expressed digitally in the L2. This in turn restricted the comprehensiveness of digital discussion, and thereby, possibly, the successful integration of this activity into a whole-class discussion. Based on the results of their study, the investigators recommended more structure in the organization and delivery of these kinds of activities, particularly with beginning learners, like the ones in their study.

Even though these articles might help us begin to understand the potential benefits of digital social reading in L2 classes, more remains to be done. First of all, there are problems with the existing studies. For example, Blyth (2014) provided little information on the participants, nor did he offer any data on how *eComma* was integrated to the classes' curricula or the ways in which data were collected and analyzed. Thoms, Sung, and Poole's (2017) work is more comprehensive, but their results were based on a small number of participants. Finally, these two works are limited to two L2s, French and Chinese. It is evident that more studies are needed.

The goal of this article is to contribute to filling this gap in the literature by presenting a study based on the work of 44 university students in two sections of an intermediate (fourth-semester) L2 Spanish class at a public university in the US South. In what follows, we describe the pedagogical process that guided the participants' synchronous work with two poems in an *eComma* environment. In addition, we examine the students' digital comments in *eComma* directly, as well as any instructional benefits and

technical difficulties that students reported after their experience with the application. The next sections present the study.

The Study

Research Questions

This work was guided by the following questions:

1. What kinds of annotations do intermediate L2 Spanish university students create with *eComma*?
2. What instructional benefits and/or difficulties do intermediate L2 Spanish university students report after working with *eComma*?

The following sections of the article outline the L2 pedagogical practices that guided students' work with *eComma,* as well as the study's participants, instruments, methods, and analysis.

Method

Instructional Background

The data in this article were collected from two intact sections of a four-semester, intermediate L2 Spanish class in the Spring 2018 semester. This class is part of a Spanish basic language program at a public university in the US South. The program offers four levels of instruction (ranging from beginning to intermediate) and serves approximately 800 students per semester. The curricula for the four instructional levels are based on performance-based instruction and assessment on the one hand, and literacy-based teaching practices on the other. The language program's theoretical and pedagogical bases are as follows: 1) the multiliteracies framework *Learning by Design* (Kalantzis et al., 2016); and 2) the standards and performance descriptors developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).[2] The main pedagogical objective of the program is to develop L2 learners' performance in ACTFL's three modes of communication: interpretive (reading and listening), interpersonal (speaking), and presentational (writing).

The *eComma* project was part of the work students did in the interpretive (reading) mode. Its main goals were to expose learners to authentic texts, and to facilitate their collaboration during comprehension and interpretation tasks. In addition, it was also vital to offer students opportunities to establish comparisons between their native and target cultures, as well as to focus on important social issues. Other goals of the *eComma* tasks were as follows: 1) to foster essential 21st-century skills, such as critical and strategic thinking, collaboration, digital literacy, creativity, global mindset, adaptability, and communication (Levy & Cannon, 2016); and 2) to develop instructional materials to which students would feel they "belonged" and that could result in learner investment (Pittaway, 2004).

The second author of this article was the instructor of the two participating intermediate L2 Spanish sections. At the time of the onset of the study, she had received training in performance-based instruction, *Learning by Design* and *eComma*. In addition, in consultation with the article's first author, a specialist in L2 acquisition and pedagogy, she developed the two *eComma* tasks on which the study is based. Both tasks were connected to topics included in the mandatory textbook used in the program [*Plazas*, 5th ed.; Hershberger, Navey-Davis, & Borrás (2016)] and in the multiliteracies-based activities (developed in-house) that complemented each chapter of the textbook.

The topic of the first *eComma* task was contemporary environmental problems. Students first worked with the textbook, learning relevant vocabulary, and then, after having been trained on it, used *eComma* to collaborate on the analysis of the poem *Bosque…jas* (Ramos Aranda, 2013). The focus of the second task was art, and in particular, painting. As with the first poem, learners were first exposed to specialized vocabulary through their textbooks, moving afterwards to the *eComma* platform to work with the poem "*Botines con lazos*" *de Vincent van Gogh* (Orozco, 1984). Both tasks were completed synchronously, and they were organized in the same way, with students working in *Learning by Design*'s four knowledge processes: experiencing the known and the new, conceptualizing by naming and with theory, analyzing functionally and critically, and applying appropriately and creatively. Figure 1 shows what students' work in each of these processes involved in the first *eComma* task.[3]

Chart 1. Schematic representation of the implementation of the *eComma*

Experiencing the Known: Brainstorming existing knowledge on environmental problems and personal experiences/opinions

▼

Experiencing the New: Short film "Man" and poem *Bosqu...jas*. Analysis of message conveyed. Focus on comprehension.

▼

Conceptualising by Naming: Analysis of (1) organizational features of poem, (2) information in each part of the text, (3) type of text

▼

Conceptualising with Theory: Based on previous analysis, students define features of poem

▼

Analysing Functionally: Focus on language (e.g., verbs used: specific nouns/adjectives). Guiding Questions: What kind of meaning is expressed by...? How is meaning expressed by...? What rhetorical "devices" are used? What kind of language do we need to convey...?

▼

Analysing Critically: Author's purpose: What is the message the author wants to convey? Emotional effectiveness. Personal connection to poem. Focus on interpretation.

▼

Applying Appropriately and Creatively: Development of new, but themacally-related, multimodal text (use of L2: application of linguistic, rhetorical, and communicative features in curriculum)

Schematic representation of the implementation of the *eComma* task grounded in *Learning by Design*. The colors in each knowledge process correspond to those in the original model developed by Kalantzis and her colleagues (Kalantzis et al., 2016).

Participants

The participants in this study were 44 students (31 females and 11 males) enrolled in two sections of a four-semester, intermediate L2 Spanish university class in Spring 2018. The average age of the participants was 20.59 years old. Most of the participants reported not reading poems often (84.1%), and not having worked with poems before (81.8%). The nine participants who had worked with this kind of text had not done so in previous Spanish classes: Their experience had solely been with English. None of the participants had used *eComma* before.

Instruments

The first source of data for this study was the student comments recorded on *eComma* during the analysis of the poems *Bosque…jas* and *"Botines con lazos" de Vincent van Gogh*. The participants were subsequently invited to complete a short, online survey that probed into their previous and current experience with poems, and different aspects of their collaborative work.

For example, learners were asked whether working collaboratively had facilitated their understanding of the poems, and had resulted in their learning of vocabulary, grammar, and culture. Also, students described the instructional benefits they had experienced when working with *eComma*, as well as the technological challenges they had encountered. The survey responses became the second source of data in this study.

Procedures

The collected data were submitted to a qualitative analysis. Since most of the data were text-based, this type of analysis was deemed more appropriate than a quantitative one. The first step consisted of categorical aggregation, involving the researchers carefully analyzing the participating students' *eComma* annotations and survey responses for any categories, which were then coded consistently. In the next step, the researchers examined the resulting categories and the

statements in each of them, applying Glaser's (1965) constant comparative method of data analysis to ensure that there were no discrepancies in the initial analysis. Finally, percentages for statements in each category were calculated. The results of the data analysis are presented in the next section.

Results

Even though the participants produced a similar number of annotations for the first poem, *Bosque… jas* (n=185), and the second one, *"Botines con lazos" de Vincent van Gogh* (n=170), the nature of the comments was different. For example, most of the comments in poem 1 (n=130) were connected to the students' interpretation of the poem, and they included text comments in both English and Spanish, as well as links to digital images, videos, and online informative reports, which resulted in further textual interactions among the students. The remainder of the recorded annotations (n=55) were vocabulary queries, for which learners mostly offer text translations, but also some images. The percentages of annotations in each category for the first poem are presented in Figure 2.

Graph 1. Percentage of student annotations in *Bosque…jas* poem.
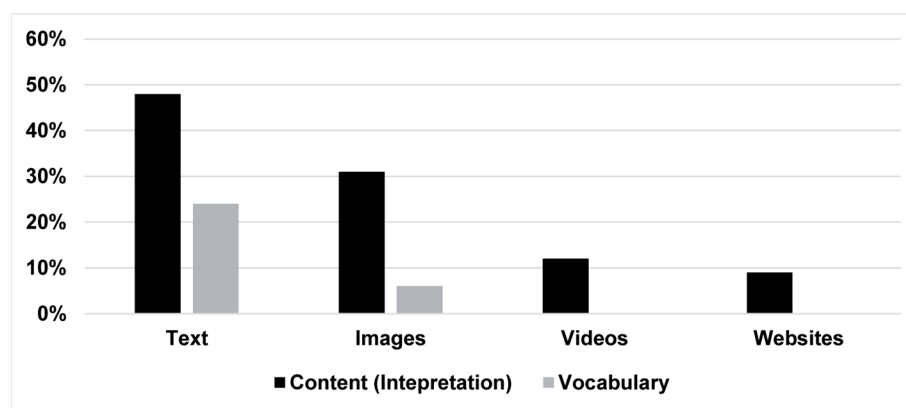
The analysis of the annotations in the second poem rendered similar results to those reported by Thoms and his colleagues (Thoms, Sung, & Poole, 2017). As in that study, most of the comments produced by the students here (n=101) were text-based vocabulary queries (both in English and Spanish), with no images or other hypermedia provided. Also, the participants offered 69 annotations on the content of the poem, resorting both to text and images, which, in turn originated text-based exchanges among the par-

ticipants. Figure 3 presents the percentage of annotations in each category for poem 2.

Graph 2. Percentage of student annotations in *"Botines con lazos" de Vincent van Gogh* poem.
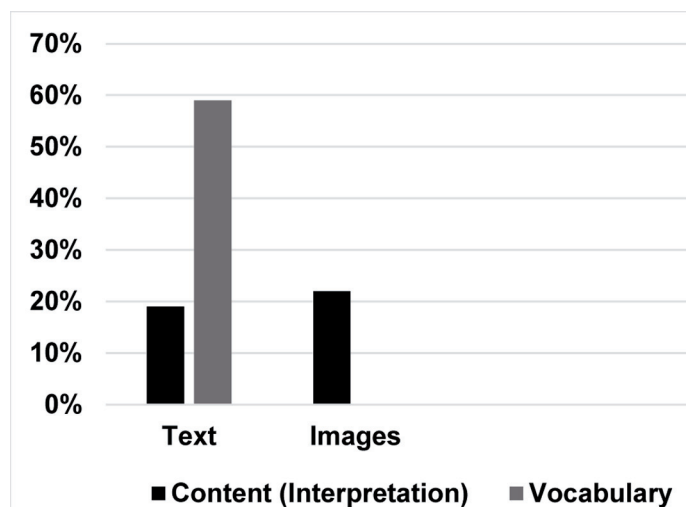
The participants' views on *eComma*'s instructional benefits were classified into five thematic categories, which reflected social, linguistic, and cultural aspects of the L2 learning process. For example, the students praised the application for facilitating collaborative learning and their exposure to different views and perspectives, as well as a diversity of opinions. In addition, they believed that their work on *eComma* had not only resulted in the development of their L2 vocabulary and grammar, but had also helped connect the L2 to real life and the target culture. These categories and the corresponding percentage of statements, along with examples of representative quotes, are presented in Table 1. The numerical data in the survey also provided support for these opinions. For instance, 98% of the participants agreed that working with their classmates had allowed them to develop a clear and comprehensive understanding of the poem. Also, 91% of the students felt that their work on the texts had resulted in vocabulary learning, 49% believed their grammar had improved, and 42% thought that the two poems had broaden their knowledge of the target culture.

Table 1. *Reported Benefits of Social Reading: Categories, Category Percentages, and Representative Statements*

Categories	Percentage	Representative Statements
Collaborative learning; collaborative construction of knowledge	41%	"Helps gain a better understanding and provides collaborative reading with classmates who may be struggling to understand the text as well."
Exposure to different views and perspectives; diversity of opinions	31%	"I am highly interested in others' perspectives of the poem. Social reading provided the opportunity to see the same text through different eyes."
Linguistic benefits (e.g., development of L2 vocabulary and grammar)	14%	"It helps understand vocabulary in context and to learn new ways of saying things (like idioms)."
Connection between L2 and real life	7%	"The ability to apply learning to everyday life makes social reading a worthwhile activity in the language classroom."
Connection to L2 culture	7%	"I think it is a good way to engage with Spanish in a cultural way."

In addition to benefits, the learners in this study mentioned some difficulties with *eComma*. Some of these comments mirrored those reported by Thoms, Sung, and Poole (2017), but others were of a different nature. For example, most of the participants (57%) characterized the application as being too slow to load content, and they criticized it for not having the capability to support many users at the same time. In addition, 14% of the participants reported problems with the log-in system. Similar to the students in Thoms, Sung and Poole (2017), 11% of the learners in this study felt that *eComma* could be more user friendly and 18% complained about the difficulties they had had when navigating.

Discussion
Even though the same group of participants offered interpretations and lexical annotations for both poems on *eComma* (research question #1), the results of the study suggest that their work on each text was characterized not only by similarities, but also by clear differences. These differences might have been related to the topics of the poems and the texts themselves. For example, the first poem, *Bosque…jas*, seems to have elicited more annotations, and to have resulted in a more in-depth analysis than the second poem. The first possible reason might have been the concrete topic of the poem, the environment and environmental problems, which students may have felt was closer to their reality. Also, this text relied on anthropomorphism to humanize both nature and the planet, as well as their suffering, and thus, it could have stirred more personal emotions than the second poem, which simply described van Gogh's painting *Shoes* and some of the events in his life. Also, the vocabulary in *Bosque…jas* contained many cognates and words that students had already encountered in their textbook, which could explain why there were fewer lexical queries for this poem.

Another interesting aspect of the first poem was the nature of the multimodal responses to content that students had offered in lieu of textual comments. Most of the images chosen were abstract and symbolic, and seemed to denote students' clear understanding of the sad and gloomy tone of the poem. For example, one of most poignant pictures submit-

ted was a depiction of a tree in the shape of a screaming, suffering human being. This image generated an exchange among nine different students who could evidently see the connections between the visual and the textual, and could "feel" the author's emotional appeal. The music videos submitted by the participants were also symbolic and creative, and seemed to evince a wide range of differing interests. For instance, while one of the participants chose the song *Another Way to Die* by the American heavy metal band Disturbed, some preferred folk or pop works (e.g., songs by the John Butler Trio or Ed Sheeran), whereas others selected solemn instrumental pieces (e.g., cello or violin solos and nature-based compositions). However, regardless of their nature, all the videos were appropriate and effectively conveyed the participants' interpretations.

Another significant result of students' work was the relationship that they were able to establish between the message implicitly expressed in the short film *Man* (Cutts, 2012), to which they had been exposed at the beginning of the *eComma* activity, and that of the poem. This is a clear case of synesthetic interpretation, which entails the ability to "get a multifaceted and…deeper understanding of things… through the juxtaposition and transposition of parallel or complementary modes of meaning" (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 234). The participants' understanding of the "juxtaposition… of complementary modes of meaning" was also evident in their choice of informative articles and videos submitted to express their interpretations. All the pieces selected complemented the meaning of the stanzas that were being analyzed, and they added new but related information.

Even though *Bosque…jas* resulted in more multimodal interpretations than *"Botines con lazos" de Vincent van Gogh*, in this second poem, the participants were also able to establish synesthetic connections between the text and some of van Gogh's works. For example, one of the participants offered the painting *The Parsonage Garden at Nuenen in Winter* (van Gogh, 1884) as her interpretation of the tone of the poem, which generated the following exchange among three different students:

"This picture is of a bleak garden in winter. I think is a good representation of what Van Gogh's life was like. Everything was dark and ratty. It looks like Vincent probably even walked through this garden with his 'viejos botines' [quote from the poem]." (Student A)

"I think that's a good picture to capture the poem's message. It is not a really positive poem and the picture looks gloomy and barren. I think you're right in saying it is a good representation of Van Gogh's life." (Student B)

"I also think this is an accurate representation of Van Gogh and his work from St. Remy on, because he starts to get bleaker and this really does a great job at encompassing the place he was at in his life." (Student C)

These annotations suggest that the participants not only were able to connect the textual with the visual, but also used the meaning of the poem, combined with that of the painting, to interpret the sadness in the artist's life. This could, again, be considered a clear case of synesthesia.

The relationship between the textual and the visual was also present in the participants' lexical annotations, particularly in the first poem. Even though the use of images was much more limited in vocabulary queries, some students (6%) conveyed the meanings of concrete words (e.g., talamontes [loggers]) through photos or illustrations. For the textual vocabulary annotations, both English and Spanish were used, though English was preferred, particularly in the second poem. This might have been due to the fact that the lexicon of the text consisted of mostly abstract words, which are easier to explain through direct translations rather than definitions or images.

These results suggest that, through their work on *eComma*, the participating learners were not only able to collaborate with their classmates on the interpretation of the two poems, but were also able to develop their multiliteracies through their use of a variety of multimodal hypermedia, a benefit previously highlighted in the existing literature (Blyth, 2014). Also, the participants reported other beneficial social and instructional effects as a result of their work with the application (research question #2). The main reported benefit was the opportunity to learn collaboratively, which "allow[ed] a further understanding of the material that a student might not gain if they

did not participate with other students" (Participant #1). It was also important to these learners that *eComma* exposed them to diverse views, perspectives, and opinions: "Everyone comes to a poem with their different experiences and it means different things to different people so everyone has a unique perspective on it" (Participant #7). These cognitive and social benefits mirror those described in previous studies. For example, both Blyth (2014) and Thoms and his colleagues (Thoms, Sung, & Poole, 2017) reported not only how the students in their studies had benefitted from the co-constructed knowledge and peer-scaffolding that had been facilitated by the *eComma* environments, but also how the platform had resulted in a more participatory culture, in which "individual practices [(such as reading). can be transformed] into a social one" (Blyth, p. 222).

The participants also made reference to instructional benefits. Some students believed that working with the two poems on *eComma* had resulted in the development of their L2 vocabulary and grammar, as well as other aspects of their L2:

> "Students get to understand how poetry sounds in Spanish; practice their pronunciation and reading skills, etc. Also, group reading gives students the opportunity to pause and ask questions about new vocabulary words and/or difficult passages" (Participant #39).

Also, through *eComma*, the learners were ostensibly able to connect the L2 with real life and the target culture, thereby extending target language exposure and use beyond the traditional, constrained instructional environments prevailing in methods such as CLT (Byrnes, 2006). The following statements exemplify these perceptions:

> "It applies our classroom education to things we will actually encounter outside of the classroom!" (Participant #2)

> "It gives us a better understanding of Hispanic culture." (Participant #44)

The instructional advantages reported by the participants were similar to those highlighted in previous works. For example, Thoms, Sung, and Poole (2017)

also described L2 vocabulary and grammar development as one of the benefits in their study. Byth (2014) pointed to the cultural connections that can result from this type of activity.

Even though in this study the students' work on *eComma* clearly resulted in a variety of benefits, it is also important to consider some of the technical difficulties encountered by the participants (research question #2). The main problem reported was the apparent limited capability of the application to support the synchronous work of a large number of students. Fully 57% of the participants expressed their frustration with the amount of time it took for *eComma* not only to upload their comments, but also to reload existing annotations when learners visited other sites to look at the images or watch the videos that other students had posted. In addition, students reported problems finding their classmates' annotations and, like the learners in the Thoms, Sung, and Poole's (2017) study, characterized *eComma* as not being user-friendly. These opinions are significant because these types of difficulties and perceptions can result in frustration, which in turn, can affect the success of the activity and student investment (Pittaway, 2014). Therefore, as also suggested by Thoms and his colleagues (2017), more technical work on *eComma* might be needed to develop a more streamlined and effective application.

Conclusion

This work has contributed to the existing research on digital social reading in L2 classes in a variety of ways. First, it focused on Spanish L2 classes, which had not been done before. Second, it included more participants than in previous studies, as well as different sources of data. Third, the two *eComma* activities on which the study was based were theoretically and pedagogically grounded in solid instructional frameworks, namely *Learning by* Design (Kalantzis et al., 2016), and research-guided teaching practices (ACTFL's performance-based instruction). The careful development and implementation of the two *eComma* tasks in this way seem to have offered intermediate L2 Spanish students clear instructional benefits. For example, learners were exposed to authentic texts and, through their collaborative work, were apparently able to develop L2 performance skills in the interpretive mode. Specifically, the nature of

the textual and multimodal interpretations that the students submitted as annotations seem to indicate them having come to an in-depth understanding of both poems. Thus, this particular pair of social reading activities extended the scope of L2 instruction beyond the usual oral-language constraints in CLT, and might also have contributed to the development of other essential 21st-century skills such as digital literacy and critical thinking.

The findings in this study also suggest that collaborative work in *eComma* environments results in the collaborative construction of knowledge, which might facilitate the L2 learning process and could also further another crucial 21st century skill: collaboration (Levy & Cannon, 2016). Such collaborative work might also foment a global mindset, as the students in this study were exposed to their classmates' perspectives and views, which might have been different from their own. The results also seem to confirm the linguistic benefits previously reported in the literature (Thoms, Sung, & Poole, 2017). Taken as a whole, the data in this study suggest that digital social reading might be an effective way to develop different aspects of L2 performance and to offer L2 learners the kind of comprehensive instruction currently recommended in the field (Chun, Kern, & Smith, 2016; Warner & Dupuy, 2018).

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Footnotes

1. Although other work has been done with social reading, it has not been in second language classes per se or with *eComma*. Thus, it is not discussed in this article. Existing work with other populations of students include Thoms and Poole's (2017, 2018) studies with learners in an L2 Spanish literature class and articles on English-as-a-foreign-language students (e.g., Lo, Yeh, & Sung, 2013; Tseng, Yeh, & Yang, 2015).

2. These are delineated in the following publications: *World-Readiness Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 2015), and *ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners* (ACTFL, 2012).

3. The two complete *eComma* activities are available at https://docs.google.com/document/d/1r5rzgqWXe43AlOSgCLZMM84b0eVe1gyGu0uJW6vHTNk/edit?usp=sharing and https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mij2h4FXqXzn-yRkoLxkTcD5Vrxim1qIIb0vtaUBl3E/edit?usp=sharing.

A CRITICAL DISCOURSE REVIEW OF THE RENE COLATO LAÍNEZ' LITERARY WORKS

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Abstract
In the last twenty-five years, there has been a great emergence of multicultural literature for children in the United States. Research has shown evidence of the importance of multicultural literature for minority children during their process of developing a bicultural identity. In this article, we analyze a few selected children books by the highly awarded author René Colato Laínez. Applying a critical discourse analysis theoretical framework and cross-cultural psychology conceptualizations, we argue that René Colato Laínez multicultural children books proposed the development of bicultural identities in Latino children living in the United States, with the purpose of avoiding social conflicts while benefiting from their bicultural identity.
Key Words: René Colato Laínez, bicultural identity, critical discourse analysis, blended identities.

Resumen
En los últimos veinticinco años ha ocurrido un gran desarrollo en la literatura multicultural para niños en los Estados Unidos. Las investigaciones han demostrado la importancia de la literatura multicultural en los niños minoría que se encuentran en el proceso de desarrollar una identidad bicultural. En este artículo nosotros analizaremos algunos de los textos literarios del altamente reconocido René Colato Laínez. Aplicando marcos teóricos pertenecientes al análisis crítico del discurso y conceptualizaciones de la psicología transcultural, argumentamos que los libros multiculturales para niños de René Colato Laínez *proponen el desarrollo de identidades biculturales en los niños Latinos que viven en los Estados Unidos, con el propósito de evitar conflictos sociales, a la vez que se benefician de su identidad bicultural.*
Palabras Claves: René Colato Laínez, identidad bicultural, análisis crítico del discurso, identidades entremezcladas.

Introduction

According to Alma Flor Ada (2016), the birth of Latin American, children's literature is attributed to José Martí, who in 1899, wrote four issues of a children's magazine named *La Edad de Oro.* Throughout the 20th-century, other Latino writers like Ernesto Galarza (1964, 1970, 1971), Pura Belpré (1932, 1962, 1969, 1973), Piri Thomas (1967, 1972, 1978), Nicholasa Mohr (1973, 1975), and Rudolfo Anaya (1987, 1996), followed José Martí's footsteps and continued to write, even when facing great resistance and rejections from many major publishing companies, and disseminated Latino children's literature. Moreover, it is evident that in the last twenty-five years, great progress and recognition have been achieved by a younger generation of Latino children book writers. Among those successful contemporary writers are: Pam Muñoz (1998, 2000), Sandra Cisneros (1980, 1984), Julia Alvarez (2000, 2004), Oscar Zeta Acosta (1972, 1973), Carmen Bernier Grant (1994, 1995), Yuyi

Morales (2003, 2014), Marjorie Agosín (1984, 1996, 2006), David Díaz (2011, 2012, 2013), Margarita Engle (2009), and Carmen Tafolla (2000, 2008, 2009).

In this article, we define Latino literature as literary works written in Spanish, English, or bilingually by Latino writers living in the United States of America. A key distinctive element of this literature is that it portrays many of the everyday conflicts associated with processes of social "struggle, denial, acceptance, revitalization, and validation" (Clark & Flores, 2019, p. 5) of Latinos and their cultural values. In other words, Latino literature serves as a social communication mechanism that attempts to construct a stronger and positive sense of ethnic identity among Latinos living in the US. It presents how Latinos, as social minorities, negotiate and resist assimilation processes enforced by socio-political and economic power structures, while also demonstrating the great resilience that Latino communities have had when faced with oppressive and adverse categorizations. In this article, we will review and analyze how René Colato Laínez presents and resolves many of these conflicts in his children's books.

René Colato Laínez was born on May 23, 1970 in El Salvador. When he was only nine years old, a civil war broke out in El Salvador, and he and his father migrated to the US in 1979. Always interested in creative writing, René Colato Laínez' first opportunity as a writer came during his high school years in Los Angeles, California where he wrote articles and poems for the Spanish school newspaper—La Voz Estudiantil. Later, during his college years, and before becoming an elementary school teacher in 1993, he wrote seven adult novels for his friends and relatives. In 2001, he submitted his very first literary work for publication and in 2005 completed a master's degree in Fine Arts and Writing for Children and Young Adults from Vermont College. During his career as a multicultural children's book author, René Colato Laínez has published nine children books, and received multiple awards and recognitions. Among those are the 2006 International Latino Book Award and Best Bilingual Picture Book for *I am René, the Boy*. He has also received the 2008 New Mexico Book Award and the Best Children's Book, for *Playing Lotería*, the 2010 Americas Book Award Commended Title for *René Has Two Last Names, René Tiene dos Apellidos*, and the 2011 International Latino Book Award and Best Bilingual Children's Book for *From North to South*.

René Colato Laínez' multicultural children's books portray many experiences lived by Latino children in United States. Some of the social issues addressed in his children's books are the suffering of many Latino families when one of its members is deported back to their native country because of their legal residence status, and how Latinos struggle to retain and maintain their cultural values while living in an Anglo-American society. In this article, our main goal is to demonstrate how the author encourages the development of a blended bicultural identity in Latino children living in United States. For the purpose of our analysis, we will follow Clark and Flores (2016) argument in the matter that "biculturalism is not based on bilingualism, but rather on cultural competence" (p. 14-15). In other words, the theoretical framework that we have constructed for our analysis recognizes that many Latinos living in United States can possess a bicultural identity, without being bilingual. In this sense, we will conceptualize a bicultural identity as an individual who shares and practices a conglomerate of "beliefs, customs, traditions, skills, and personal values of both the United States and the Latino cultures" (Clark & Flores, 2016, p. 14-15). Using this conceptualization as a starting point, we will explore how René Colato Laínez encourages Latino children to recognize, accept, and benefit from their bicultural identity, while discouraging any possible conflictive negotiation between Anglo-American and Latino cultural values. To demonstrate our argument, we have selected four of his most awarded children's books and analyzed them by applying a methodological model based on the critical discourse analysis theoretical framework proposed by Norman Fairclough (2001). This theoretical model will give us the opportunity to explore the author's literary works from three different perspectives. First, the content of the text itself, meaning the language and vocabulary used to construct the narrative. Second, the discourse practices, meaning the production, distribution, and consumption of the text. Finally, the sociocultural practices, referring to the multiple levels of social context embedded in the discourse practice (Johnson, 2013). The books that we have selected are: *René Has Two Last Names, René Tiene Dos Apellidos* (2009), *The Tooth Fairy Meets El Ratón Pérez* (2010), *Señor Pancho had a Rancho* (2013), *and Mamá the Alien, Mamá la Extraterrestre* (2016).

Methodology

As mentioned in the introduction, the analysis of the selected René Colato Laínez children books will be guided and sustained by a methodological model based on the critical discourse analysis theoretical framework developed by Fairclough (2001). Before we explain the three-dimensional model applied in our analysis, we should start by deconstructing the concepts "critical" and "discourse," by pointing out what critical discourse analysis theoretical frameworks entitles, and by mentioning relevant criticisms which have been raised against it. First, critical discourse analysis theoretical frameworks were constructed (we write in plural because there are multiple versions and different approaches to it), by integrating different aspects and perspectives of other theoretical approaches, including critical linguistics, systemic-functional linguistic, and critical theory (Johnson, 2013). When it comes to critical linguistic theoretical approaches, according to Janks (2010):

> "Critical linguistics pay attention to the way in which reality is mediated by language. Speakers and writers use language to construct texts that represents their version of reality. Choices do not, however, produce meaning divorced from context and our choices are shaped by the ways of speaking, writing, believing, doing, and valuing of the communities we live in." (p. 46)

In other words, when analyzing a written text through critical discourse analysis lenses, one has to consider that language is a tool used by writers to portray and transmit their own perspective of the reality they are describing. In that sense, when reading and analyzing René Colato Laínez multicultural children's books, it is important to keep in mind that many of the stories he narrates come from his own experiences as a Latino migrant, and as an elementary bilingual teacher in California. From the roots of critical theory, critical discourse analysis centers its attention on how power shapes through language, all social contexts. According to Johnson (2013),

> "Critical discourse analysis draws connections between the structure of written and spoken texts and the multiple layers of discur-

sive practices and social contexts to illuminate connections between discourse and power. By exposing how discourse is conditioned by and helps constitute relations of power, critical discourse analysis attempts to reveal, challenge, and subvert powerful discourses and empower those who have been marginalized by them" (p. 154).

In the following section of this article, we will discuss how the author encourages Latino children not to confront the assimilation discourses coming from the socio-political and economic power structures or from the dominant cultural values of the Anglo-American social practices. Instead, he proposes that Latino children should embrace both the Anglo-American and the Latino cultural values and social practices, in an attempt to develop a more stable bicultural identity. Finally, according to Candlin (quoted in Johnson, 2013, p. 152), discourse can be conceptualized as:

> "Means of talking and writing about and acting upon worlds, a means which both constructs and is constructed by a set of social practices within these worlds, and in so doing both reproduces and constructs afresh particular social-discursive practices, constrained or encouraged by more macro movements in the over-arching social formation."

In other words, not only discourses are produced and reproduced in and by social practices and social agents, but also when analyzing a written text one has to take into consideration other external elements like processes of production and reception of those same discourses (Janks, 2010, p. 46). Later in this article we will see how many of the stories that René Colato Laínez presents in his children's books are constructed around how Latino children in the US should produce and perform social practices based on both Anglo-American and Latino cultural values. Fairclough (2010) argues that critical discourse analysis:

> "to systematically explore, often opaque relationships of casualty and determination between discursive practices, events, texts and wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such prac-

tices, events, and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourses and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony" (p. 93).

Even when we firmly believe that critical discourse analysis theoretical frameworks will fit well with the scope and main goals of our analysis, we have to consider a few relevant criticisms that have been raised against this methodology in order for us to avoid those limitations. First, according to Schegloff (1997), critical discourse analysis as a theoretical approach is a simplistic framework, mainly because it relies on basic and sometimes bias assumptions that might be under-theorized. To address this theoretical limitation, we are going to apply in our analysis three concepts that we have adopted from cross-cultural psychology approaches. These approaches include bicultural integration identity, alternating bicultural, and blended bicultural (Wiley and Deaus 2010). All of them will be explained in detail in the next section. Second, Blommaert (2001) argues that because critical discourse analysis focus is to uncover how dominant discourses construct and promote through language unequal relations of power between the Marxist dichotomies of oppressor and oppressed, the analysis leaves no room for individual improvisations, subversions, creativities or agencies. We believe and will demonstrate later how René Colato Laínez' stories portraits many examples of individual agencies, particularly practiced by Latino children. Finally, according to Wodak (1996), due to the fact that researches have been constantly constructing their own versions of critical discourse analysis theoretical frameworks, there is no clear methodology that can be applied to different texts and produce similar results.

For our analysis, we will apply a three-dimensional framework proposed by Fairclough (2010), and that provides the necessary tools to analyze how René Colato Laínez' multicultural books are constructed, how dominant discourses are produced, distributed, and consumed, and how sociocultural practices of both Anglo-Americans and Latinos are blended in a bicultural identity. With these theoretical frameworks and conceptualizations in hand, we will address the following questions: How have dominant discourses in United States promoted ideologies that encourage the separation and conflict of Anglo-American and Latino identities? How does the writer reconcile the antagonism between the two identities? How do these processes of integration between the two identities take place in his stories? How do Latino children develop a bicultural identity without the exclusion of particular cultural values?

Results

In a way, the application of Fairclough's three-dimensional framework consists in reading René Colato Laínez selected works three times from three different perspectives. After the first read, one can conclude that the author is writing the stories in both English and Spanish with the intention of exposing the narrative to both Anglo-American and Latino children from the same level of relevance. This could be considered an initial encouragement for the development of a bicultural identity in Latino children that do not place any of the two cultures to a higher value. After the second read, we can start analyzing how the production and interpretation of the stories encourage Latino children to integrate both cultural identities into a bicultural one. To identify and analyze the process we followed Wiley and Deaus (2010) conceptualizations of alternating bicultural identity, the process of bicultural integration and blended identity. According to Wiley and Deaux (2010):

> "Alternating biculturals have the strongest situational contingencies, endorsing both the ethnic and national identities but believing that there are distinct social settings in which one or the other identity is more prominent. The construct is further articulated in two terms, one referring to conflict and the other to the perceived distance or degree of dissimilarity experience between the two cultures" (p. 50).

In René has two last names; René tiene dos apellidos (2009), the author narrates his personal experience when the teacher gave every student a name tag on the first day of school. According to the author, his sticker read, "René Colato", omitting Laínez, his second last name that comes from his mother's family side. René immediately knew that his name was incomplete and

re-wrote it, including both last names. When the Anglo-American children notice how long his complete name was, they make fun of him. Here the author presents a situation where patriarchy, an Anglo-American socio-political dominant ideology that erases the mother's family side of children's names, has created a conflict with the Latino cultural values and social practices of René's family. René tells his parents about the incident, and his father tries to convince him that it did not matter if Laínez was taken out of his name, mainly because in his heart he will always be a Laínez. According to Wiley and Deaux (2010), "identity performance involves the purposeful expression or suppression of behaviors relevant to those norms conventionally associated with a salient social identity" (p. 51). In that scene, René's father is performing an alternating bicultural identity, because he is proposing that René should negotiate with the dominant power structures the cultural values that he will embrace. In other words, around his Latino family, he could be René Colato Laínez and when in contact with the Anglo-American community he should be René Colato.

In *Mamá the Alien, Mamá la Extraterrestre* (2016), a young child found in her mother's purse, a United States governmental ID where she is classified as a resident "alien". Being his father a natural-born citizen, the girl struggles with the idea that her mom might be from another planet. In the US, socio-political power structures identify and classify non-citizen residents as aliens, a categorization that throughout history has brought social and legal conflicts, while also producing negative social ideologies and practices like racism and discrimination. According to Weller and Kurman (2017), individuals who experiencing the negotiation and development of a bicultural identity, tend to perform three types of identities. These are:

> "The central identity, which is the one that people strongly identify with and that dominates their lifestyle; the peripheral identity, which is a more distant identity, and with which individuals identify less; and the conflictual identity, which is a complicated case of a peripheral identity that involves coping with the existing conflict between two groups" (268).

René Colato Laínez also portrays this alternating identity in *The Tooth Fairy meets El Ratón Pérez* (2010). In this story, a young Latino kid losses a tooth, and following an Anglo-American and Latino social practice, he decided to put it under his pillow with hopes of receiving a coin. Because the young kid lives in Unites States with a Latino central identity, both the Tooth Fairy and el Ratón Pérez arrive to his room to give away a coin. A cultural struggle develops as both characters start to fight for the right to deliver the coin and collect the child's tooth. René Colato Laínez presents a clear cultural conflict between Anglo-American and Latino values and social practices, as both fight to claim the child's identity. Now, how does René Colato Laínez resolves this cultural conflict? He proposes the integration of both cultural identities without awarding supremacy to either of the two. According to Wiley and Deaux (2010),

> "Bicultural integration identities refer to the degree to which biculturals perceived their mainstream and ethnic cultural identities as compatible and integrated vs. oppositional and difficult to integrate. Researchers have recognized that immigrants maintain attachments to multiple cultural groups and that their identities are composed of different elements, take multiple forms, and vary in their performance across situations." (p. 50)

In *René has two last Names; René tiene dos apellidos* (2009), young René dreamed that if he follows his father advice and negotiate the use of his two last names when faced with the cultural values maintained by socio-political American-Anglo power structures, he will eventually lose a great part of what being a Latino is. That is why when given the opportunity, he decided to present to the teacher and his classmates his family tree, and the reasons why his last two names where an integral part of his Latino identity. Meanwhile, in *Mamá the Alien; Mamá la Extraterrestre* (2016), the young Latina asks herself, if my mother is an "alien" and my father is from planet Earth, then I must be half alien and half earthling. She even started to wonder which parts of her belonged to which identity. In *The tooth fairy meets el ratón Pérez* (2010), the conflict between the Anglo-American cultural values represented by the Tooth Fairy, and the Latino identity

represented by el Ratón Pérez, has caused the loss of the kid's tooth. Now, in a desperate attempt to find it, both characters must work together before the child wakes up and finds that none of them delivered the coin. Now, how does René Colato Laínez starts to integrate both cultural identities? According to Wiley and Deaux (2010),

> "Bicultural individuals are typically described as people who have internalized two cultures to the extent that both cultures are alive inside of them. Blended biculturals construct their two identities as compatible and overlapping. They often refer to general cultural and historical aspects of identity, as opposed to personal experience. People living between cultural groups develop thoughts and feelings about their group membership that shape self-definition (and) their collective identities" (pp. 49-51).

In *René has two last Names; René tiene dos apellidos* (2009), René demonstrates to his teacher and his classmates how much he values his Mama's family side. He argues that the use of his full name makes him feel like a complete person, and that if he excludes his mother's family side that part of his cultural values disappears. Now that both the Anglo-American teacher and his classmates have learned the importance of Rene's cultural values, they accept him as a bicultural Latino in the United States. With this acceptance, the conflictive social practices between Anglo-American socio-political power structures and Latino cultural values is resolved. In *Mamá the Alien, Mamá la Extraterrestre* (2016), the young girl discovers that her mom is not an alien, but a permanent resident, and that actually she is two days away from attending a ceremony where she will become a U.S. citizen. As a U.S. citizen, her mother now enjoys the full protection of the constitutional rights and will be more protected against discriminatory practices. Finally, in *The tooth fairy meets el ratón Pérez* (2010), both the Tooth Fairy and el Ratón Pérez join forces and found the missing tooth. By portraying that unity, the author demonstrates how Latino children can benefit from being a bicultural individual and avoiding conflictive social practices and confronted cultural values. How great is the benefit of being a bicultural Latino in the United States? The boy received two coins, one from each of his cultural identities.

Discussion

The third read of René Colato Laínez stories involves analyzing the social practices performed by the characters. Because we have already discussed most of the social practices presented in the three previous books, in this section we will analyze *Señor Pancho has a Rancho* (2013). In this book, the writer integrates both Anglo-American and Latino identities by portraying the social practices of labor and responsibility. It also serves as a counter-discourse to many deficit theories and negative stereotypes that dominant discourses have attributed to Latinos in the US. Written in stanzas, the book is a translation of the Anglo-American classic children's song Old MacDonald had a farm. In the pictures that demonstrated the words of the song, the author equals the work ethics of the Anglo-American farmers with the Latino farmers. They are both very happy and proud with their work, they both wake up very early in the morning to start their working day, they both suffer from an annoying dog, and they both like music and riding horses. With this narrative, the author shows to both, the Anglo-American and Latino children, the falsehood of the lazy and economic dependent stereotype of Latinos in the US. We argue that for Latino children living in the US, it is imperative to have access to narratives that embrace their cultural values, social practices, and bicultural identities.

Conclusion

In this article, we proposed an examination of a few selected literary works of René Colato Laínez to explore how this author encourages Latino children living in the US to develop a blended bicultural identity between their Latino culture and the Anglo-Saxon. This blended bicultural identity does not allocate one culture over the other, nor does it advocate for a negotiation between cultural values. On the contrary, the author presents stories where a cultural conflict arises and is resolved by blending both cultural identities. We conclude that the writer seeks to create a safe socio-political space for Latino children living in the US—one where they can embrace the benefits of been truly bicultural.

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INSTRUMENTOS PARA EVALUAR EL DESARROLLO DE LA COMPETENCIA INTERCULTURAL

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Resumen

El actual estatus del inglés como lengua global ha implicado nuevos retos en la enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera. Por eso, prepararse para ser maestro de inglés en el mundo actual, también representa retos en cuanto a las expectativas que se tienen del individuo como hablante bilingüe, bicultural y como docente de la lengua. Debido a este panorama que enfrentan los futuros maestros de inglés, este estudio de caso tiene como objetivo evaluar y desarrollar la competencia intercultural de seis alumnos de inglés como lengua extranjera, estudiantes de la licenciatura de inglés en la *Universidad Autónoma*, México, a través de tres instrumentos diseñados para esta investigación. Estos fueron desarrollados con base en indicadores del Marco de Referencia para los Enfoques Plurales de las Lenguas y de las Culturas (Candelier, Camillieri-Grima, Castellotti, De Pietro, Lörincz, Meißner, & Molinié, 2012) y adaptados de Huber-Kriegler, Lázár, & Strange (2003). Los resultados indican que estos instrumentos promueven que los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera reflexionen sobre el conocimiento, las habilidades y actitudes, elementos que conforman la competencia intercultural. La meta a largo plazo es mirar hacia un nuevo enfoque de evaluación que incluya, además de los instrumentos para evaluar la competencia lingüística, instrumentos que evalúen las habilidades y actitudes del alumno hacia la lengua y cultura extranjeras.

Palabras clave: competencia intercultural, conciencia crítica, Marco de Referencia para los Enfoques Plurales, reflexión, instrumentos.

Abstract

The current status of English as a global language has brought new challenges in the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language. Thus, preparing to be an English teacher in today's world also represents challenges in terms of the expectations of the individual as a bilingual, bicultural speaker, and as a language teacher. Due to this scenario faced by future English teachers, this case study aims to evaluate and develop the intercultural competence of six students who study to become English teachers at the Universidad Autónoma de Mexico, *and who also study English as a foreign language. In order to carry out this analysis, three instruments were designed based on indicators of the Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches (Candelier, Camillieri-Grima, Castellotti, De Pietro, Lörincz, Meißner, & Molinié, 2012), and adapted from Huber-Kriegler, Lázár, & Strange (2003). Results indicate that these instruments allow students to reflect upon their knowledge, skills and attitudes, that is, their intercultural competence. The long-term goal is to look towards a new evaluation approach that includes instruments to assess students' abilities and attitudes towards the foreign language and culture; in addition to the instruments used to assess language competence.*

Keywords: Intercultural Competence, critical awareness, Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches, reflection, instruments.

Introducción

Actualmente en México existen más de sesenta programas de nivel superior que preparan estudiantes en licenciaturas de enseñanza del inglés, también llamados enseñanza bilingüe, de

acuerdo con la Asociación Nacional de Universidades e Instituciones de Nivel Superior (ANUIES). Muchos de estos programas están basados en los criterios establecidos en el Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para la Lenguas (Consejo de Europa, 2002) y tienen como objetivo que los alumnos desarrollen competencias lingüísticas e interculturales. Sin embargo, dichos programas no dan un significado concreto a lo que se refieren con alumnos interculturales aunque los futuros maestros serán los encargados de preparar a las próximas generaciones de alumnos que estudien inglés como lengua extranjera en diferentes niveles educativos. Por lo mismo, pensamos que las licenciaturas de enseñanza bilingüe en México deben de tener claridad en el proceso y en las características que implican desarrollar a hablantes interculturales.

En el panorama general mexicano, tanto la internacionalización como la formación de ciudadanos globales implican que los alumnos desarrollen una competencia intercultural que, posteriormente tendrán que fomentar en sus propios alumnos. Sin embargo, aun cuando existe una referencia en cuanto a los criterios para la evaluación de la competencia lingüística de los estudiantes en estos más de 60 programas, no existen parámetros establecidos para la evaluación u observación del desarrollo de la competencia intercultural. Por lo mismo, existe un vacío en cuanto a los criterios o indicadores que deben definirse para identificar las características de los alumnos que han desarrollado una competencia intercultural además de la lingüística. De esta manera, es necesario identificar los indicadores, instrumentos o modelos que les permitan a las instituciones evaluar el desarrollo de la competencia intercultural, complementando así la evaluación que ya se hace de la competencia lingüística y dando seguimiento a la formación de alumnos interculturales.

Este estudio se centra en el uso de tres instrumentos cuyo objetivo es analizar el desarrollo de la Competencia Intercultural (CI) de estudiantes universitarios de una universidad pública mexicana que llamaremos *Universidad Autónoma* (UA) para los propósitos de este trabajo. Algunos autores que han estudiado el desarrollo de la CI de alumnos en niveles superiores (Deardorff, 2004; Chao, 2014) afirman que existen componentes de la CI que la hacen evaluable y observable. Por lo mismo, este estudio tiene

como objetivo analizar el desarrollo de la CI de seis alumnos que estudian inglés como lengua extranjera en la UA y que serán futuros maestros de inglés. El análisis se realiza partir de los hallazgos encontrados a través del uso de tres instrumentos (dos cuestionarios y una entrevista retrospectiva) que guiaron la evaluación y observación del desarrollo de la CI de dichos alumnos. Los instrumentos de evaluación son creaciones propias pero se basaron en materiales existentes y en los indicadores del Marco de Referencia para los Enfoques Plurales de las Lenguas y de las Culturas (MAREP) para su diseño.

Estos instrumentos buscan analizar los componentes de la CI, por lo que se dividen en instrumentos que evalúan tanto conocimientos y habilidades como actitudes. Además, a través de diferentes actividades se buscó promover el desarrollo de la conciencia crítica del alumno, definida por Byram (1997) como una evidencia de que el estudiante ha desarrollado la CI, ya que al activar esta conciencia se logra un verdadero entendimiento del otro. Asimismo, los instrumentos fueron creados a través del análisis de los indicadores del MAREP y de la adaptación de situaciones presentadas en el libro *Mirrors and windows* (Huber-Kriegler, Lázár, & Strange, 2003). Después de haber sido pilotados y modificados, los instrumentos fueron utilizados para autoevaluar y entrevistar a un grupo de estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera en nivel B2 de acuerdo con este contexto. Se buscó trabajar con alumnos en este nivel de suficiencia, ya que corresponde al nivel que deben alcanzar los alumnos en competencia lingüística. Asimismo, se considera necesario el desarrollo y la evaluación de la Competencia Intercultural en estos alumnos, ya que se espera que sean hablantes interculturales que desarrollen identidades múltiples para establecer interacciones sociales con miembros de otras culturas en un ambiente de respeto e igualdad (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002) y que en su momento, puedan ayudar a sus propios alumnos a desarrollar la misma. Finalmente, tomando en cuenta el nivel de suficiencia lingüística de los alumnos, será posible generar conclusiones acerca de la relación que ambas competencias, lingüística e intercultural guardan. A continuación, se describe el sustento teórico en el que se basa este estudio cualitativo.

Marco teórico

La Competencia Intercultural

Las investigaciones iniciales acerca de la competencia intercultural se abocaron a la búsqueda de tres puntos esenciales: (a) cómo definir la competencia intercultural, (b) cómo relacionar la CI con las demás competencias y, (c) cómo evaluarla (Deardorff, 2009). La complejidad que significaba responder a estas preguntas fue entonces evidente, ya que involucraba tanto la perspectiva individual como la de otros para hablar en términos de un comportamiento apropiado en un contexto comunicativo.

Byram, Nichols y Stevens (2001) desarrollaron un modelo que se preocupa de la negociación de identidades en el espacio dentro y a través de la(s) cultura(s). Para Byram y Zárate (1996), el individuo intercultural posee una identidad individual flexible, ya que es capaz de combinar aspectos de diferentes culturas mientras interactúa con miembros de la misma o de otras culturas, lo que lo convierte en un mediador de sus culturas. En este modelo de Byram (1997), el individuo es capaz de negociar en sus dos o más lenguas, pero posee una identidad individual flexible que le permite combinar aspectos de diversas culturas mientras interactúa con otros. Este modelo sirvió como base para el desarrollo del Marco Común Europeo para la Enseñanza de las Lenguas (Consejo de Europa, 2002).

Por otro lado, para Deardorff (2011) la competencia intercultural es un proceso continuo y no existe un punto específico en el que un individuo se convierta en un hablante que posee una CI total. Además, el desarrollo de esta competencia no ocurre por sí solo, sino que la CI necesita ser desarrollada intencionalmente. Por lo mismo, es necesario un marco de referencia que guíe los esfuerzos del maestro de lengua extranjera para que el estudiante sea un individuo global que domine por lo menos dos lenguas y sea capaz de interactuar en diversas culturas. Para lograr dicho objetivo, Deardorff (2011) propone un modelo que, además de los tres elementos de la CI (actitudes, habilidades y conocimiento), incluye resultados internos y externos. Los resultados internos se refieren al desarrollo de la empatía como medio para que el individuo pueda ver el mundo desde la perspectiva de otros, y los resultados externos se refieren a la efectividad y adecuación de la conducta y la comunicación en situaciones interculturales.

En una definición más reciente, Bektaş-Çetinkaya (2014) define la competencia intercultural como la posesión del conocimiento, las habilidades, actitudes y la conciencia requerida para pensar y actuar apropiadamente en cualquier forma de interacciones interculturales: desde una interacción cara a cara hasta una interacción con un documento producido en otra cultura. De acuerdo con esta definición, al 'actuar y pensar apropiadamente en interacciones interculturales', la competencia intercultural del alumno es observable y, por lo tanto, evaluable. Bektaş-Çetinkaya (2014) también propone que la CI se demuestra en interacción oral o en comprensión de documentos escritos, que son dos actividades comunes en la clase de lengua extranjera. De esta manera, a través de la observación del desempeño del alumno en el aula será posible hacer un análisis y evaluación del desarrollo de la Competencia Intercultural.

El desarrollo de la Competencia Intercultural

Fantini (2009) propone que algunos elementos que se deben favorecer para el desarrollo de la competencia intercultural son la flexibilidad, la paciencia, la apertura, el interés, la curiosidad y la empatía. Dichos elementos deben desarrollarse en tres áreas (la habilidad para establecer y mantener relaciones sociales, la habilidad para comunicarse y la habilidad de lograr tareas y alcanzar objetivos de interés común) y en cuatro dimensiones (conocimiento, actitudes, habilidades y conciencia). Todos, elementos, áreas y dimensiones deben estar vinculados a la suficiencia y a los niveles de desarrollo en la lengua meta. El mismo autor señala que el desarrollo de la CI se lleva cabo usualmente como un proceso continuo.

Por otro lado, existe otro estudio realizado por Chao (2014) con estudiantes de diversas universidades en China, en el cual se desarrolló un instrumento de evaluación que incluía ítems de cinco factores que, de acuerdo con el autor, influyen el desarrollo de la CI. Estos factores se refieren a (1) la orientación afectiva hacia la interacción intercultural, (2) la demostración de una consciencia intercultural, (3) la auto-eficacia en situaciones interculturales, (4) el conocimiento de interacciones interculturales y (5) el desempeño en interacciones interculturales. Los resultados sugieren que la evaluación de los participantes en los aspectos de orientación afectiva y demostración de una conciencia intercultural fue mejor que en los demás

aspectos, por lo que Chao (2014) sugiere que, a pesar del interés que pueda tener el alumno en alcanzar una competencia intercultural, este necesita más oportunidades para desarrollar una autoconciencia y participar en actividades que le permitan interactuar en una variedad de contextos.

Chao (2014) encontró que algunas escalas internacionales existentes tales como el Inventario de Desarrollo Intercultural (IDI), el Inventario de Adaptabilidad Multicultural (CCAI por sus siglas en inglés) y la Evaluación de la Competencia Intercultural (AIC por sus siglas en inglés) habían sido diseñados específicamente para alumnos cuya lengua materna es el inglés y que viven en culturas occidentales por lo que afirma que necesitaba adaptar el instrumento de evaluación del la CI para su propio contexto, el de estudiantes universitarios chinos. En este trabajo, seguimos los pasos de Chao y creamos instrumentos de evaluación para el contexto de estudiantes mexicanos que aprenden inglés como lengua extranjera. Finalmente, Deardorff (2009) propone instrumentos cualitativos como entrevistas, observaciones e instrumentos de autoevaluación para la evaluación de la CI. De acuerdo con las autoras de este trabajo, la evaluación de la CI solo es posible si se tiene una clara definición de los componentes de la competencia intercultural y de los instrumentos que analicen cada uno de esos componentes. Uno de los documentos que define la Competencia Intercultural y sus recursos es el Marco de Referencia para los Enfoques Plurales, el cual usaremos para la creación de nuestros instrumentos. Este marco surge en 2012 con el propósito de desarrollar el plurilingüismo en Europa y es un complemento del Marco Común de Referencia para las Lenguas (MCER). Este documento se describe en el siguiente apartado.

El Marco de Referencia para los Enfoques Plurales (MAREP)

El MAREP surge en Europa debido a una necesidad de establecer relaciones entre 24 lenguas oficiales y culturas a través de una propuesta pedagógica concreta con la que se puedan alcanzar resultados específicos y coordinados en todas las lenguas que habla/estudia un individuo (Candelier et al., 2012). El MAREP surge también a partir del incremento en la migración a países europeos, por lo que actualmente existe un número creciente de alumnos cuya lengua materna no es la misma que la lengua en la que reciben o recibirán una instrucción escolar formal. Así, los enfoques plurales incluyen una serie de estrategias que buscan desarrollar la competencia lingüística y cultural en los idiomas que el alumno habla y/o aprende (Candelier, 2008). Estos enfoques buscan modificar la manera en que se enseña la lengua y la cultura tomando como base la integración y transferencia de información en todas las lenguas que habla y/o estudia un individuo. De esta manera, los enfoques plurales se dividen en cuatro grandes áreas que son (a) la Didáctica Integrada de las lenguas, (b) la Intercomprensión entre lenguas, (c) el Enfoque Intercultural y (d) el Despertar a las lenguas; este último relacionado con la tarea que tiene el alumno de valorizar a las otras lenguas y culturas de la misma manera en que valora la propia.

En esta visión pluralista de unificar los criterios de evaluación y aprendizaje de diferentes lenguas, particularmente en el contexto actual, no existe una jerarquía establecida en términos de los conocimientos, habilidades y actitudes que debe poseer el hablante. Al contrario, el MAREP se ve como un continuum que describe competencias globales, entre ellas la intercultural, la cual presupone el desarrollo de estrategias de reflexión y de entendimiento entre hablantes de diferentes culturas y que hablan diferentes lenguas. No obstante, el MAREP hace una distinción entre los indicadores dependiendo si un enfoque plural es útil, importante o esencial. De acuerdo con esta clasificación, para los indicadores útiles, no es necesario que el alumno reciba instrucción formal porque puede desarrollar estos conocimientos, habilidades o actitudes fuera del salón de clase. Por otro lado, los que son importantes y esenciales son aquellos que solo se pueden desarrollar mediante instrucción formal. Este instrumento incluye listas de recursos, es decir, conocimientos, actitudes y habilidades que el individuo dominará en un contexto de alteridad y que, al combinarse, dependiendo de la tarea a realizar y de la situación, contribuyen a la activación de las competencias.

Finalmente, el MAREP presupone que uno de los contextos donde se logrará dicha activación de las competencias es el aula, por lo tanto, postula que 'es posible trabajar en el desarrollo de estos recursos

en el salón de clase' (Consejo de Europa, 2002, p.13). El MAREP enlista una serie de recursos que clasifica como útiles, importantes o necesarios dependiendo de qué tan indispensable es la instrucción formal en estos aspectos. Veremos a continuación que los instrumentos que hemos desarrollado para este trabajo (dos cuestionarios y una entrevista retrospectiva) han sido influidos tanto por el MAREP (2012) como por la experiencia de Chao (2014) y de Huber-Kriegler, Lázár, & Strange (2003). Además, cabe recalcar que han sido creados específicamente para el contexto que nos concierne, es decir el de estudiantes mexicanos que aprenden inglés como lengua extranjera y que serán futuros maestros de inglés. A continuación explicaremos los instrumentos y cómo los hemos utilizado para evaluar la CI en nuestro contexto específico.

Metodología

La presente investigación se llevó a cabo en la *Universidad Autónoma que* es una universidad pública ubicada en el centro de México y alberga a más de 65 mil alumnos en programas de licenciatura. Estos programas se dividen en cuatro áreas de estudio, incluida la de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades donde se inserta la Licenciatura en Enseñanza del Inglés. En 2009, se llevó a cabo la modificación curricular de esta licenciatura y se adoptó el MCER. De acuerdo con esta modificación, el programa actual establece que los alumnos deben alcanzar el nivel B2 del MCER al término de su formación académica.

Este trabajo es un estudio de caso cualitativo único en el que participaron seis estudiantes que estudian en la Licenciatura de Enseñanza de Inglés. Dichos estudiantes cursan la materia de inglés como lengua extranjera en el nivel B2 y han estudiado inglés de manera formal durante cinco a siete años. Todos los instrumentos fueron piloteados y revisados antes de su aplicación con una población similar a la que participó en este estudio.

Participantes

Los seis participantes en este estudio se llaman Carla, Dylan, Gabriel, Ivón, Jaime y Camila. Todos los nombres son pseudónimos. Todos estudian en la Licenciatura de Enseñanza del Inglés de la *Universidad Autónoma* y estudian inglés como lengua extranjera en nivel B2 de acuerdo con el Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas (MCER). Estos seis alumnos han recibido instrucción formal en inglés durante por lo menos dos años en este programa. En el momento del estudio, estos alumnos estaban inscritos en una clase de inglés como lengua extranjera y recibían 10 horas de clase a la semana, además de clases de contenido en inglés. Estos alumnos habían tenido por lo menos tres cursos anteriores de inglés con características similares. Asimismo, la selección de los seis participantes en este estudio se basó en tres características en común con las que los alumnos debían cumplir: (a) no haber vivido en el extranjero, (b) no tener ningún contacto continuo con extranjeros hablantes nativos del inglés y (c) no tener contacto con hablantes de lenguas indígenas, ya que estos tres factores podrían significar una competencia intercultural mayor y una conciencia crítica más amplia. Los participantes están en un rango de 19 a 26 años, son tres hombres y tres mujeres y han estudiado inglés como lengua extranjera entre 5 y 7 años.

Recolección de datos e instrumentos utilizados

El objetivo de la recolección de datos fue evaluar la competencia intercultural de los seis participantes mencionados. Para tal efecto se desarrollaron tres instrumentos que se abocan a la recolección de datos de cada uno de los componentes de la competencia intercultural (conocimientos, habilidades y actitudes). Los datos fueron recolectados durante el periodo de otoño 2017.

Primero, se pidió a los participantes que contestaran dos cuestionarios por escrito que les fueron entregados en la misma sesión, de forma física y a mitad del semestre. Los participantes respondieron en sesiones individuales y tomaron en promedio 25-30 minutos para responder ambos cuestionarios.

El primer cuestionario es una autoevaluación donde el alumno autocalifica sus *conocimientos interculturales* y el cuestionario dos pretende evaluar las *habilidades* y *actitudes interculturales* de los alumnos. Al terminar los dos cuestionarios, realizamos entrevistas retrospectivas con todos los participantes, que duraron un promedio de 15 minutos para que los alumnos nos explicarann sus respuestas en el cuestionario dos. Los tres instrumentos se encuentran en los anexos de este trabajo. La siguiente tabla resume los tres instrumentos utilizados en la recolección de datos.

Tabla 1. Resumen de los instrumentos utilizados en la recolección de datos. (Elaboración propia)

	Cuestionario Parte I	Cuestionario Parte II	Entrevista introspectiva
Consta de	10 ítems donde el estudiante se autocalifica en CONOCIMIENTO. Los indicadores están adaptados del MAREP.	5 ítems donde el estudiante responde a situaciones desde una doble perspectiva: la suya y la de una persona de otra cultura. Estos corresponden a 5 ítems de HABILIDADES y ACTITUDES que están relacionados con 5 de los indicadores de conocimiento.	El alumno explica sus respuestas a los 5 ítems de la segunda parte del cuestionario.
Qué hace el alumno	Responde en una escala del 0-6 y da ejemplos en donde cree que es capaz de hacerlo	Lee cinco situaciones y responde primero a preguntas abiertas y luego a una pregunta cuyas opciones son SÍ NO TAL VEZ	Comenta y justifica las respuestas del Cuestionario Parte II en una entrevista retrospectiva.

Análisis de datos

Para analizar los datos, tanto de los cuestionarios como de las entrevistas retrospectivas, nos hemos enfocado en los componentes interculturales definidos por el MAREP: *conocimientos*, *habilidades* y *actitudes*. Los *conocimientos* han sido evaluados en el cuestionario uno, mediante autoevaluación como lo propone Deardorff (2004) mientras que las *habilidades* y *actitudes* se analizan en el cuestionario dos. Para evaluar dichas habilidades y actitudes hemos usado situaciones de conflicto, ya que se espera que el alumno demuestre tanto sus habilidades como actitudes al actuar y resolver una situación de conflicto intercultural. El análisis de las respuestas de los alumnos arrojó los resultados por componente que se presentan a continuación.

Resultados

Conocimientos

Los resultados generales arrojados del cuestionario I corresponden a una autoevaluación de los participantes con respecto al *conocimiento* que tienen en términos de competencia intercultural. En este instrumento, por cada indicador, el alumno debe elegir un número entre 0 (no tengo la competencia/ no entiendo) y 5 (conozco ampliamente al respecto). Si eligen entre el 3 y 5 es necesario que den un ejemplo para ilustrar su comprensión del indicador. Los resultados generales en esta área revelan que los alumnos en promedio no se autoevalúan con un número alto, pues el promedio por alumno es 2.6 y por pregunta es 2.55. Asimismo, en consistencia con las instrucciones, el participante cuyo promedio es más alto (3.9)

es quien más ejemplos dio. Las situaciones que más ejemplos elicitaron fueron la número 5 "*Sé que es necesario adaptar el vocabulario y expresiones al contexto social y cultural en el que se desarrolla la comunicación*" y que obtuvo un promedio de 3.2; y la 10 "*Conozco algunas diferencias entre prácticas sociales, costumbres, valores y modos de expresión de diferentes culturas*" que obtuvo un promedio de 3.0.

La pregunta 2 "*Sé que el conocimiento en aspectos gramaticales, de significado o de uso del español me puede ayudar a aprender inglés, francés y otras lenguas*" es la que obtuvo el promedio más bajo (1.8) y solo se recolectaron dos ejemplos para esta pregunta. Por lo mismo, podemos constatar que los participantes poseen un auto conocimiento escaso de la competencia intercultural y de los recursos que ya poseen en su lengua materna y que pueden transferir y/o adaptar a la lengua extranjera. Esta afirmación se ve también confirmada en la pregunta tres que está directamente vinculada con la situación 3 en el recurso "*Sé que al hablar o escribir existen estrategias para facilitar la comunicación. Por ejemplo, la simplificación, la reformulación o la repetición.*" Los alumnos se califican en general con 2.0, esto es equivalente a tener un conocimiento limitado de ese recurso. Sin embargo, al enfrentarlo a una situación donde tiene que utilizar esas estrategias de comunicación, los participantes respondieron que intentarían diversas formas de darse a entender antes de abandonar la conversación, lo cual muestra que sí podrían hacerlo, pero no saben que son capaces de ello. Este punto nos parece muy importante ya que indica que es necesario despertar la conciencia en

cuanto a los recursos que el alumno ya posee en español tal como lo describe el MAREP (2012). En efecto, los enfoques plurales en el aprendizaje de lenguas (Candelier, 2008) como los adoptados por el MAREP han demostrado que para formar personas bi- y plurilingües, es necesario que los nuevos conocimientos se instalen de modo durable en la memoria y eso solamente es posible si se integran y se anclan en los saberes que ya poseen los alumnos (Meissnery et al. 2004). Los nuevos enfoques didácticos en el aprendizaje de lenguas tales como la Didáctica Integrada de las Lenguas (Castellotti, 2001; Hufeisen y Neuner, 2003) o el Enfoque Intercultural (Cortier, 2007; Varro, 2007) ya dan sustento irrefutable de que es necesario motivar al alumno hacer uso de sus conocimientos lingüísticos anteriores para aprender la nueva lengua.

Habilidades y actitudes

Los resultados generales arrojados del cuestionario dos corresponden a las habilidades y actitudes interculturales de los seis participantes en este estudio. En este instrumento se plantean cinco situaciones críticas donde el alumno responde cómo reaccionaría en esa situación y cómo actuaría si estuviera en un papel diferente en esa misma situación. De los cinco escenarios planteados, solo en el segundo escenario, los participantes en su conjunto actuarían de la misma manera estando en diferentes papeles. Por el contrario, en la situación cinco es donde hubo más divergencia y no existe un acuerdo general en cómo reaccionarían si ellos experimentaran esa situación. De manera general, las cinco situaciones están orientadas a que el alumno demuestre actitudes como cortesía, empatía, tolerancia, respeto y puntualidad en situaciones y temas cotidianos como la comida. En general, los alumnos demuestran una conciencia de que deben reflejar estos valores en la interacción en contextos interculturales comunes, lo cual es consistente con lo que plantea Byram (1997) acerca de que la conciencia crítica es una evidencia de que el alumno está desarrollando la competencia intercultural. Sin embargo, al enfrentar al alumno con la misma situación pero donde él es a quien le deben mostrar cortesía, tolerancia, respeto y otros valores, la expectativa de que el otro actúe de la misma forma que él lo hace, varía dependiendo de la situación. Únicamente en la situación 4 que plantea la interacción con extraños, hubo un acuerdo general en que la expectativa de un

trato amable hacia él equivale al que el alumno daría a otros extraños. Esto implica que el alumno considera elementos del contexto tales como la cercanía social para elegir las actitudes que demuestra hacia el otro. Estos resultados se presentan en la Tabla 2.

Entrevista introspectiva

Por otro lado, en los resultados arrojados por la entrevista introspectiva se encontró que en la situación 1, los alumnos no abandonarían la conversación inmediatamente. Antes de eso, acudirían al lenguaje no verbal. Por ejemplo, Jaime expresó que "*No, no me rendiría, trataría de expresarme*", de igual manera Dylan afirmó que " *Intentaría como hacerles alguna seña o comparar con algún objeto o algo para que, utilizar por decir sinónimos para llegar a que haya una mejor comprensión*". Dichos resultados son consistentes con los enfoques plurales definidos en el MAREP (2012) y por Candelier (2008), ya que los alumnos agotarían todos sus recursos para establecer la comunicación.

En la segunda situación, todos los alumnos expresan que entienden que la persona extranjera de visita en México no come picante y no se molestan si el invitado extranjero rechaza comer algo que pica. Sin embargo, Camila expresa que su amigo "*debe acostumbrarse a la comida mexicana*". Esto parece estar asociado a los resultados externos que describe Deardorff (2014) y que se refieren a la efectividad y adecuación de la conducta en situaciones interculturales. No obstante, los alumnos no esperan que los demás entiendan y toleren el hecho de que ellos también rechacen comer un tipo de comida al que no están acostumbrados, lo cual sugiere que la CI se sigue desarrollando, pero los alumnos necesitan una orientación para demostrar las mismas actitudes ante la cultura de origen que las que demuestran ante la cultura meta.

En la situación 3, los participantes deben decidir si cambian de código de español a inglés según la lengua que la mayoría entiende. En esta situación, todos están de acuerdo en que no cambiarían de código de español a inglés. Sin embargo, sí ajustarían su discurso para que este fuera más comprensible. Por otro lado, existen dos posturas opuestas si ellos experimentaran la misma situación en un diferente rol. En ese caso, tres de los participantes esperarían que los demás hicieran lo mismo por ellos, y los otros tres no están seguros, por lo que expresan opiniones

Tabla 2. Resultados de los componentes de habilidades y actitudes. (Elaboración de María Leticia Temoltzin)

1. En el país donde no hablan tu lengua materna, intentas explicar que tu tarjeta de crédito o débito no funciona. ¿Qué estrategia prefieres para darte a entender si no comprenden tu inglés? ¿Si un extranjero experimentara lo mismo en tu país, haría lo mismo que tú? SÍ NO TAL VEZ	SÍ 2 NO 0 TAL VEZ 4
2. Invitas a comer a tu casa a un estudiante de intercambio. Tu mamá prepara un platillo tradicional mexicano un poco picante. Tu invitado se come una parte por educación, pero deja casi todo. Al preguntarle si no le gustó la comida, él dice que sí, pero que no come picante. ¿Qué haces? ¿Piensas que debió haberlo dicho antes, piensas que tiene que acostumbrarse al picante porque está en México? Si tú estuvieras en el lugar de tu amigo como estudiante de intercambio y te ofrecieran una comida muy condimentada, ¿harías lo mismo que tu amigo? SÍ NO TAL VEZ	SÍ 1 NO 0 TAL VEZ 5
3. Estás en el patio con un grupo de amigos de diferentes nacionalidades, japoneses, mexicanos, coreanos, alemanes, etc. hablando en español sobre una película que viste el fin de semana. Cuando se integra a la plática otro estudiante de intercambio que no habla muy bien español ¿cambias de tema o de idioma a inglés? ¿En qué basas esa decisión? Si tú fueras un alumno de intercambio en otro país, ¿crees que tu grupo de amigos reaccionaría igual, cambiarían el tema o de lengua para que tú entendieras mejor? SÍ NO TAL VEZ	SÍ 3 NO 0 TAL VEZ 3
4. Estás afuera de un banco en tu ciudad y ves que un extranjero va a entrar, inmediatamente detrás de él llega una señora. El joven, no le cede el paso por la puerta a ella. ¿Cuál es tu reacción? Por ejemplo, no molestarte, dar muestras de disgusto, etc. Si tú estuvieras en la misma situación en un país extranjero, ¿Entenderías si no te detienen la puerta? SÍ NO TAL VEZ	SÍ 6 NO 0 TAL VEZ 0
5. Tienes un plan para salir con un grupo de alumnos de intercambio de diferentes nacionalidades. La cita es a las 9 am. ¿Crees que el orden en que llegarán depende de su nacionalidad? ¿Quiénes llegarían primero? ¿A qué hora llegas tú? Si estuvieras en la misma situación con un grupo de mexicanos, ¿Llegarías a la misma hora que en tu respuesta anterior? ¿Te importaría ser el último en llegar? SÍ NO TAL VEZ	SÍ 2 NO 2 TAL VEZ 2

opuestas. Por ejemplo, Karla expresa "*Preferiría hacer mi mayor esfuerzo para poder continuar la conversación y ya hasta llegar al límite en que ya no pueda y ya cambiarlo al inglés*". Por otro lado, Dylan expresa "*me ha pasado que es así como de que '¿de qué están hablando?' o sea como que ellos siguen en su rollo y no te toman en cuenta pero pues si no falta quien te explica o sea pero como por lo regular no, sin embargo nosotros sí o sea somos como más abiertos*". Este punto también se relaciona con los resultados externos definidos por Deardorff (2011) que requieren que los alumnos se adapten a los demás para comunicarse con efectividad.

En la situación 4, donde los alumnos presencian un acto propuesto como descortés en la salida de un banco, hay un consenso general en expresar que no se molestarían si presenciaran esa situación o si la experimentaran ellos mismos. Por ejemplo, Gabriel explica " *…a lo mejor en este país no sabes si las perso-*

nas son iguales, entonces yo creo que entendería y no me enojaría". Esto es un indicio de que el alumno ha desarrollado una identidad flexible cuando interactúa con miembros de otras culturas, lo cual es consistente con las características del hablante intercultural que Byram y Zárate (1996) describen.

Finalmente, en la situación 5, es donde existe menos acuerdo en las respuestas, pues algunos argumentan que la puntualidad es una característica individual y no colectiva de las naciones. Sin embargo, otros argumentan que la nacionalidad sí influye en la puntualidad. Por eso, en la reflexión sobre si llegarían igual de puntuales con un grupo de extranjeros que con un grupo de mexicanos, las respuestas varían y se expresan opiniones como la de Camila. Ella opina que los extranjeros llegarían más temprano que ella y expresa "*creo que las personas de otras nacionalidades son más puntuales porque he conocido a algunas. Yo soy,*

por lo regular, yo soy una persona impuntual, entonces, igual dependiendo la ocasión". Por otro lado, Gabriel opina que sí llegaría puntual con los extranjeros y se sentiría mal si llegara tarde a una cita con ellos, pero con los mexicanos su opinión es "*pues no, no tan mal, la verdad no sería así como que muy malo*". A diferencia de las otras situaciones, en esta no se da una igualdad de empatía o tolerancia en ambas culturas, sino que se reconoce el valor que los miembros de otras culturas le asignan al tiempo y a la puntualidad, pero no ocurre lo mismo en la cultura de origen. Esto sugiere, que probablemente existan temas más arraigados que requieren un tratamiento más puntual y preciso usando los enfoques plurales, particularmente el de "Despertar a las lenguas" (Candelier, 2008) para que el alumno logre asignar el mismo valor al tiempo y a otros temas en ambas culturas, aún cuando en un colectivo haya mayoría de participantes o interlocutores que comparten la misma cultura de origen.

En resumen, vemos entonces que en las respuestas del cuestionario dos, los alumnos desarrollan una conciencia crítica en situaciones cotidianas de contacto intercultural. En todas las situaciones planteadas en este cuestionario, el alumno muestra respeto y empatía hacia la(s) cultura(s) extranjeras y sus hablantes. No obstante, en muchos casos no demuestra el mismo respeto y empatía por las personas de su propia cultura. Esto se ve reflejado particularmente en las respuestas de la situación 5. Este punto nos parece muy importante ya que en los enfoques plurales, tales como el enfoque intercultural mencionado anteriormente, el objetivo principal es la competencia de comunicación (Cortier, 2007; Varro, 2007). Asimismo, estos enfoques consideran que la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de la lengua deben estar asociados a la cultura y deben abordar elementos más profundos que conforman la cosmovisión de un pueblo, tales como las cuestiones de puntualidad que han sido reflejadas en la situación 5. Por lo mismo, en un enfoque plural, el alumno debe ser motivado para desarrollar una perspectiva intercultural que valore ambas culturas, la de origen y las extranjeras a la par. Dicha perspectiva intercultural, busca educar en el conocimiento del otro, aminora la discriminación y conlleva un valor cognitivo ya que una perspectiva de la diversidad cuestiona las categorías del otro y del sí mismo, incluso dentro del mismo país, al cuestionar los mecanismos de evaluación y de comprensión (Lévy, 2008).

En suma, los dos cuestionarios y la entrevista retrospectiva, son instrumentos útiles para trabajar en clase y desarrollar situaciones de conflicto para que el alumno pueda mirar ambas culturas desde el lente de la alteridad, la tolerancia, el respeto y la empatía. Asimismo, es necesario establecer el vínculo entre los recursos que ya tienen los alumnos en la lengua materna para transferir este conocimiento a una situación práctica. En la situación 3, por ejemplo, los alumnos reportan que tienen un conocimiento suficiente y lo aplican de manera correcta para resolver la situación. Por ejemplo, Dylan opina "*supongo que si la mayoría habla un idioma pues el que llega después pues tiene que adaptarse ¿no? pero tal vez es comprensible que si no tiene conocimiento adecuado se le debe de ayudar o explicarle*". Esta reflexión, sugiere que Dylan ya posee una conciencia de la alteridad y refleja actitudes de tolerancia y empatía, que son características de un hablante intercultural. Este tipo de ejercicio que busca vincular el conocimiento con la práctica, ayuda a consolidar el conocimiento y prepara a los alumnos a enfrentar una situación similar en el futuro (Pfleger & García Diego, 2014).

Discusión

Los tres instrumentos presentados en este trabajo sirvieron a dos propósitos que fueron (a) una fuente de información de datos para evaluar la CI de los alumnos y (b) un análisis del auto posicionamiento de los alumnos como aprendices de una lengua extranjera. En el cuestionario I, el hecho de solicitar los ejemplos ayudó a corroborar que efectivamente el alumno demostraba un nivel de comprensión del indicador. Sin embargo, es probable que algunos alumnos no se autoevalúan en la escala entre 3-5, equivalentes a tener una competencia normal, amplia o muy amplia respectivamente, para no tener que dar un ejemplo. Por lo mismo, se sugiere que se llenen los cuestionarios dentro del salón de clase para que el maestro pueda ayudar a los alumnos a buscarlos. El llenado de los cuestionarios podría realizarse como una autoevaluación al inicio y al final del curso para que los alumnos puedan darse cuenta de su desarrollo en la CI. De esta manera, se empezaría a despertar la conciencia crítica que es uno de los componentes fundamentales de la Competencia Intercultural (Byram, 1997).

Por otro lado, el cuestionario II y la entrevista verbal introspectiva también fueron un medio para lograr un acercamiento hacia las habilidades y actitudes

de los alumnos en situaciones críticas. De acuerdo con los resultados, fue posible identificar características de la CI en los alumnos cuando en situaciones críticas interactúan con miembros de otras culturas desde la perspectiva de su cultura de origen y desde la perspectiva de la cultura extranjera. De esta manera, es posible determinar que los alumnos demuestran que han concientizado algunas características de la CI. Por ejemplo, en la situación 1, los resultados sugieren que los alumnos hacen uso de recursos lingüísticos y no lingüísticos para establecer la comunicación; además, demuestran empatía ante las personas que no son capaces de comunicarse en ninguna de las lenguas que hablan los participantes. Estos resultados fueron consistentes con los enfoques plurales (Candelier, 2008), ya que el alumno no abandona la comunicación y utiliza todos sus recursos verbales o no verbales para mantener la interacción y transmitir un mensaje. Asimismo, tomando en cuenta los elementos que Deardorff (2011) señala como evidencias de la CI, es decir los resultados internos y externos expuestos anteriormente, el alumno demuestra que puede evidenciar, por lo menos resultados internos. Esto es, los resultados internos están vinculados con la empatía, donde ya existe una conciencia de la alteridad. Los seis participantes demuestran esta actitud en las situaciones 2, 3 y 4. Por ejemplo, en la situación 3 no cambiarían de código si un extranjero que no entiende la plática se integra a la misma, pero sí intentarían explicarle, adecuar el discurso o integrarlo de alguna manera.

Los resultados también demuestran que es posible identificar resultados externos que están vinculados a la adecuación de la conducta. Por ejemplo, en la situación 5, el alumno que tiende a ser impuntual, ajustaría ese hábito para ser puntual con un grupo de extranjeros. Estas actitudes demuestran que el estudiante ha desarrollado una identidad flexible que le permite interactuar con personas de diferentes culturas. No obstante, este desarrollo está enfocado en una sola dirección, ya que al preguntarle si espera que los demás tengan la misma actitud hacia él, sus expectativas son menores. Esto es, el alumno sabe que debe adecuarse en la interacción con otros, pero no espera que los demás se adecúen. Por lo tanto, sugerimos que el alumno necesita una orientación para equilibrar el valor que le asigna tanto a las culturas extranjeras como a la propia. Esto se puede lograr adaptando los enfoques plurales y haciendo al alumno reflexionar a través de diferentes situaciones críticas.

Conclusiones

Este estudio nos permitió analizar la competencia intercultural de seis alumnos universitarios que estudian el inglés como lengua extranjera en el nivel B2, utilizando tres instrumentos de creación propia basados en Candelier et al. (2012), Chao (2014) y Huber-Kriegler, Lázár & Strange (2003). El análisis de los resultados nos permitió tener un primer acercamiento hacia el desarrollo de la competencia intercultural de los participantes y cómo evaluarlo. Los resultados apuntan a que los alumnos tienen un conocimiento limitado de sus propios recursos en la lengua materna, aunque en situaciones críticas sí aplican dichos recursos. Esto sugiere que se debe trabajar en el autoconocimiento de sus propias capacidades y en practicarlo en situaciones comunes, tal como se presentó en este estudio. El aula debe representar uno de esos espacios donde el alumno tenga la oportunidad de poner en práctica lo que sabe, supone y cree para poder hipotetizar sobre las expectativas que se tienen sobre él como hablante bilingüe y bicultural.

Por otro lado, se considera necesario que el alumno compare y contraste cómo estas situaciones críticas requieren que demuestre el mismo nivel de respeto, tolerancia, empatía y reconocimiento cuando interactúa tanto con hablantes de su cultura de origen como cuando interactúa con hablantes de culturas extranjeras, ya que se observó que en algunos casos estas actitudes de respeto se demuestran con extranjeros, pero no con mexicanos. En otros casos, el alumno no espera que los extranjeros le demuestren este mismo respeto. A pesar de que los enfoques plurales pueden abordar esta problemática, también es posible que exista un vacío y que estos enfoques no consideren la desigualdad de poderes en una misma cultura. Esto es, dado que los enfoques plurales fueron creados en Europa, parten de la premisa de que el alumno europeo valora y aprecia su lengua y cultura de origen. Al adaptarlo a un contexto poscolonial como lo es México, no se puede partir de la misma premisa. Por lo mismo, se vuelve necesario realizar un trabajo de concientización sobre el valor que tienen las lenguas y culturas de origen y usar dicha valoración como punto de partida para el desarrollo de la competencia intercultural.

Finalmente, consideramos que es necesario ampliar esta investigación utilizando estos mismos instrumentos con alumnos de otros niveles de suficiencia para después analizar cómo vincular el desarrollo de la competencia lingüística con la competencia intercultu-

ral, e identificar si ambas competencias se desarrollan a la par. Asimismo, es necesario proponer nuevas situaciones críticas que puedan ser trabajadas en el aula, ya que son una manera de aproximar al alumno a la autorreflexión, al desarrollo de una conciencia crítica y a la evaluación de la competencia intercultural.

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DEFENSA DE LA PROFESIÓN: EL DISCURSO DE UNA COP DE MAESTROS DE INGLÉS

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Resumen

El concepto de Comunidades de Práctica (CoP, por sus siglas en inglés) ha sido útil para ilustrar el aprendizaje que surge y evoluciona entre personas que buscan lograr metas comunes por medio de prácticas comunes. En el marco de una CoP, este estudio cualitativo de análisis del discurso examinó las practicas discursivas de un grupo de maestros de inglés mediante la herramienta de la Gran Conversación (Gee, 2014). Los resultados evidencian que la construcción discursiva de una comunidad es un fenómeno complejo que involucra negociación de significados compartidos y vinculación del discurso a los eventos, sucesos y debates que ocurren alrededor de la CoP. Los resultados demuestran que el debate principal que ocupa a estos docentes es el de la profesionalización de los maestros de inglés. Además, se identificó que entre las prácticas discursivas de los docentes de esta CoP se encuentran la defensa y demanda por la valoración de su profesión como parte de un debate que perdura hasta el momento.

Palabras clave: enseñanza de inglés, comunidad de práctica (CoP), defensa de la profesión y análisis del discurso.

Abstract

The concept of Communities of Practice (CoP) has been useful to illustrate how learning happens and evolve among people who have common and shared goals. In the framework of a CoP, this qualitative discourse analysis study follows the tool of the "C"onversation by Gee (2014) to analyze the discourse produced by a group of English teachers in Puebla about their experiences as English teachers in Mexico. The results evidence that the discursive construction of a community is a complex phenomenon that involves meaning negotiation and link the discourse to the events, happenings and debates that occur in and around the CoP. These results also showed that the "C"onversation of this community is the professionalization of English Teachers. Additionally, among the discursive practices of the members of this CoP, the defense and a claim to value the activities they do were identified as part of a debate that lasts until this moment.

Keywords: English teaching, community of practice (CoP), defense of the profession and discourse analysis.

Introducción

El presente estudio se enfoca en el lenguaje y su uso en sociedad. El lenguaje ha sido considerado como el medio por el que se lleva a cabo y se socializan las actividades propias de un grupo. Wenger, McDermott y Snyder (2002, p. 4) definieron a las comunidades de práctica (CoP) como "grupos de personas que comparten un interés, un conjunto de problemas, o una pasión sobre un tema, y quienes profundizan su conocimiento y experiencia en el área mediante una interacción continua". Así, se enfatiza que los participantes de una comunidad de práctica comparten tiempos juntos, comparten información y se ayudan entre sí a resolver problemas por medio de discursos compartidos o prácticas discursivas. Es

en este marco que se lleva a cabo el presente estudio sobre la comunidad de práctica de los maestros de inglés en México.

Esta CoP se ha visto afectada por una serie de reformas educativas que ha cambiado la visión que los maestros tenían de su quehacer docente, de su preparación y su desempeño. Estos cambios en las políticas educativas han sido objeto de discusiones y han dado lugar a programas de enseñanza de inglés y a la necesidad de una actualización del profesorado de la materia que ha resultado en campo de investigación para los especialistas del área. Davies (2011), Ramírez (2013) y Vázquez, Guzmán y Roux (2013), por ejemplo, han identificado la necesidad de contextualizar las investigaciones en México en el área de la enseñanza de inglés (ELT, por sus siglas en inglés) en el momento histórico o social en que se llevan a cabo, por medio del discurso de los miembros de la comunidad de maestros de inglés. El estudio se enfoca en mostrar esta contextualización por medio de la herramienta de análisis del discurso de la Gran Conversación propuesta por Gee (2001, 2014).

Justificación del estudio

En México ha habido pocos estudios sobre los maestros de inglés como grupo profesional o como comunidades de práctica. Los estudios previos se han enfocado en las metodologías de las prácticas docentes o en los procesos de adquisición de la lengua (e.g., Tapia, 2008; Lengeling, 2010; Mora, 2011; Mendoza-Valladares, 2017) pero el análisis de la construcción del discurso emitido por los maestros de inglés como individuos y como miembros de una comunidad de práctica no ha sido explorado, por lo que es necesario conocer la forma en que las prácticas discursivas dan forma a una comunidad de práctica. En la presente investigación se examina el discurso de los diez participantes como muestra de la forma en que los docentes, en específico en el estado de Puebla, construyen su discurso a través de sus experiencias en la profesión docente y le dan significado a las interacciones y prácticas discursivas compartidas con el fin de defender su profesión.

El presente estudio busca contestar las siguientes preguntas de investigación mediante el análisis de los discursos producidos por los participantes:

1.-De acuerdo con la herramienta de la Gran Conversación de Gee (2011), ¿Qué temas conforman la Gran Conversación que ocupa a los maestros de inglés del estudio?
2.- ¿Cómo usan los participantes el discurso para defender la profesión de la enseñanza de inglés ante los retos que enfrentan?
3.- ¿Cómo usan y qué significado dan los participantes a las palabras *profesionalización y profesional* en el marco de la enseñanza del inglés?
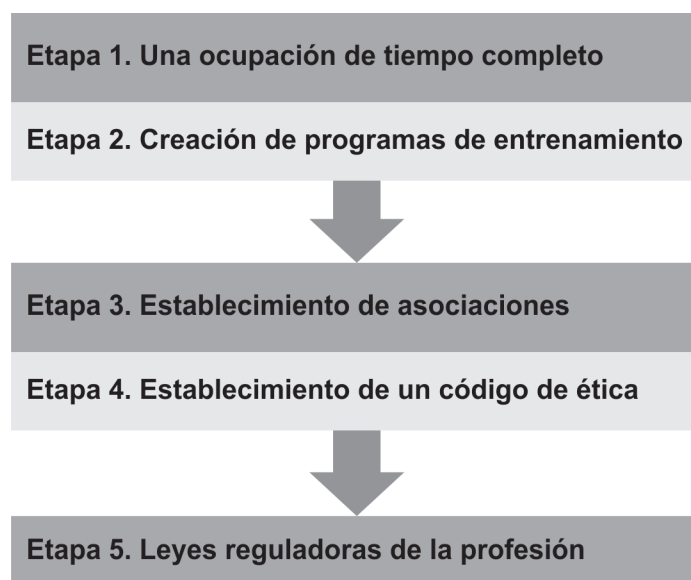
Revisión de la Literatura

En 1997, Johnston tituló un artículo: "¿Los maestros de lenguas tienen una profesión?". Casi dos décadas han pasado y la pregunta parece tener una respuesta positiva, por lo menos en México, ya que de acuerdo con Toledo (2014, p. 5) "la profesionalización de la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras tiene una larga historia que contar". La profesionalización de los maestros de inglés, según Burns and Richards (2009, p.1) ha sido impulsada por dos situaciones en específico: "una necesidad interna de los maestros mismos y otros actores del contexto educativo, que enfrentaron el reto de evolucionar y ampliar su conocimiento para desempeñar su trabajo y las presiones externas, por ejemplo la globalización y la necesidad del inglés como la *lingua franca* (énfasis de la autora) para la comunicación y el comercio internacional".

Estas situaciones globales han dado paso a reformas y demandas locales para ejercer más control sobre la educación y obtener mejores indicadores de la calidad de la educación. Es en este contexto, que el área de ELT adquiere mayor importancia y visibilidad así como las situaciones y retos que esta profesión enfrenta. Para los propósitos de este documento, se utilizará la definición de profesión de Bullock y Trombley (1999, p, 689) quienes afirman que una ocupación o actividad laboral se convierte en una profesión cuando "hay un desarrollo de calificación formal por medio de educación, aprendizaje, exámenes y el surgimiento de cuerpos regulatorios con poderes para admitir y disciplinar a los miembros".

La Figura 1 representa un modelo del proceso de profesionalización propuesto por Curnow y McGonigle (2006) a partir de otros modelos previos, por ejemplo Wilensky (1964), Vollmer y Mills (1996)

y Tobias (2003). En este modelo es posible ver en orden secuencial los pasos por los que una ocupación u oficio se puede convertir en una profesión. En este modelo, cada etapa influye en la siguiente y da por resultado la consolidación y conformación de una actividad en una profesión:

Fig. 1. La profesionalización como un proceso, basado en Curnow y McGonigle (2006).

Etapa 1. Una ocupación de tiempo completo

Etapa 2. Creación de programas de entrenamiento

Etapa 3. Establecimiento de asociaciones

Etapa 4. Establecimiento de un código de ética

Etapa 5. Leyes reguladoras de la profesión

En el caso de los maestros de inglés, la primera etapa se caracterizó por el surgimiento de un gran número de trabajadores que se dedicó a la misma actividad de tiempo completo, situación originada por las demandas de globalización y comercio internacional. La segunda etapa es la identificación del conocimiento base y habilidades necesarias de la profesión y una resultante creación de programas de entrenamiento o enseñanza para el ejercicio de la profesión. Esta creación de programas es evidente en el campo de la enseñanza de inglés, donde las instituciones públicas y privadas compiten por la capacitación de los docentes. A la creación de programas, le sigue la etapa del surgimiento de asociaciones que puedan regular y certificar los conocimientos y las licencias a los potenciales miembros de la profesión. En México podemos mencionar la Asociación de Maestros de Inglés, (MEXTESOL) fundada en 1973, como se indica en la página web de la asociación. Después, se hace necesario un código de ética que los miembros adopten y sigan. Por último, el apoyo de la ley se hace necesario para respaldar, proteger y reconocer a los miembros

de la profesión. Aunque en México no hay una mención específica de los maestros de inglés, la Ley de las Profesiones establece las medidas protectoras de los derechos de los profesionistas, en lo que corresponde a su ejercicio profesional como lo establece el Artículo 5 de la Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos vigente.

Goodwin, Narváez, Macola y Núñez (2015) mencionan que la profesionalización de la enseñanza del inglés en México comenzó a finales de los 80, especialmente a cargo de instituciones tales como el Consejo Británico y la Embajada de Estados Unidos en México, que ya tenían experiencia al capacitar profesores en sus países de origen. Actualmente, las instituciones que se encargan de la preparación de los maestros de inglés también se han diversificado. Las licenciaturas o posgrados en TESOL (Enseñanza de inglés como segunda lengua, por sus siglas en inglés) son los programas a largo plazo que las instituciones ofrecen para la preparación de los maestros. De igual forma son las universidades públicas las que están desarrollando programas a nivel licenciatura y posgrado en la enseñanza del idioma inglés "contando hasta el momento con más de 100 programas en ELT" en todo el territorio nacional, aseguran Goodwin et al. (2015, p.16), para la profesionalización de los maestros de inglés en México.

El estatus de la profesión

A pesar de lo expuesto anteriormente, hay una demanda de los miembros de la comunidad por tener el reconocimiento de la sociedad a su profesión. La comunidad misma puede a través de su discurso, hacer evidente la relevancia de sus actividades para posicionarla dentro de la sociedad. Hoyle (2001) asegura que los atributos positivos o negativos sobre una profesión o comunidad se pueden clasificar en tres dimensiones:

- Prestigio ocupacional,
- Status ocupacional y
- Estima ocupacional

El prestigio **ocupacional** puede ser definido como la opinión pública de la posición de una ocupación, Valls (2007) relaciona el campo ocupacional con las expectativas de carrera. Hoyle (2001) mostró que aunque la profesión tiene prestigio, hay diferencias

Tabla 1. Línea del tiempo de la enseñanza de inglés en México (Davies, 2011; Ramírez, 2013; Toledo, 2014; Ruíz Esparza y Lengeling, 2016)

Año	Evolución de la enseñanza de inglés en México
1973	No hay Licenciaturas en Enseñanza de Inglés; la Normal Superior ofrece preparación a sus egresados en el área de inglés. Hay algunos centros biculturales que ofrecen cursos de preparación para maestros entre ellos: El Instituto Mexicano Norteamericano de Relaciones Culturales (IMNRC) y el Instituto Anglo Mexicano de Cultura (IAMC)
1980s	Se crean las primeras Licenciaturas en Enseñanza de Inglés en universidades Públicas en México:
1983	Acuerdo entre la Universidad de California en Fullerton y la Universidad de Baja California (UABC) da origen a la educación universitaria de los maestros de inglés.
1984	Creación de la Licenciatura en Enseñanza de Lenguas Extranjeras en la Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (UAP)
1991	La Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán ofreció un curso de preparación para maestros de inglés.
1999	La Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas ofreció el programa de Licenciatura en Enseñanza de Inglés.
2000	Apertura de la Licenciatura en Enseñanza de Inglés en Guanajuato
2000 2007 2015	Algunas maestrías en Enseñanza de Inglés son creadas en diferentes estados de México: Puebla, Guanajuato
+2000	Se ofertan licenciaturas y maestrías en línea o en modalidades mixtas.
+2000	Se ofertan doctorados en Enseñanza de Inglés en diferentes modalidades.

entre los maestros de diferentes niveles educativos. Significativamente, los maestros de lenguas no están incluidos en tal reporte. El *status ocupacional* es entendido como la manera en que las ocupaciones se adaptan a la noción de actividad profesional (Hoyle, 2001). Por último, para Hoyle (2001) *la estima ocupacional* es el reconocimiento a los miembros de una profesión en específico. Este es un concepto más difuso y más difícil de medir que el *status* y el *prestigio*, ya que trata de medir el desempeño personal. Estos son algunos de los factores que podrían tomarse en cuenta para evaluar la presencia de los maestros de inglés en el contexto educativo en México como una comunidad de prestigio. A pesar de que en las últimas décadas se ha avanzado en el reconocimiento del área de ELT cómo Vázquez, Guzmán y Roux (2013) aseguran, en Latinoamérica hay aún mucho trabajo por hacer.

Ramírez-Romero y Pamplón (2012) mencionan que esta falta de reconocimiento se debe a que anteriormente, los miembros de la mencionada comunidad no poseían grados académicos o sus estudios no eran precisamente del área de ELT e incluso las licenciaturas y maestrías estaban en etapa de creación y desarrollo. Johnston (1997), estudioso de las vidas profesionales de los docentes en la enseñanza de inglés, llegó a la conclusión de que el reconocimiento de los profesores de inglés es "uno de los temas más urgentes que esta área enfrenta" (1997, p. 213). Johnston señaló como un problema el que hasta ese momento nadie había preguntado a los maestros sus opiniones y perspectivas sobre la profesionalización.

El siglo XXI es, entonces, un buen momento para dar voz a los propios docentes sobre los temas relacionados con el área de ELT, no sólo en el salón de clases, sino también en cuanto a los grupos sociales que crean, los cuales en este estudio han sido denominados como comunidades de práctica. En México, Davies (2009) sostiene que una forma probable de resolver este reto es logrando más espacios institucionales donde la comunidad de la enseñanza del inglés pueda interactuar y debatir a pesar de las diferencias en los escenarios donde los maestros de esta lengua laboran. Davies (2011) afirma también que los maestros experimentados son los líderes de la comunidad académica y por lo tanto, los portadores de la credibilidad profesional y de los perfiles académicos sólidos, gracias a lo cual son quienes deben hacerse responsables de los debates compartidos entre los individuos, las comunidades y las instituciones.

Metodología

Este estudio cualitativo de análisis del discurso forma parte de un estudio más amplio sobre las experiencias que un grupo de maestros ha tenido a lo largo de sus carreras dentro del área de ELT. Para Creswell (2009, p. 16) la "investigación cualitativa tiene un interés por explorar y entender el significado de los atributos de los individuos o grupos en relación con un problema social". Las experiencias de los docentes debían ser contadas por ellos mismos.

El estudio se sitúa en el contexto educativo de las Instituciones de Educación Superior (IES) y dos Centros de Idiomas del estado de Puebla, México. La ciudad de Puebla, es la cuarta ciudad en tamaño y número de habitantes del país. Los participantes del estudio fueron diez maestros de inglés de cuatro contextos diferentes:

Tabla 2. Los participantes del estudio

Participante	Experiencia docente	Lugar de trabajo	Grado Académico
1.- Ana	7-8 años	Univ. Privada	Maestría en Educación
2.- Isabel	11	Univ. Pública	Maestría en Enseñanza de Inglés
3.- Karla	17	Univ. Pública	Maestría en Educación
4. Mary	8	Instituto Tecnológico	Maestría en Enseñanza de Inglés
5.- Tania	18	Instituto de Idiomas	Pasante de Lic. en Enseñanza de Inglés
6.- Sonia	3	Univ. Privada	Lic. en Enseñanza de Inglés
7.- José	8	Univ. Privada	Lic. en Enseñanza de Inglés
8.- Luis	10	Instituto Tecnológico	Lic. en Enseñanza de Inglés
9.- Carlos	6	Univ. Privada	Pasante de Lic. en Enseñanza de Inglés
10.- Saúl	20	Instituto de Idiomas	Pasante de Lic. en Enseñanza de Inglés

La razón por la cual los participantes fueron elegidos para su inclusión en el estudio fue mostrar la diversidad de antecedentes de formación y experiencia de los profesores de inglés, laborando en México. Para la selección de los participantes se siguió el principio de *muestra intencionada* de Patton (2002). Creswell y Plano Clark (2011) la definen como una técnica en la que se identifican y eligen participantes que tengan el conocimiento y el interés en el fenómeno estudiado así como la disposición de compartir sus experiencias. Los factores que los convirtieron en participantes del estudio fueron : estar activos como docentes de inglés en el momento de la entrevista, tener gusto por su trabajo y que su formación inicial hubiera tenido lugar en la Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP), en específico en la Licenciatura en Enseñanza de Inglés o Lenguas Modernas como era llamada anteriormente. Detalles de la información sobre los participantes se pueden ver en la Tabla 2.

Instrumento
El instrumento de recolección de la información fue una entrevista semi-estructurada con cada uno de los participantes sobre: a) sus experiencias docentes y b) su relación con los demás actores de su entorno educativo. Las entrevistas se llevaron a cabo entre octubre, 2013 y febrero de 2015 cuando se conformó el corpus para el análisis del discurso propuesto para el estudio.

La Gran Conversación
Gee (2011, 2014) propone una serie de herramientas de análisis del discurso que se basan en la relación entre lenguaje, discurso y sociedad y en el marco del análisis del discurso. La herramienta de la Gran Conversación se refiere a los debates que el grupo en cuestión lleva a cabo durante las interacciones que tienen entre sí. Al identificar estos debates se identifican también los valores, creencias y objetos que juegan un papel importante en construir significados en los discursos del grupo. Al usar esta herramienta para el análisis del discurso se pudieron evidenciar la Gran Conversación y los temas que ocupan a los participantes de la comunidad de maestros de inglés en México.

Discusión de los resultados
Para dar respuesta a la primera pregunta de investigación: De acuerdo con la herramienta de la Gran Conversación de Gee (2011), ¿Qué temas conforman la Gran Conversación que ocupa a los maestros de inglés del estudio? Basándose en las respuestas de los maestros durante las entrevistas, se puede decir que la Gran Conversación, de esta CoP es la Profesionalización. La Figura 2 muestra los temas identificados como derivados de la Profesionalización a los que los participantes hicieron referencia en las respuestas:

Figura 2.- Temas de la Profesionalización

Profesionalización

| Formación Académica |
| Experiencia |
| Vocación |
| Identidad |

| Actualización |
| Colaboración |
| Valoración de la profesión |

| Evidencias de aprendizaje |
| Discriminación |
| Situación Laboral |

La siguiente sección discute los temas identificados en el discurso de los maestros de inglés donde los participantes se refieren y defienden la profesión docente. La Profesionalización fue identificada como la Gran Conversación o debate central de los maestros de inglés en México, dadas las situaciones descritas en la primera parte del presente documento. Los temas en específico dejan ver detalles del momento social en que el estudio fue hecho por lo que los participantes expresaron en su discurso.

a) Formación Académica

De acuerdo a lo dicho por los maestros, uno de los caminos hacia la profesionalización de la enseñanza del inglés puede referirse directamente a la formación académica y a los grados obtenidos por los maestros. Gabrielatos (2002) señala que los requerimientos de entrada a la práctica docente de la enseñanza de inglés son demasiado relajados y no hay regulaciones generales sobre lo requerido por diferentes instituciones. Así, los participantes expresaron sus ideas sobre la formación académica:

> **Tania.-** "Cuando inicié en la profesión, no había muchas oportunidades de estudio. De hecho la única oportunidad de estudios, era una certificación COTE. No había licenciatura, nada muy oficial."
> **Luis.-** "La mayor parte de mis compañeros no son maestros, o sea que no estudiaron para ser maestros de inglés, por lo tanto no tienen tantas técnicas."
> **Carlos.-** "…como yo no tenía mi título no podían recontratarme, así que las autoridades dejaron al otro maestro… que no contaba con experiencia docente, pero sí con un título."

De acuerdo con la primera participante, lo oficial son los grados universitarios como una licenciatura o una maestría. Sin embargo, ella ha podido ejercer como docente en un contexto de educación privada y convertirse en educadora de maestros sin tener un título universitario al momento de la entrevista. A modo de reclamo ante esta situación, Mary dice:

> "*¿Para qué estudio una maestría si me pagan lo mismo que con licenciatura*?". Aunque los grados académicos aún no son reconocidos por

todas las instituciones, los requerimientos para la contratación de maestros se vuelven más estrictos y los grados universitarios sí son tomados en cuenta.

b) Experiencia

Lave y Wenger (1991) resolvieron la pregunta de "¿Cómo las comunidades facilitan la participación de nuevos miembros?" con el concepto de la participación periférica legítima (LPP por sus siglas en inglés), que se refiere al proceso de integración a la comunidad como una renegociación graduada de expertos y novatos. Así, siguiendo el concepto de LPP, los miembros de la comunidad se integran desde la periferia hasta llegar a una completa participación en el "núcleo" de la comunidad al incrementar su competencia y conocimiento. Afirman:

> **Karla-** "Recuerdo que cuando recién egresé de la licenciatura sabía sobre metodología, con el tiempo y con diferentes cursos que he tomado he aprendido cómo puedo diseñar actividades que sean pertinentes y más significativas para mis alumnos."
> **Isabel.-** "…el tiempo te ayuda a sortear estas cosas, pero siempre hay grupos que te presentan retos…"
> **Mary.-** "Mis clases definitivamente no son las mismas de hace nueve años. He aprendido, he crecido y me siento más contenta con mi desempeño. Considero que durante estos nueve años, he crecido como docente de inglés."
> **Mary.-** "Ahora sé que es importante conocer cómo aprenden… yo no sabía mucho... y tampoco tenía experiencia en cómo controlar a niños."

La experiencia, en las voces de los participantes, provee oportunidades de aprendizaje, de cambio y de mejora en los roles y actividades de los miembros de esta comunidad.

c) Evidencias de Aprendizaje

Durante las entrevistas, los participantes mencionaron que uno de los indicadores de la efectividad y calidad de la educación que los maestros dan a sus alumnos es medida por el aprovechamiento (las calificaciones) de éstos como evidencia del logro de los

objetivos propuestos por la reforma educativa planteada por las autoridades. Los entrevistados dicen sobre esto:

> **Ana.-** "En las evaluaciones docentes siempre dicen eso… porque aparte ellos, (los alumnos) me han dicho que se sienten a gusto, y que sí han aprendido, incluso en clases me dicen que sí aprenden, que se sienten bien, que sienten que han mejorado, que sí aprenden."
>
> **Luis.-** "…mis alumnos obtuvieron una calificación por arriba del promedio de los demás, tuvimos los promedios más altos".
>
> **Saúl.-** "La satisfacción y alegría que me da cuando un alumno me comenta que por fin pudo dar una presentación en inglés frente a un grupo de personas o jefes de forma eficiente".

d) Identidad

De acuerdo con Taylor (1992) cada persona tiene sus propias ideas sobre el tipo de persona que quiere ser, a lo que este autor llama "el proyecto de sí mismos". Taylor (1992) enfatiza que si el "ideal sí mismo" no corresponde a lo que se valora en el contexto social del individuo, este podría llevar a cabo acciones que le permitan ajustarse al contexto dado. Los participantes expresan individualmente la idea de hacer su trabajo como una faceta o un aspecto de la profesionalidad que resulta en la conformación de sus identidades como maestros preparados y efectivos para ejercer la docencia.

I.-Identidad individual

> **Isabel.-** "Me describo como tranquila. Me percibo como alguien que les exige".
>
> **Karla.-** "Me considero una buena maestra".
>
> **Sonia.-** "Mediante la experiencia me di cuenta que sí soy una buena maestra".
>
> **Luis.-** "Me considero un poco mejor que la mayoría de maestros en mi entorno".

Asimismo, también hay formas de presentarse como miembros activos de dicha comunidad que están alineados a los discursos y comportamientos de los demás, por medio de una integración discursiva de "nosotros" expresada por ellos mismos.

II.- Identidad de comunidad

> **Isabel.-** "(…) Estamos aquí por vocación".
>
> **Mary.** "Somos apasionados de lo que hacemos".
>
> **Tania.-** "Los que estamos en esto por vocación buscamos la manera de crecer profesionalmente".
>
> **Saúl.-** "Tenemos una misma meta, profesión, entorno y tipo de personas que nos rodean".

e) Valoración de la profesión

Nunan (2001) y Pennington (1992) han asegurado que es necesario que los mismos docentes del área sean los encargados de convencer a las autoridades educativas y tal vez a ellos mismos de que el trabajo que hacen es importante:

> **Isabel.** "Tal vez habrá gente a la que no le guste o que minimice la carrera…tal vez sí haya otras gentes, otras profesiones que minimicen la profesión, pero yo no lo siento así".
>
> **Isabel.-**"… es que tú le des el valor a tu profesión y los demás lo puedan percibir".
>
> **José.-** "Pedir a las autoridades que se valore la actividad como profesional… los alumnos sí, ellos sí lo valoran".

Las quejas generalizadas de los docentes se refieren a sus autoridades e incluso a sus pares. Los maestros no valoran lo que sus colegas hacen debido a las tensiones que se pueden dar entre ellos y que serán exploradas más adelante. Sin embargo, los participantes mencionaron que los alumnos sí valoran a los docentes preparados.

f) Colaboración

Meirink, Meijer y Verloop (2007) encontraron que en las escuelas donde hay un ambiente de colaboración se facilita el intercambio de ideas y esto ayuda a la creación de diseños educativos comunes. Sin embargo, esta no parece ser la norma en el contexto de los participantes de este estudio. Según sus testimonios:

> **Karla.-** "Si realmente fuéramos compartidos todos y nos ayudáramos entre todos, ese sería un primer paso: ayudarnos y apoyarnos".

Carlos.- "Los maestros debemos generar y tener confianza y dejar las diferencias profesionales que se tienen… así que compartir ideas y experiencias tanto positivas como negativas podrían (sic) ayudar".

Saúl.- "Como profesores trabajando en grupo, podemos hacer muchísimo unos por otros. Podemos compartir material, experiencias, enfoques, nuevas técnicas, apoyo moral y teórico… si nos viéramos todos como iguales, apartando egos, podríamos mejorar muchísimo nuestra práctica".

Como se ve, entre los participantes hay un reconocimiento consciente sobre la pertinencia y beneficios de la colaboración con los demás participantes de la comunidad. Sin embargo, es cierto que lograrlo parece ser un proceso complicado debido a las tensiones y relaciones que pueden llegar a darse entre los miembros de las comunidades de práctica.

g) La Vocación

En las respuestas de los maestros de inglés participantes se encontraron referencias a la vocación como el motivo para tener un mejor desempeño. En la comunidad de los maestros de inglés la vocación también puede ser usada como una herramienta profesional, el maestro que tiene vocación hace mejor su trabajo:

Isabel.- "Son como dos grupos, la gente que nada más va por ir y la gente que está comprometida, que tiene vocación".

Tania.- "Los que estamos en esto por vocación seguimos buscando la manera de crecer profesionalmente".

José.- "Unos sólo hacen el trabajo, sólo por hacerlo, pero creo que eso es por falta de vocación, porque no les gusta ser maestros, pero pienso que sucede así con otras profesiones".

El concepto de la vocación se relaciona de manera significativa con las identidades que los individuos desarrollan al aprender a ser maestros. Dubet (2006) habla de la relación entre la vocación y la identidad docente como un acuerdo entre los valores individuales y la realización del YO en su actividad profesional.

h) Situación Laboral

En el campo de la enseñanza del inglés hay una preocupación generalizada sobre la situación laboral de los docentes. Kimber (2003) señala las altas tasas de empleo casual, un alto índice de rotación de maestros y la falta de apoyo institucional para tener puestos estables como causas de quejas entre los docentes. En algunas instituciones, los maestros de inglés no son considerados parte del personal oficial ni participan de los mismos beneficios que los demás maestros, como lo demuestran los siguientes comentarios:

Mary- "Considero que nuestra situación laboral en comparación con la de los otros profesores, es diferentes, aunque también influye en la actitud del profesor. Los profesores de inglés no estamos en nómina oficial, no tenemos los mismos beneficios que los demás docentes, especialmente los beneficios que de alguna manera pueden motivar al docente a seguirse preparando y mejorar sus clases".

Carlos.- "…quiero entrar al sistema oficial, necesito más seguridad en mi trabajo".

En muchos casos no hay regulaciones institucionales en cuanto a la contratación de maestros de inglés. La otra demanda de los participantes es tener los mismos beneficios laborales que los docentes que no son de ELT.

i) Actualización

El discurso de los maestros de inglés refleja que los docentes están conscientes de la necesidad de involucrarse en procesos de actualización y de educación continua. Esta demanda ha sido aprovechada por diferentes instituciones para ofrecer cursos y diplomados para los docentes:

Carlos.- "Tenemos que estar actualizados y saber lo que está pasando en el área, pero no es fácil o no es accesible. Sobre todo, si estamos fuera de la ciudad, no es posible tomar más cursos regularmente".

Sonia.- "Sólo hay que seguir preparándonos para conseguir un buen trabajo".

Los participantes enfatizan el tema del desarrollo profesional y la actualización como procesos conti-

nuos y que deben seguir durante todo el tiempo que dura su práctica docente. Algunos de los participantes, sin embargo, se refirieron a la dificultad de encontrar oportunidades de desarrollo al estar en áreas rurales y no tener facilidad para recibir capacitación adecuada.

j) Discriminación

Los participantes sugirieron que existe discriminación entre los mismos colegas, esto es, los maestros de inglés u otros maestros de las instituciones donde se desempeñan como docentes, por diferencias en su preparación académica, experiencia o inexperiencia o bien, la falta de una vocación docente:

> **Ana.-** "Se ve como si los maestros de inglés, como si no fueran tan importantes como los otros maestros de la universidad".
> **José.-** "Unos sólo hacen el trabajo, sólo por hacerlo, pero creo que eso es por falta de vocación, porque no les gusta ser maestros, pero pienso que sucede así con otras profesiones".
> **Mary.-** "En el tecnológico, los alumnos dan más importancia a sus demás clases… el inglés no tiene créditos".

Los maestros de inglés también mencionaron como una forma de discriminación la situación laboral de los docentes de inglés. Como sus comentarios lo expresan, no son tratados de la misma forma en comparación con los profesores de otras materias consideradas más importantes que la materia que ellos imparten. Los maestros, por ejemplo, mencionan que no reciben los mismos beneficios o prestaciones por ser del área de inglés.

En relación a la segunda pregunta de investigación: ¿Cómo usan los participantes el discurso para defender la profesión de la enseñanza de inglés ante los retos que enfrentan? Los participantes denuncian algunas de las situaciones confrontadas al ejercer la profesión docente. Las denuncias se refieren principalmente a desigualdad entre los profesores de inglés y los docentes de otras áreas del conocimiento aunque tengan las mismas características y preparación, Mary lo resume así:

> **Mary.-** "Los profesores de inglés no tenemos los mismos beneficios que los demás docen-

tes… No tenemos derecho a todos esos estímulos, en mi caso por ejemplo, aunque tengo la maestría, no me pagan más, como en el caso de otros profesores, porque somos de inglés, es injusto, pero así funciona el sistema aquí".

Otra de las denuncias identificadas en el discurso de los profesores fue sobre la falta de seguridad en el trabajo. Los profesores de inglés señalan que no tienen suficientes horas para cubrir sus gastos básicos y tienen que buscar más de un empleo, siendo esta situación común entre los profesores de la CoP de maestros de inglés. Luis lo cuenta de esta manera:

> **Luis**.- "No tengo seguridad en mi empleo, soy sólo un maestro de inglés y a veces no tengo suficientes horas y tengo que buscar otro trabajo o tengo que dar clases particulares para que me alcance el dinero. Eso es un problema para todos, ¿no?"

De acuerdo con el modelo de las profesiones de Curnow y McGonigle (2006) se evidencia que una actividad se puede volver una profesión al crearse programas de preparación universitaria, José sabe que la universidad es el primer paso para ser profesionales, sin dejar de lado la preparación continua y constante:

> **José.-** "Siguiendo profesionalizando la actividad por medio de la Universidad. Teniendo educación continua, no dejar de estudiar y prepararse. Asistir a cursos, a eventos".

Sin embargo, Tania hace alusión a la falta de respeto y valoración de la profesión docente en México y asegura que son los alumnos los que valoran y respetan al maestro. Sin embargo, en los medios de comunicación y entre algunos sectores de la sociedad mexicana la profesión docente no es apreciada y Tania lo denuncia:

> **Tania-** "Creo que los maestros en general, de cualquier materia a cualquier nivel en México tienen todavía que buscar y encontrar más respeto por su profesión, por todo lo que invierten en una clase. Nuestros alumnos; si hacemos un buen trabajo, sí nos valoran y nos respetan".

Ser profesional

La tercera pregunta de investigación: ¿Cómo usan y qué significado dan los participantes a las palabras profesionalización y profesional en el marco de la enseñanza del inglés? Se vuelve relevante al haber escuchado las voces de los participantes de la CoP de maestros de inglés. Si la Gran Conversación de los participantes es la profesionalización, ¿Qué significan ser profesional, la profesionalización y ser profesionista para esta CoP? La polisemia de los términos *profesional, profesionalización y profesionista* han también afectado la forma en que los maestros de inglés se expresan de sus actividades docentes. Por un lado, la profesionalización se refiere, en general a una actividad que pasa por el proceso descrito en la introducción de este documento (Ver Fig. 1) y que implica una educación terciaria con el objetivo de recibir un título que acredite al poseedor como un profesionista. Sin embargo, los maestros de inglés, en México, han tenido el *permiso* de ejercer sus actividades docentes sin un título universitario, dada la situación global que exige el aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera.

Esta situación originó una gran demanda por maestros del idioma donde se da prioridad a las habilidades lingüísticas (dominio del idioma) sobre la formación académica que los profesores puedan tener. Ante este panorama, en el campo de la enseñanza de lenguas se han creado y usado términos como desarrollo profesional o actualización con un significado de profesionalización que no es el mismo que en otras profesiones. Hargreaves y Goodson (1996), hacen referencia a la falta de un consenso relacionado con el significado de profesionalización; de igual manera, Freidson (1994, p. 169) afirma que "mucho del debate sobre la profesionalización se ensombrece por los supuestos no declarados y por sus usos inconsistentes e incompletos". Tomando en cuenta sus respuestas, los participantes afirman que un profesional de la enseñanza de inglés es tal cuando:

a) Tiene un título universitario,
b) Posee características especiales, como la responsabilidad y paciencia,
c) Se siente preparado para estar al frente de un grupo de estudiantes,
d) Prepara sus clases y sabe explicar el contenido de su materia,
e) Tiene una actitud específica con los alumnos, pares o autoridades,

f) Tiene vocación de maestro o maestra,
g) Asiste a conferencias y eventos académicos y está en constante preparación,
h) Se preocupa por sus alumnos,
i) Prepara a sus alumnos para el éxito.
j) Es ético, colaborativo y
k) Se siente orgulloso de su profesión, entre otras características.

Este ser profesional, tan diverso, da lugar a las diferentes concepciones que los participantes y la sociedad tienen sobre la profesionalización.

Conclusiones

La profesionalización se ha convertido en un debate actual y controversial en el campo de la enseñanza de inglés. La profesionalización puede entenderse como el establecimiento de estándares de competencia y preparación en un campo específico. Sin embargo, la demanda social por una mejor educación y las reformas educativas hacen necesaria una concientización sobre lo que profesionalización significa para las autoridades y para los maestros de inglés. Esta situación da lugar a debates, acuerdos y desacuerdos que ocupan las interacciones de los maestros de inglés en las que involucran hechos y realidades sociales. La herramienta de la Gran Conversación de Gee (2001, 2014) permitió adentrarse en los discursos de la CoP de los maestros de inglés y escuchar sus demandas.

Cada día, más personas necesitan aprender el idioma inglés, entonces, existe la necesidad de más maestros de esta lengua. Sin duda, la CoP de los maestros de inglés en México está en constante crecimiento. Sin embargo, los participantes expresaron su búsqueda por ser respetados y tratados de acuerdo al papel que juegan dentro de la sociedad. Mediante sus discursos, los participantes declararon su esperanza porque su profesión sea legitimada y valorada como tal. Las voces de estos maestros se dejaron escuchar para defender el estatus y valor de su profesión. El marco de las CoP permitió escuchar a los docentes tanto como individuos como comunidad a través de los discursos comunes.

Bien sabido es que los maestros no sólo transmiten conocimiento, sino también principios éticos, de justicia social, tolerancia y paz. De esta manera, los maestros contribuyen al desarrollo de las sociedades donde laboran, debe ser también un compromiso

de estas sociedades proveer al maestro del reconocimiento y la revalorización de su profesión que le permita desempeñar todas estas tareas. Los maestros mismos lo exigen; como este estudio ha demostrado al exponer sus voces en defensa de su profesión.

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Apéndice 1. Las entrevistas

BANCO DE PREGUNTAS PARA LAS ENTREVISTAS SEMI-ESTRUCTURADAS

1. ¿Cuántos años tienes dando clases de inglés?

2. ¿Cómo ha sido tu experiencia como maestro de inglés, en general?

3. ¿Te gusta ser maestro de inglés?

4. ¿Qué tipo de maestro/a te consideras? ¿Por qué?

5. ¿Qué te hace igual o diferente a los demás maestros de inglés?

6. ¿A qué retos te has enfrentado al ser maestro de inglés?

7. ¿Cómo calificas la situación laboral de los maestros?

8. ¿Qué factores influyen, positiva o negativamente en tu práctica docente?

9. Cuéntame alguna buena o mala experiencia en tu práctica docente o ¿Tienes alguna anécdota de tu experiencia como docente que quieras compartir?

10. ¿Cómo visualizas a la comunidad de los maestros de inglés en el futuro?

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