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Building Networks among Teachers

**A Refereed National Journal of Issues in Teaching
English as a Foreign Language (EFL)**

Volume 1, No 2, December 2015

A Message from the Editor Director

Welcome to ARTESOL EFL E-journal, *Building Networks among Teachers*, December 2015. The journal is a great forum for for EFL professionals from different type of institutions and levels of education to share information on the field.

I would like to thank the authors of the five articles published in this edition for their contributions. They have made this issue possible. Their articles encourage other experts to express themselves and share their research works and class experiences.

ARTESOL EFL E-journal is a venue for EFL specialists around the world to meet and share best practices. In this edition you will read articles written by experts from three Argentine universities, Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata, Universidad Adventista del Plata and Universidad Autónoma de Entre Ríos.

I hope readers all around the world will like this edition, and I invite them to submit their works and visit ARTESOL web page.

Building Networks among Teachers ARTESOLEFL Journal

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ARTESOLEFL hopes to become a professional resource in the field of teaching English as a foreign language and an opportunity for teachers to publish their research papers and teaching experiences.

This fully refereed national journal will be published online once a year. The language of the journal is English.

ARTESOLEFL Journal receives submissions of unpublished manuscripts on any topic related to the area of EFL. Four categories of manuscripts will be received: **Contributions, research articles, pedagogical experiences in EFL, and reviews.**

Please see our **submission guidelines** for more information.

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Contributions

Short articles published by prestigious EFL specialists.

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This section is devoted to the publication of research articles that will be refereed by three renowned researchers.

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This section includes the description of new experiences (strategies, techniques, course design) within EFL.

Reviews

This section includes reviews of books and journals published by universities, teacher training colleges and other institutions interested in the development of EFL courses or studies.

Those articles, pedagogical experiences or reviews that do not meet the requirements of this journal, will be reconsidered by the editorial board for publication on the EFL Web page.

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Analyzing the Selection and Presentation of Collocations in an EFL Textbook

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ABSTRACT

For the last few decades, experts and practitioners have emphasized the importance of teaching and learning collocations in the EFL classroom. They have pointed out that, although collocations display semantic transparencies, these combinations still pose great challenges for EFL learners. The purpose of this study was to explore and describe the current treatment of collocations in two widely-used EFL textbooks in Argentina.

Keywords: treatment of collocations - EFL - textbooks strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION

The central role of collocational competence - the ability to combine lexical items appropriately- has been widely acknowledged (Nesselhauf, 2005; Howarth, 1996) in the last two decades. This competence is essential to develop fluency in both written and oral production because the ability to retrieve a wide range of collocations reduces the necessary processing effort for both sender and receiver (Nesselhauf, 2005; Pawley & Syder, 1983, 2000; Wray, 2002). Knowledge of collocations is especially important for non-native speakers given that they naturally need to invest a greater cognitive effort for the successful production and reception of the message (Towel, Hawkings y Nives, 1996). Taking into account the importance of collocations and the fact that even advanced learners have difficulties using them appropriately (Howarth, 1996; Hill, 2000; Bahns & Eldaw, 1993; Nesselhauf, 2005, 2003; Tuero & Suarez, 2009, 2013) most researches agree that collocations need to be explicitly taught and that current teaching methods and materials need to be revised (Nesselhauf, 2005; Jiang, 2009; Handl, 2009; Komuro, 2009). In her study of the use of verb+noun collocations by advanced German learners of English, Nesselhauf (2005) claims that the "the length of exposure to the language has only a slight positive effect" (2004:238). This statement has led other researchers (Meunier & Gouverneur, 2007) to consider the extent to which these difficulties can be attributed to the materials being currently used in the teaching of these combinations.

Among the teaching materials available to the English Language Teacher, textbooks are the most widely used resource in the classroom and - in many contexts- they determine the contents and the dynamics of the classes (Harwood, 2014). Despite the fact that collocations now seem to receive increasing attention in the design of teaching materials, some authors suggest that textbooks are still far from reflecting the importance of collocational competence (Biber et. al. 2004; Koprowski, 2005). Along these lines, Meunier and Gouvernener (2007), in their investigation of the treatment of phraseology in EFL textbooks, also claim that "whilst the new generation textbooks explicitly claim to be dealing with phraseology and actually integrate phraseological exercises in their syllabus, a number of aspects could, however, still be improved" (133). Other studies have also reported that the teaching of collocations in textbooks needs to be improved. Some of the aspects that have been deemed problematic include the scarce repetition of collocations (Wang & Good, 2008; Tsai, 2014), insufficient awareness-raising during the presentation of collocations (Meunier & Gouverneur, 2007; de Souza Hodne, 2009), unsystematicity (Nesselhauf, 2005; Lopez- Jimenez, 2013) and inadequate practice (Lopez-Jimenez, 2013). On the basis of these claims, the purpose of this study was to further explore the treatment of collocations (selection and presentation) in textbooks for intermediate adolescent students in Argentina.

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How many collocations are presented in textbooks for intermediate students?
2. What syntactic structures are included in textbooks for intermediate students?
3. How are collocations presented in textbooks for intermediate students?

Towards a definition of collocations

Phraseological vs. Statistically-Oriented Approaches

Most ESL/EFL teachers would generally describe collocations as “words that go together” or “frequent combinations of words”. However, from a theoretical perspective, there is little consensus over the concept of collocations and the term is used widely different in linguistics and language teaching. According to Nesselhauf (2005), the only common ground between all these interpretations is that “collocations are some kind of syntagmatic relation”. Despite the varied and vague definitions surrounding the term, two perspectives can be identified: the phraseological tradition and the frequency-based tradition. The phraseological school is mainly concerned with delimiting word combinations and classifying them into detailed typologies by following two criteria: the degree of fixedness/commutability of the word elements and the degree of semantic opacity/transparency of these combinations. The first criterion refers to the extent to which the elements of a collocation can be replaced with synonymous words. For example, the collocation “run an errand” displays limited commutability of the elements because only two verbs can replace the verb “run” (“do” or “go on”). The other criterion, semantic compositionality, refers to the extent that the meaning of the whole expression can be predicted from the meaning of the individual parts. Unlike idioms (“kick the bucket”), collocations (“reach a goal”) are generally “transparent” because the sum of the meanings of each element is roughly equivalent to the meaning of the collocation as a whole. Even though there are certain aspects that have been agreed upon, scholars working within the phraseological tradition have failed to achieve a clear-cut typology so that the same word combination may be considered as a free combination, a collocation or an idiom by different authors. This lack of consensus becomes a problem when attempting to carry out research on collocations and compare obtained results (Nesselhauf, 2005).

In the frequency-based tradition or “statistically-oriented approach” tradition, collocations are seen as “units consisting of co-occurring words within a certain distance of each other” (Barfield & Gyllstad 2009:3). In this tradition, collocations are intrinsically connected to frequency and statistics, predominantly advocated by scholars working within the fields of Corpus Linguistics and Computational Linguistics. Jones & Sinclair (1974), main representatives of this tradition, define a “significant” collocation as the “co-occurrence of words such that they co-occur more often than their respective frequencies and length of the text in which they appear would predict” (1974: 21). Within this approach, several *word association measures*- mathematical formulae that interpret co-occurrence frequency data- are used to objectively determine if a combination is a collocation. Following a statistically-oriented approach, this study adopted the view that a collocation is the statistically significant co-occurrence of two or three lexical or grammatical elements within a span of 4 -/+ words which stand in a close syntactic relationship.

Statistically Significant Co-occurrence

For the purposes of identifying collocations in the textbook analyzed, the study relied on the information obtained from two online corpora: the Corpus of Contemporary American English, 450 million words, US 1990 –2012, (<http://corpus.byu.edu/coca>) and British National Corpus, 100 million words, 1980- 1999, (<http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc>). Only those combinations which exhibited a Mutual Information score of 3.0 points or higher were considered collocations. Mutual Information score is a standard association measure used to determine the strength of association between two words and how likely it is for these words to co-occur. Siyanova and Schimtt (2008) exemplify the use of this measure by means of two combinations: “extenuating circumstances” and “red car”. The first combination will have a very high MI score because every time we read or listen to the word “extenuating”, we are very likely to read or listen the word “circumstances” immediately after. On the contrary, the combination “red car” will have a much lower MI because many things can be “red” and cars are made in many different colors. In this way, IM score can be useful to determine which combinations can be considered collocations (extenuating circumstances) instead of free combinations (red car). This statistical measure ranges from 0 to approximately 17 points, the higher the score, the more strongly the words are associated. According to Hunston (2002), an MI score of 3 or higher is enough to claim that a given combination is above the statistically significant threshold. Generally, the search for a given collocation in a corpus is carried out within a “span” or “window” of four words to the left and four words to the right of the “search word” or “node” because the most frequent collocations are to be found within this range (Sinclair, J.; Daley, R. and Jones, S. 2004). To identify the collocations in this study, the span or window

was set to 4 words to the left and 4 words to the right of the search word and a MI score of 3 points or higher was considered.

2. METHODOLOGY

Materials and Context

The book selected for analysis can be described as a global, general English book for adolescents aged 12-14 years old. It is the intermediate book of a five-level course for secondary students, from Elementary to Advanced Level. The components of the course include: students' book, workbook, online resource, teachers' handbook, active-teach, and class audio CD. The textbook covers the descriptors of Common European Framework of Reference (B1-B2). The approach to language, as described in the introduction to the textbook, seems to reflect a lexicogrammatical view of language. The coursebook is divided into 12 units, each of which is further divided into 4 or 6 lessons. Each lesson opens with a section that introduces the module topic and presents most of the vocabulary dealt with in the unit. Other lessons center on grammatical content, skills development and cultural understanding. Vocabulary is presented below the headings "vocabulary network", a section that aims to combine key functional language with lexical sets, and "word builder", which focuses on lexical features such as prefixes, suffixes and multi-part verbs.

Procedure

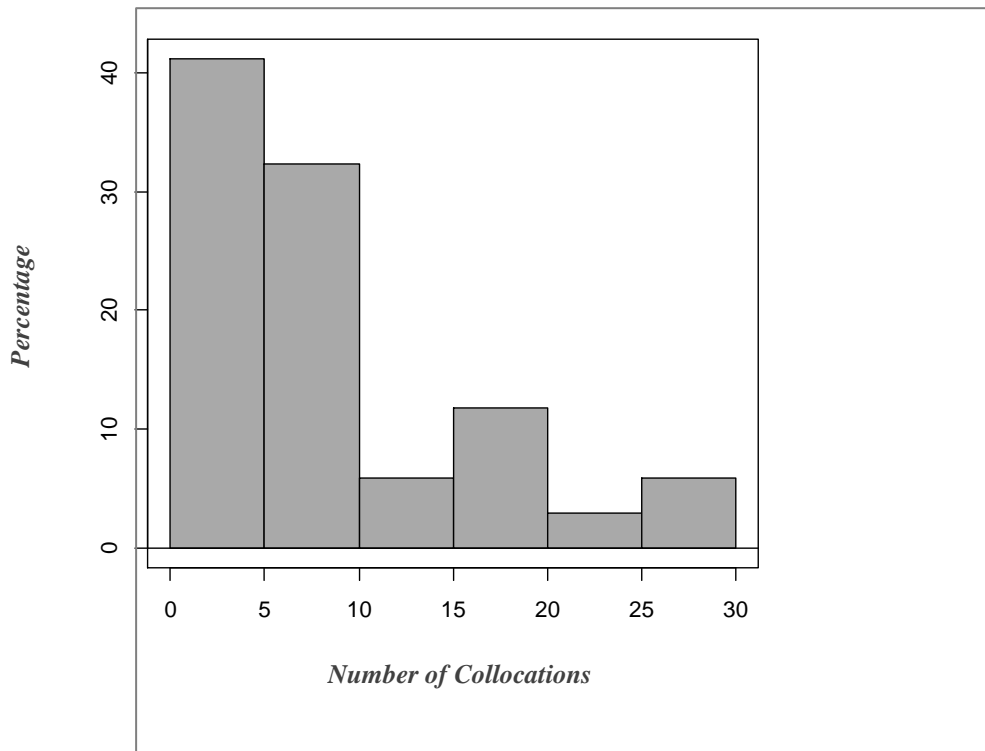
- 1) All sections that specifically addressed the treatment of vocabulary were identified. In the book selected, these sections are labeled with the titles "Vocabulary Network" or "Word Builder". All word combinations that were in some way highlighted in the section of vocabulary were listed. By "highlighted", it is meant that these collocations were clearly the focus of the exercise and attention was drawn to these items by means of a special font color or style.
- 2) The highlighted combinations were searched on the COCA and BNC to determine by means of their MI score if they qualified as statistically significant combinations= collocations. The collocations were then tallied and classified according to their syntactic structure.
- 3) The statistical analysis consisted of univariate descriptive statistics of the data: mean, standard deviation, median, mode, coefficient of variability, frequency distributions and graphs (histograms, boxplots and bar graphs). Inferential analysis was used in later stages of the research. A T-test for paired data was used to compare the proportion of collocations and the number of individual words for each presentation of vocabulary while the Pearson's χ^2 Chi-square test or, when appropriate, the Fischer's exact test was used to analyze if two categorical variables were or not associated. The following variables were considered: Number of collocations, Number of individual words, Type of Collocations (Syntactic Structure).

3. FINDINGS

Selection of Collocations in the Textbook

34 presentations of vocabulary were identified in the textbook. A total of 278 collocations and 431 individual lexical items were presented. The average number of collocations in each presentation of vocabulary was of 8, 12 (confidence interval of %95) against an average of 12.3 (confidence interval of %95) individual lexical items. The proportion of individual lexical items was higher than the proportion of collocations (significance level of 5% p value=0.017). Another 26 collocations, which were not presented or highlighted in the vocabulary sections, were identified in the revision, practice or evaluation sections. As shown in Fig 1, a 40% of the presentations of vocabulary included between 0-5 collocations and 30% included between 5-10 collocations. These results show that although collocations are given a prominent role in the textbook, single words were given greater importance.

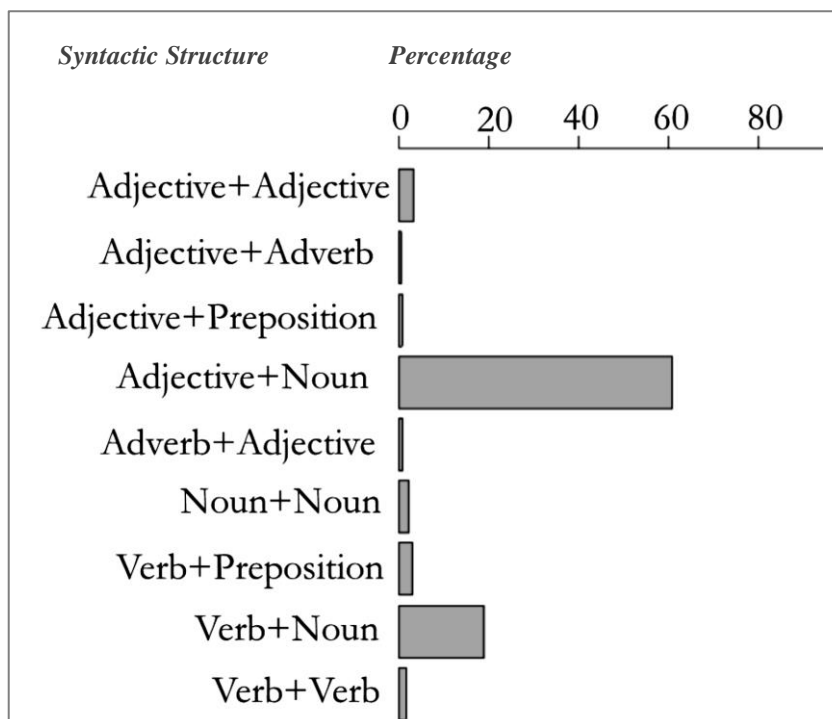
Fig. 1. Average Collocations in Each Presentation of Vocabulary



Syntactic Patterns of Collocations Presented in the Textbook

Of the total of 278 collocations presented, 185 were adjective+ noun collocations and 58 were verb+noun collocations. These two syntactic patterns were the most frequent, adding up to a total of 243 collocations = 87.41 %. Although verb+noun collocations are considered the most problematic for learners (Nesselhauf, 2003, 2005; Howarth, 1996), the textbook focuses more on adjective+noun collocations which pose fewer challenges to L2 learners (Peters, 2015). Other types of collocations, which are also particularly difficult for learners, were poorly represented (Adjective+Preposition, Verb+Preposition) or completely disregarded (Noun+Verb) in the presentations of vocabulary.

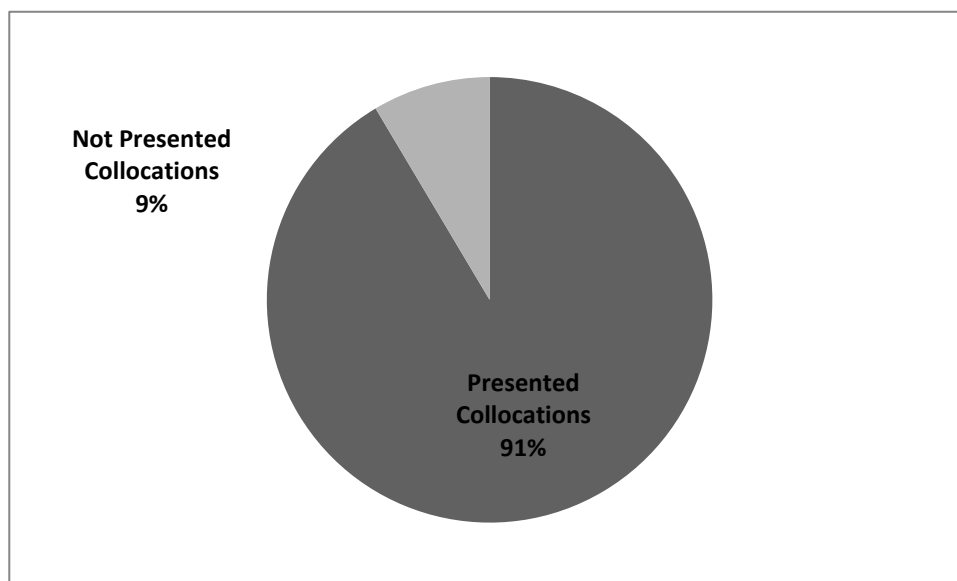
Fig. 2. Syntactic Patterns of Presented Collocations



Presentation of Collocations in the Textbook

As shown in Fig.3, 91% of collocations were included in presentations of vocabulary while a 9% of collocations were not presented or not “properly presented”. In most cases, a collocation was introduced in the presentation of vocabulary but attention was not drawn to it (no special font or color was used) while other adjacent expressions were clearly highlighted for students to consciously focus on them. In some other cases, a collocation only appeared in later teaching-learning stages, such as, practice, revision or evaluation. For some collocations, a given combination was presented (lead actor) but a slightly different combination was practiced (lead singer). In this last case, both collocations were taken into account: the one that was presented but not practiced (lead actor) and the one that was practiced but not presented (lead singer).

Fig. 3. Presentation of Collocations

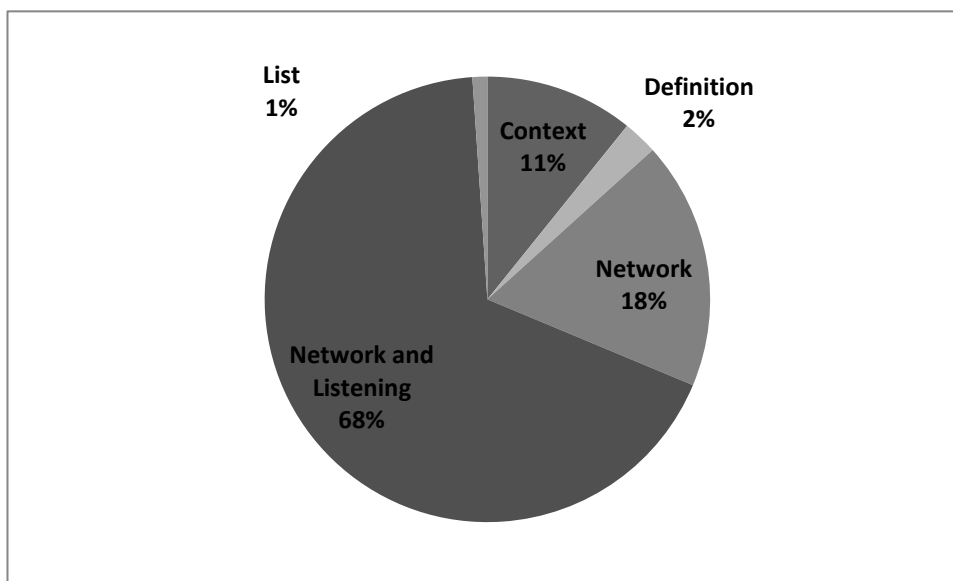


Five types of presentation of collocations were identified in the textbook: context, network, network and listening, list and definition.

1. **Context:** The collocation is presented in a sentence taken from a text from a reading section or the collocation is highlighted in the reading text and the student is referred to this text in the vocabulary presentation.
2. **Network:** The collocation is presented in a network which classifies or organizes various vocabulary items according to syntactic pattern, meaning or topic.
3. **Network and Listening:** The collocation is presented in a network which classifies or organizes various vocabulary items according to syntactic pattern, meaning or topic. Some of the vocabulary included in the network appears in a previous listening which introduces the topic of the unit.
4. **List:** The collocation appears on a list of vocabulary items. The list includes the combination in isolation or within a phrase/clause (not a complete sentence). The list displays no organization.
5. **Definition:** The collocation is presented in a sentence. The students need to match the collocation with the corresponding definition/paraphrase.

As shown in Fig. 4, 86% of collocations are presented by means of a network, which arranges the collocations according to a general topic and subtopics (Network and Listening, 68%; Network, 18%) while only 11% of collocations were presented in context.

Fig. 4. Type of Presentations of Collocations



4. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of the study was to explore the treatment of collocations in an intermediate global textbook by taking a look at two different dimensions: selection and presentation. The analysis of the data indicates that, overall, a great number of collocations were selected for explicit teaching in this textbook but individual items were still favored in the presentations of vocabulary. These results are in line with the claims made by some researchers that textbooks are still far from reflecting the importance of collocational competence (Biber et. al. 2004; Koprowski, 2005). The findings also suggest that there is a strong need for clear guidelines for materials development regarding collocations. Up to now, partly because of the instability of the concept of collocations, the selection of collocations in textbooks seems to be quite arbitrary. Textbooks may need to adopt a more systematic approach to the treatment of collocations and explicitly address the criteria used for selection. Nesselhauf (2005) has developed a possible form that such an approach could take. She proposes a three- dimensional model, which would take into account the degree of difficulty, degree of frequency and degree of disruption of a given collocation. Given that part of the difficulty that EFL/ESL students have when rendering English collocations lies in L1 negative transfer (Nesselhauf, 2005; Howarth, 1996; Suárez & Tuero, 2013; Suárez, 2009), learners need to be exposed to teaching materials that present especially selected groups of collocations tailored to the difficulties of learners with a particular L1 (Nesselhauf, 2005). Several researchers (Bahns and Eldaw, 1993; Nesselhauf, 2005; Peters, 2015) claim that teachers should pay special attention to “incongruent” collocations, those for which there is no direct equivalent (literal translation) because these are the collocations learners will have more difficulties to acquire and produce accurately.

As regards the presentation of collocations, most of the collocations were simply listed under a general topic or subtopic and only a small percentage of collocations were embedded in context. Presenting collocations in isolation deprives learners of the rich information that only context can provide, such as, syntactic and semantic behavior of the collocation at the level of the sentence and text. This type of presentation does not reflect the prevailing view that collocations need to be made salient in input to promote their acquisition. Bahns and Eldaw (1993) suggest that exposure to language alone will have little or no impact on collocational use. An increase in input will be much more beneficial if this input is enhanced by means of consciousness-raising activities. Nesselhauf (2005) also argues that students, without the guidance of the teacher, do not generally give much importance to collocations because these are mostly transparent in meaning and therefore, easily understood. The fact that collocations do not cause much difficulty at the level of comprehension makes students require less cognitive effort to process them, which, in turn,

lowers the probability of retrieving them during production (Schmitt & McCarthy, 1997). therefore, it is necessary not only to raise students' awareness of collocations as these combinations occur in texts but also to help students identify and record them.

Considering the small-scale nature of the study, it is necessary to mention that further research needs to be carried out to further explore the treatment of collocations in textbooks and to determine if collocations are being dealt with effectively in these materials. The present study only analyzed the students' book and the exams from the teacher's book but other components of the book, in particular, the workbook, should also be included in further analysis to accurately account for the number and type of collocations students are exposed to. Even if the treatment of collocations has not been fully explored yet, the results we obtained speak in favor of introducing certain changes to the current treatment of collocations in EFL materials.

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Translation Strategies Choice and Its Effect on Characterization in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings/El Señor de los Anillos*

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ABSTRACT

The speech of some Hobbits in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Ring* – namely, Frodo Baggins, Samwise Gamgee and some other secondary characters- and its translation into Spanish have been analyzed with a twofold aim: to identify linguistic behaviors in the source text and the translated version and to enumerate the possible translation strategies that seem to have been applied. Aspects of the characters' discourse features and characterization itself are discussed, considering the extent to which the translation procedures selected have had an effect over the building up of the protagonists.

Keywords: linguistic behavior – identity – characterization – literary translation - translation strategies.

INTRODUCTION

Since the late 1950s, when Vinay and Darbelnet (1958/ 1997) proposed the concept of *translation procedure* to denote the processes and choices made by translators in their task of rendering from one language to another, the field of Translation Studies has evolved to include not only aspects connected to the structural facets of the two languages, but also to stylistic and communicational aspects (cf. e.g. Nida, 1964; De Beaugrande, 1978; Rastall, 1994). Precisely, rendering a text from one language into another requires more than simply focusing on finding a set of linguistic equivalents.

The translator needs to work with two cultures, and identify the elements in the TL (target language, that into which the original is being translated) that will produce in the TL readers an effect similar to that experienced by readers when reading in the source language (Nida and Taber, 1982). In literary translation, this effect relates to how the target reader will perceive the ideas, the content, the characters, after they have been made accessible through the agency of the translator. The mental image of the character that the readers will create depends, to an extent, on how the translator chooses to convey the character's different features.

When the development of a character relies heavily on the verbal features the author has deemed fit to provide their creation with, the strategies the translator selects will probably have a remarkable effect on characterization as perceived by the target readership.

J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* has been translated into over 30 languages, and has been analyzed from the most diverse points of view. Van der Peet (2000, in Dellien, 2012) compares the Chinese and English stylistic choices from a formal (syntactic) perspective. *Tolkien in Translation* (Honegger, 2003) gathers academic articles centered on the translation of the author's works into a variety of languages: among them, Agoy deals with the issue of register in English and Norwegian; Ferré, Lauzón and Riggs approach the reception the French version had in France; Bayona analyses how some politeness formulas have been rendered in English and Spanish; Smith works with the translation of names into Esperanto. In a second volume on the same topic edited by Honegger (2011), *Translating Tolkien: Text and Film*, Nagel deals with issues concerning syntax, semantics and style in English and German from the technical perspective of translators; Orbach works with two versions in Hebrew and Sturch points the obstacles that regional English poses to the translation into Latin. Arias Moreno and Mugford Fowler (2012) take a sociolinguistic perspective, looking into the role (im)politeness fulfills in the source text and the difficulties this implies for a translation into Spanish.

The idiosyncrasies in the speech of its characters in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is a clear example of linguistic behavior used as a means to build up characters and portray the relationships among them. The Hobbit society in this story is organized in two main groups: the landed gentry, whose linguistic behavior coincides with the standard English we learn, and the working class, in which mannerisms are as much part of their identity as their name. Their use of the language is a distinctive feature for them, one that puts flesh on these people that only exist on paper (Bal, 1990). Thus, when addressing the translation of their linguistic interventions, the choice of strategies will affect not only the words the characters utter, but

also their identity as individuals in the created universe of the novel, and how the target reader will get to know them.

As regards translation strategies, Krings (1986, in Ordurari, 2007) and Loescher (1991, *ibid.*) agree that they are a plan translators choose so as to solve the specific obstacles faced when translating. This selection of strategies implies the development of a methodology to apply them (Venuti, 1998, *ibid.*). Chesterman (1997, in Owji, 2013) states that translation strategies can be classified into syntactic (applied at the micro-structure of the text), semantic (centered in the transmission of the message by means such as synonymy and antonymy, among others) and pragmatic (based on the specific communicative situation to be translated).

The intersection between characterization based on the linguistic choices of the author when depicting the speech of the characters and that which results after the process of translation has been addressed by Fernández (2012). She quotes Tabernig (1970) in her analysis of *El Extranjero*, warning the translator to take into account the syntactic features of the speech of the characters, to transmit in the target language the development of such character, as shown in the source text by the growing complexity of the character's speech.

ANALYSIS

Methodology

A hermeneutically oriented comparison methodology was followed. The speech of characters (main and secondary) representative of the two social groups mentioned above – landed gentry and working class- was considered to determine whether there was a connection between their social class and their linguistic behavior. The same was done with the 1980 translation into Spanish (Horne, Domènech and Masera). A linguistic profile of each group, in each language, was drawn, and the translated versions of the speech of the main character belonging to the working class (Sam) was analyzed following Chesterman's taxonomy of translation strategies (1997, in Owji, 2013)¹. The effect of the strategies probably used to translate the original English version into Spanish was then addressed, comparing the linguistic behavior of the same character in the source and target texts and its possible outcome in terms of characterization.

Results

The analysis of the source speech of Hobbits representative of the landed gentry and the working class- several, with a focus on Frodo Baggins and Sam Gamgee- established that the upper-class Hobbits present an unmarked use of the language, whereas the opposite is true of lower-class Hobbits: they duplicate the subject, apply double negatives, elide parts of certain words – the phonetic elision indicated by omission of graphemes, and rely on tags and expressions which are similar, and even identical, in their pragmatic function, their grammatical structure, and the choice of words.

In the 1980 translation into Spanish (Horne, Domènech and Masera) it was observed that the speech of both groups presented very few dissimilarities. Few, if any, instances of non-standard English could be identified in the speech of the lower-class Hobbits, though occurrences of tags and expressions were found.

As to the taxonomy of translation choices, it was possible to establish that three main procedures were selected to deal with the non-standard linguistic behaviors: normalization (Scott 1996, in Bloch 2005), syntactic and semantic strategies (Chesterman 1997, in Owji 2013). Among the first, all linguistic features which can be considered deviations from Standard English (double negatives, duplication of subject, grapheme elision that indicates phonetic elision) were normalized in the translation. The deviant form used in the source text was rendered in Standard Spanish.

The second linguistic feature used for characterization in the original version (tags and repeated expressions) seems to have been addressed by the application of syntactic and

¹ Chesterman (*id.*) states that, basically, translation strategies imply changing something, and goes on to propose a three-part taxonomy –syntactic, semantic and pragmatic strategies. Each of these contains subcategories, and concentrates on different facets of the text and the task of rendering it into the target language, proposing a variety of options for the translator to choose.

semantic strategies. Within the former, the translators have opted for level shift, expressed in rendering the same syntactic structure in the source text using a variety of possibilities in the target text (as in the case of tags starting with *if*, such as *if you understand/follow me*, profusely used by working-class Hobbit Sam, presented in Spanish not only as conditionals, but as interrogatives and declaratives as well). They have also relied on clause structure change, for example, translating an invariable *I reckon* into a variety of tenses in the target language.

The semantic strategies identified are distribution change with expansion – the same source semantic element is expressed by a number of items in the target text, expressed mainly by means of synonyms. An example is *reckon*, mentioned before, which is translated into Spanish in nine different ways: *creo* (*believe*), *digo* (*say*), *tengo la impresión* (*I've got the impression*), *me parece* (*I think*), *reconozco* (*I recognize*), *diría* (*I'd say that*), *supongo* (*I guess*), *estimo* (*I believe*), or simply omitted. *Reckon* is found 13 times among the working-class Hobbits, eight of which are uttered by Sam; the Spanish-speaking Sam uses six different ways of expressing the original *reckon*.

DISCUSSION

Bal (1990) establishes that a character is a semantic unit with a number of features that allow readers to set it apart from the other characters: its name, its origin, its job, its history, its psychological tendencies, its linguistic choices. Readers do not usually know the whole character from the start – there is a process of discovery involved, which demands a varying degree of effort on their part. Precisely, the author may present a character that is already rounded off, or one that develops along with the reading. The evolution of a character is given, among other aspects, by the appearing of certain traits that allow readers to see what remains and what changes. Along the process, the reader finds attitudes, reactions, behaviors, that become the bases of the identity of this paper-person: “The more marked and repeated the characteristic, the clearer and more defined the image of the character” (Bayona, 2003, in Honneger, 2003). In the case of translations, the readers meet a character that has been created by the author, but whose image has been co-created, or at least mediated, by the choices of the translator.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, the linguistic behavior of the lower-class Hobbits –Sam being the one representative of this group in most of the story– is a fundamental component of the image the reader produces. The English-speaking, working-class Sam does not make use of the same register that his employer and other wealthy Hobbits do; his linguistic repertoire differs from theirs; his syntactic structures deviate from the standard variety; tags and repetition are never far from his utterances. Readers know, by the information provided in the story itself, that Sam belongs to a different social class and his relation to the other main characters is not that of a relative or an equal socially speaking. Readers also know this because Sam's speech is different from that of the other main characters. His oral production marks him as a member of a certain group. His identity is not simply mentioned by the author; it is developed by means of Sam's verbal behavior.

When the translator sets to render a text from one language to another, there is the need to make certain choices. These are not always necessarily related to stylistic or even formal aspects of the text, but to potential readership with the considerable intra-language variation that exists in the Spanish-speaking world. In such cases, the professional probably will decide to sacrifice certain aspects of the original, to achieve a rendering that satisfies the widest set of customers. This seems to be the case in those idiosyncratic expressions which do not follow Standard English. Because of the wide range of varieties of Spanish, finding a similar deviation in this language that causes the same effect on all Spanish-reading sectors may prove difficult, if not downright impossible. Normalization, then, seems the only way out for such a complex market.

However, this does not apply to all lower-class Hobbit idiosyncrasies. As pointed out before, distribution change with expansion and synonymy were identified as the strategies chosen to translate tags and repeated expressions. This choice allowed the communicative function of the tag/expression to be maintained: pragmatically, the Spanish-speaking Hobbit is still endeavoring to keep the communication channels open; he is still (sometimes) closing his statements with a tag. Nonetheless, even if linguistically, the result of such choice may be considered impeccable, there is always the question of characterization. The selection of these particular strategies has weakened the profile of Sam and the other Hobbits of his social

group highly marked language which builds their identity as part of a group and differentiated from the other group. What is more, it has affected the identity of the members of the other class as well. Everybody in Hobbiton seems to speak using the same register, a standard variety of Spanish with almost no idiosyncrasies that may point to the existence of diverse social classes with their own identity. It can be stated that English-speaking Sam repeats certain expressions or applies the same structure really frequently; Spanish-speaking Sam could have been provided with the same feature. It is entirely feasible –and accessible to Spanish-speakers all over the world- to render *I (don't) reckon* (tag that appears 13 times in the oral discourse of the lower-class Hobbits, eight of them in Sam's) using the same lexical item instead of the nine different options enumerated above. Had this been the translators' choice, characterization would have been presented to the target readers in a way closer to the original.

CONCLUSION

The choice of translation strategies has produced normalization not only in the linguistic behavior of the characters, but also in their identities. What are two linguistically identifiable groups in the source text have become less clearly cut in the Spanish version, with their identity apparently coming only from the relative positions in society that the author has indicated for them. Their choice of discourse has become rather uniform, with a clear preference to Standard Spanish. Characterization has suffered an alteration after the process of translation; the contours drawn and fulfilled with specific linguistic behavior have been made less defined for the Spanish-reading community. Though this flattening may be rather inevitable due to the structure of the target language and its wide range of variation, there are verbal choices in the source text whose features could have been preserved in the translation.

It is likely that other considerations were made at the time of facing the task of translating *The Lord of the Rings* into Spanish. It is also probable that those readers who have access to the translated version only will not notice that all characters –whatever social group they belong to- use a language with little if any intra-variation, and practically always conforming to Standard Spanish. However, bilingual readers in contact with both texts may wonder why in one case there is such a colorful, marked use of the language, which becomes unmarked in the other, and how this alters the perception of certain speakers in the literary work, making them more clearly defined and characterized in one language than in the other.

This piece of research addresses a very specific set of texts (*The Lord of the Rings* and *El Señor de los Anillos*). It is to be wished that it aids a reflection on the multifaceted approach that translators (need to) take, which goes beyond the consideration of structural aspects only. It would also be interesting to look into readers' reactions to characterization in source and target texts, and how this might contribute to the education of future translators.

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Benefits and Drawbacks of Supervisory Feedback in the Teaching Practicum: Student Teachers' Perceptions

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ABSTRACT

This research study investigated the benefits and negative aspects of supervisory feedback as perceived by student-teachers involved in the teaching practicum, in two EFL teacher education programmes from Entre Ríos, Argentina. Data were obtained by means of a questionnaire, which included open-ended questions, and a semi-structured interview. After considering the perceptions of the student teachers participating in this research study, the findings suggested a characterisation of supervisory feedback that contributed to deepen the existing knowledge about feedback in the teaching practicum context. Moreover, the results obtained provide relevant information to interpret the impact of supervisory feedback on student-teachers in the English Language Teaching (ELT) practicum.

Keywords: teacher education - teaching practicum – feedback – student teachers - perceptions

INTRODUCTION

The teaching practicum provides for the authentic context within which student teachers (STs) experience the complexity and richness of being a teacher (Kiggundul & Nayimuli, 2009). One of its main purposes is to provide information on STs' performance, "a form of feedback which can take them forward, feed forward" (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Copland (2010) states that a central component of the teaching practice is the feedback offered to the student teacher (ST) by an experienced teacher who is expected to assess the STs' teaching and provide support, suggestions and advice with regard to improving practice.

Therefore, through supervisory feedback, "supervisors assist teachers-to-be in developing the tacit aspects of professional competence" and are responsible for providing STs with "strong foundations of professional knowledge and with tools for ongoing, independent professional development" in order to become autonomous teachers after graduation (White, 2005, p. 177).

Feedback and ST's reactions, during feedback sessions, can be affected by the power and functions of university supervisors and the perceptions that STs may have of them (González Ramírez, 2012). For Guardiola (2001), perceptions are mental images that result from selecting and interpreting feelings and which provide data on our habitat, our actions and internal states². They are processes by which "our brains give meaning to the stimuli registered by our senses" (Robbins, 2003, p. 45). Highlighting the importance of perceptions, Guski (1992, as cited in Manyari Aranda, 2010) points out that it is by collecting and analysing information from the outside world that human beings can familiarise themselves with it and develop possible action plans.

Hence, it seems important to understand STs' perceptions of supervisory feedback to characterise it and deepen the existing knowledge about the practicum. This research study represents one step towards this goal by investigating the perceptions of the benefits and negative aspects of supervisory feedback of STs involved in the teaching practicum, in two EFL teacher education programmes from Entre Ríos, Argentina.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research study is to analyse the perceptions of supervisory feedback of STs involved in the teaching practicum, in two EFL teacher education programmes from Entre Ríos, Argentina, Universidad Adventista del Plata (UAP) and Universidad Autónoma de Entre Ríos (UADER). Its main objectives are:

- To investigate student teachers' perceptions as regards the benefits and the negative aspects of supervisory feedback communicated in the EFL teacher education

² Own translation.

programmes both from Universidad Adventista del Plata (UAP) and Universidad Autónoma de Entre Ríos (UADER).

- To characterise supervisory feedback after considering the student teachers' perceptions in order to deepen the existing knowledge about the teaching practicum.
- To gather data and provide relevant information in order to understand, interpret and anticipate student teachers' reactions when receiving feedback in the EFL practicum.

METHODOLOGY

UAP's and UADER's programmes award a degree in English Language Teaching and conduct the practicum experience during the last year of the course of studies following a "partnership model". According to Mattsson, Eilertsen and Rorrison (2011), partnership models are based on agreements between a university and local schools that have been carefully selected and which are expected to offer a good educational environment as well as grant opportunities for practicum learning.

During the teaching practicum, university supervisors observe and assess STs' performance in their host classes and provide after class feedback, either verbal or written. The sample consisted of 7 student teachers randomly selected from the EFL Practicum at UAP and 8 student teachers randomly selected from the EFL Practicum at UADER. A questionnaire containing open-ended questions was administered to the participants to investigate the benefits and negative aspects of supervisory feedback, and a semi-structured interview was employed in order to triangulate data with the purpose of confirming, disputing and/or extending the data obtained through the questionnaires.

The questionnaire

The questionnaire investigated the participants' perceptions of the benefits and the negative aspects of supervisory feedback in the ELT practicum. All the STs answered the same questions in the same order and, although all the participants possessed a very good command of the target language, the questionnaires were designed in Spanish to minimize any pressure and to make it clear that there was no intention to evaluate the respondents' use of English. The questionnaire, based on the surveys designed by Starkey and Rawlins (2011) and Farr (2011), consisted of two items: a) participants were enquired about the benefits of received feedback; b) participants were asked to mention the negative aspects of received feedback (See Appendix A).

The interview

Although there was a set of pre-prepared guiding questions and prompts, the interview format was open-ended and the interviewee was encouraged to elaborate on the issues raised in an exploratory manner (Dörnyei, 2007). Each one-to-one interview lasted about 15 to 20 minutes and the interview guide included five sections: a) greeting and introduction; b) presentation of the objectives of the interview; c) Interviewee's personal information; d) content questions; e) final greeting (See Appendix B). Three STs from each of the universities involved in the study were randomly selected and interviewed. All the participants were asked the same questions, although not necessarily in the same order or using the same words. The interviewer supplemented the main questions with various probes. All the interviews were implemented in Spanish and they were recorded, transcribed and conducted by the researcher in person. Before recording the interviews, the interviewees' consent was obtained and the researcher guaranteed the confidentiality and anonymity of the data.

Results

The questionnaire

a- Benefits of supervisory feedback

Regarding the benefits of supervisory feedback, the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the answers as well as the references (i.e. number of times that each sub-theme was mentioned by the participants), are shown in Table 1.

The most frequently mentioned benefits were related to the *type of feedback* that *focused on weaknesses/strengths* (13 references made by the STs) and to the *development of personal/professional skills* that feedback promoted on future teachers. This type of feedback

was characterized as one which developed *self-criticism* (6 references by the STs), *self-confidence* (11 references by the STs) and *motivation* (5 references by the STs). Moreover, according to the participants, feedback that *improved the teaching practice* focusing on *teacher roles* (3 references), *use of the board* (4 references), *lesson planning* (3 references) and *classroom management* (4 references), was beneficial.

As a result, benefits of supervisory feedback were connected to comments focusing on weaknesses and strengths identified during the lesson observed that helped STs improve their teaching practice, and promote self-criticism, self-confidence and motivation to grow as professionals.

Table 1: Benefits of supervisory feedback: Distribution of references made by the STs and percentages in relation to the total of STs surveyed

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	STs (n=15)
Improvement of teaching practice	Teacher roles	3
	Use of the board	4
	Lesson planning	3
	Classroom management	4
Type of feedback	Focus on weaknesses/strengths	13
Development of personal/professional skills	Self-criticism	6
	Self-confidence	11
	Motivation	5

b- Negative aspects of supervisory feedback

As regards the negative aspects of feedback (see Table 3.1.2.1), nine STs mentioned the *negative comments* received about *demeanour*, specifically *tone of voice*. Four STs referred to *comments that only focused on weaknesses*, and two STs pointed out that feedback that showed supervisors' *unawareness of the groups being taught* was negative. Having *different supervisors* and consequently, *different considerations of lesson planning* was also negative, as highlighted by five STs. Moreover, *time constraints* resulting in *limited observation time* was a negative characteristic of feedback mentioned by 8 STs and *written feedback* was identified as negative by four STs.

Consequently, negative aspects of supervisory feedback were related to comments that referred to weaknesses, STs' personal characteristics, and comments showing lack of awareness of the students being taught. Furthermore, lack of time to observe STs and being supervised by more than one teacher was said to result in negative experiences. As regards the kind of feedback received or given, written feedback was regarded as ineffective.

Table 2: Negative aspects of supervisory feedback. Distribution of references made by the STs.

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	STs (n=15)
Focus on STs' demeanour	Tone of voice	9
Negative comments	Focus on weaknesses only	4
	Unawareness of problematic groups	2
Different supervisors	Different considerations of lesson planning	5
Time constraints	Limited observation time	8
Type of feedback	Written	4

The interview

a- Benefits of supervisory feedback

When talking about the benefits of supervisory feedback, the STs referred to feedback that described both the *strengths* and *weaknesses* observed during the lesson and that helped STs to develop both *personal and professional skills*, in accordance with the responses to the questionnaires.

The STs indicated that feedback made them aware of mistakes and, as a consequence, their practices improved. Besides, future teachers revealed that they felt enriched if their supervisors offered tips, advice and suggestions that included examples of their own experiences as professionals.

b- Negative aspects of supervisory feedback

For the STs interviewed, supervisory feedback had never been ineffective. These future teachers expressed their satisfaction regarding the kind of feedback received but pointed out that written feedback should always be complemented by verbal feedback or informal discussions with the supervisor. They indicated that written comments could have been clarified and expanded in a conversation and that STs should have been given a voice.

DISCUSSION

This study investigated the perceptions of the benefits and the negative aspects of supervisory feedback of 15 student teachers that were involved in the teaching practicum, in two EFL teacher education programmes from Entre Ríos, Argentina: UAP and UADER.

The results indicate that most of the participants agree on the fact that feedback is beneficial when it provides both strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, almost half of the participants indicate that it is positive to receive comments connected with the development of personal and professional skills that can contribute with their self-criticism.

Some STs state that it is positive to receive feedback that includes comments related to the *use of the board* (4) and *classroom management* (4), and some others consider that it

is beneficial to receive feedback connected with *teacher roles* (3) and *lesson planning* (3). These findings are consistent with previous studies that showed that STs prefer to be given feedback that acknowledges the kind of activities included in the lesson plan and that makes reference to their interaction with the group of students (Leshem & Bar-hama, 2007). Moreover, in agreement with Viáfara González (2005) and Smith (2010), STs expect feedback to clearly indicate what their *strengths* and *weaknesses* are.

Two difficulties emerged from the qualitative analysis of the interviews: 1) the supervisors' lack of time to observe the STs Teaching, and 2) the incongruence caused by being supervised by more than one teacher, a situation also found problematic by Rosemary, Richard and Ngara (2013).

Written feedback was also considered as a constraint since the participants explained that *verbal* feedback should complement the written comments. In addition, STs claim that it would be necessary to add a verbal instance for them to express their opinions, clarify doubts and discuss aspects that cannot be covered by written feedback only. It is encouraging to compare these results with those by Babkie (1998 as cited in White, 2007) who maintains that both spoken and written feedback need to be given, and that each should cover positives and negatives.

Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

This study has shed light on STs' perceptions of the benefits and the negative aspects of supervisory feedback in the ELT practicum. However, it is difficult to make claims about the generalizability of the knowledge gained in this research since it just involved participants from two EFL teacher education programmes from Entre Ríos, Argentina.

It is possible to identify a number of areas for future research into supervisory feedback which would help to generate deeper insights on the teaching practicum. An example of a future research topic is to examine the perceptions of STs from other socio-cultural contexts.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study suggest some possible implications for teacher education. Firstly, results have shown the importance of using complementary strategies to communicate supervisory feedback. As Harrison, Lawson and Wortley (2005 as cited in Tang & Chow, 2007) point out, the implementation of varied reflective practice strategies allows STs to construct and deconstruct practice and to become self-evaluative and critical professionals. Also, in agreement with Starkey and Rawlings (2011), it is recommended that verbal feedback in the form of informal meetings or forums organised by the supervisors be also incorporated as a regular strategy to communicate and discuss supervisors' comments.

All in all, providing feedback appears to be an enriching process, in which relations of power and underlying perceptions should be considered. As Tang and Chow (2007) suggest,

By developing shared understanding of assessment criteria, it is hoped that deprivatizing the 'judgment' and 'feedback' facets of supervisory practices will engender the gradual reframing of supervisory practices and facilitate the move towards maximizing teacher ownership of the assessment process to promote professional self-learning. (p. 1081)

STs' participation in this research study added to the understanding of supervisory feedback by generously sharing their valuable thoughts and perceptions during the practicum. In addition, having already experienced the practicum and the feedback process allowed STs to express their perceptions as leading actors eager to contribute to the teaching practicum experiences of future teachers to be.

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Appendix A – Questionnaire for STs

Universidad (University)	
Lugar y Fecha (Place and Date)	

ENCUESTA A PRACTICANTES DEL PROFESORADO EN INGLÉS (Questionnaire to Participants)

El objetivo de esta encuesta es recoger la valoración de los practicantes acerca del *feedback* docente. Su colaboración es imprescindible para contribuir al mejoramiento de la profesionalización docente, por lo que es importante una respuesta sincera y objetiva. (The purpose of this survey is to collect the assessment of practitioners about teachers' *feedback*. Their collaboration is essential to help improve teacher professionalization, so it is important to provide an honest and objective response)

a. Puntualice, si los hubo, beneficios del *feedback* que recibió durante su práctica docente. (Indicate the benefits, if any, of the *feedback* received during your teaching practice)

b. Mencione, si los hubiese, aspectos negativos del *feedback* que recibió durante su práctica docente. (Mention the negative aspects, if any, of the *feedback* received during your teaching practice)

Muchas gracias por su cooperación. (Thank you very much for your cooperation)

Appendix B- Semistructured Interview

ENTREVISTA SEMI-ESTRUCTURADA A PRACTICANTES DEL PROFESORADO EN INGLÉS. (SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW TO ENGLISH TEACHER PRACTITIONERS)

TIEMPO PREVISTO PARA CADA ENTREVISTA: (INTENDED TIME FOR EACH INTERVIEW)	15' - 20'
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A. INICIO. (START)

- ✓ Saludo, agradecimiento y charla informal. (Greetings and informal chat)

B. PRESENTACIÓN DEL OBJETIVO DE LA ENTREVISTA. (PURPOSE OF THIS INTERVIEW)

El objetivo de esta encuesta es recoger la valoración de los practicantes acerca del *feedback* docente. Su colaboración es imprescindible para contribuir al mejoramiento de la profesionalización docente, por lo que es importante una respuesta sincera y objetiva. (The objective of this survey is to collect the assessment of practitioners about teachers' *feedback*. Their collaboration is essential to help improve teacher professionalization, so it is important to provide an honest and objective response).

C. PRESENTACIÓN DEL/DE LA ENTREVISTADO/A. (INTERVIEWEE'S INTRODUCTION)

- ✓ Edad. (Age)
- ✓ Titulación. (Degree)
- ✓ Lugar de trabajo. (Workplace)

D. CONTENIDO. (CONTENT)

- ✓ Repercusión del *feedback* docente en la práctica de enseñanza. (Impact of teacher's *feedback* on teaching practice)
- ✓ El *feedback* docente, ¿genera beneficios para la práctica de la enseñanza? ¿Por qué? ¿Cuáles? (Does Teacher's *Feedback* generate benefits for the teaching practice? Why? Which?)
- ✓ El *feedback* docente, ¿genera perjuicios para la práctica de la enseñanza? ¿Por qué? ¿Cuáles? (Does the teacher's *feedback* generate damage to teaching practice? Why? Which?)

F- FINALIZACIÓN (COMPLETION):

- ✓ Agradecimiento y saludo de despedida (Thanks and goodbye greeting).

The Impact of Instructional Format on Reading Comprehension: Cognitive Load Theory and the Redundancy Effect

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ABSTRACT

Based on cognitive load theory, this paper explores the extent to which the redundancy effect influences L2 reading comprehension skills of two groups of learners whose ages and English language proficiency differed widely. 59 learners participated, 24 were teenagers with low-intermediate proficiency and 35 were adults whose command of English was advanced. Each group was divided into two sets. One was exposed to a single mode of instruction (reading alone) while the other was presented with a dual format (reading and listening simultaneously). Results revealed that students presented with the single mode of instruction outperformed the other group in the reading comprehension task, independently of their command of the language. Furthermore, when comparing results obtained in both read-only groups (low-intermediate and advanced), the students with higher proficiency obtained better results. In the light of the findings revealed some pedagogical implications for reading comprehension instruction are discussed.

Keywords: reading comprehension, cognitive load, instruction design, redundancy effect, memory, proficiency level

INTRODUCTION

The process of comprehension involves the construction of a mental representation of a text (e.g., Kintsch, 1998; Zwaan and Radvansky, 1998). Several simultaneous operations are involved in it: lexical processes are required to access word meanings, memory retrieval is needed to elaborate on the text and thus form connections to prior knowledge, and inference processes are crucial when it comes to integrating a sentence with previous ones and background knowledge (Moss et al. 2011). Comprehension, then, becomes a determining predictor of success in language learning as it involves mental processes of learning, memory and problem solving. These procedures allow learners to build up a knowledge system which can be automatically called on for speaking and understanding.

Cognitive load refers to the entire load which is imposed on working memory during human mental activities and it has been used in the analysis of common instructional procedures (Sweller, 2003; 2004) which may produce the so-called *redundancy effect* (henceforth, RE). The RE occurs when the same information is presented to learners simultaneously through different modes of instruction generating an extraneous cognitive load which obstructs learning (Chandler & Sweller, 1991; Sweller, 2005; Sweller & Chandler, 1994).

In the second/foreign language learning classroom, students are often provided with an oral version of a written text they are supposed to work with. It is overtly suggested among teachers –and even believed so by students– that this format mode of instruction reinforces learning. However, the effectiveness of this practice is highly questioned by Cognitive Load Theory (CLT).

This paper aims to explore the extent to which the RE impinges on comprehension skills of two groups of L2 learners whose ages and language proficiency differed widely. The first group was made up of teenagers from a private school with a low intermediate command of the language while the second one was composed of adult English majors. As regards the structure of this paper, the first part will include a theoretical background regarding CLT and RE. Following this section, a depiction of its participants will be included and the method employed for the research will be described. Then the results and a conclusion will be presented and the findings will be discussed. Finally, some avenues for further research will be addressed.

Theoretical framework

Over the last decades, there has been a growing interest in the field of reading comprehension in a second/foreign language. In this scenario, comprehension cannot be merely reduced to a process of accessing word meanings and combining them; it is an undeniably more active and complex process as there are a number of interactive variables

involved in it. When learners tackle a comprehension task, they must resort to several cognitive procedures to select information from discourse clues and connect it to their existing knowledge located in their long-term memory (Gao, 2012).

It is often the case that many second/foreign language instructors use an explicit dual mode of presenting a text to teach reading comprehension. They believe that presenting information to their students through multiple formats will actually foster reading comprehension. Yet, this in fact may turn out to be counterproductive for comprehension purposes as simultaneous reading and listening has proven less effective than reading alone (Tuero, 2011; Tuero, Luchini and Gómez Laich, 2012)

Learning structures are defined in terms of an information processing system involving *long term memory*, which stores all of our knowledge and skills on a more-or-less permanent basis and *working memory*, which performs the intellectual tasks associated with consciousness. They are the medium through which we are allowed to think both logically and creatively, to solve problems and to express ourselves. Working memory is closely related to *where* and *how* we direct our attention to think about something, or to process information. (Sweller, 1999; 1994).

Only after being attended to and processed by working memory, information is saved in long term memory. It is important to highlight that working memory is extremely restricted in both capacity and duration as it is incapable of dealing with more than eight elements of information at the same time (Miller, 1956). These restrictions may slow down or even impede learning. If our working memory's capacity is surpassed while processing a body of information, it is very likely that most of that information may not be recovered when needed.

Learning, thus, consists in the capacity of encoding or storing knowledge and skills into long term memory in a way that they can be easily recovered and later applied on demand. This knowledge base is held in *schemas* and if they are well-learned, they may be recalled and applied with relative ease. Being able to recall schemas may be compared with learning to drive as both processes provide a good example of developing fluency and automaticity. When first learning to drive, novices cannot carry on a conversation while driving. As the driver gains confidence and experience, navigating the car and chatting simultaneously becomes easier. Similarly, novice readers whose ability to decode words is not yet fast enough cannot devote attention to the task of understanding what they are reading until they have gained fluency and experience in the task (LaBerge and Samuels, 1974). Therefore, as learners become more proficient in the foreign language, they are able to develop strategies to handle difficulties they might come across when tackling comprehension tasks.

According to Gao (2012), cognitive load can be understood as the burden that a task imposes on an individual's working memory. Cognitive load may be classified into two different types: *intrinsic* and *extrinsic*. Chandler and Sweller (1991) first defined intrinsic cognitive load as the inherent difficulty of learning material. It is important to highlight that it cannot be altered by any instructional means other than changing the task or the levels of knowledge held by learners (Sweller, 1994). On the other hand, extrinsic cognitive load is defined as an unproductive burden imposed on the cognitive system which results from learners' investing cognitive resources in activities which are irrelevant to learning. Unlike intrinsic cognitive load, the extraneous one typically results from an inappropriate mode of instruction and can therefore be altered and even reduced if a more effective instructional procedure is employed (Gao, 2012).

CLT has raised awareness regarding the drawbacks of many instructional procedures currently utilized in EFL classrooms (Sweller, 2003, 2004). One of these procedures is the *redundancy effect*, which occurs when the same information is presented to learners in different forms. Presenting information to learners using a dual-format forces them to synchronize psychologically the multiple forms and inflicts an extraneous cognitive load on them that hinders learning (Chandler & Sweller, 1991; Sweller, 2005; Sweller & Chandler, 1994).

When it comes to exploring pedagogical purposes in the second/foreign language field, it must be borne in mind that the quality of instructional design affects reading comprehension and even language acquisition. That is, if tenets from cognitive load theory were used when designing instructional materials and working memory's role and its limitations were taken into account, better results could be obtained. In most ESL and EFL reading comprehension lessons, teachers often present reading comprehension activities in a way that implicitly assumes that spoken and written text should be presented jointly. The belief

underlying this teaching practice is that the more integrative the presentation modes are, the more beneficial for learning they will be.

Cognitive load theory suggests that instructional design that pushes learners to split their attention between multiple sources of information is ineffective for learning to occur. Furthermore, information should be conflated into one and presented to learners through a single mode that does not impose a heavy extraneous cognitive load and saves learners from performing unnecessary mental integrations that interfere with learning. Seemingly, reading comprehension skills are polished by learners as their language proficiency increases. Other research projects carried out have also underscored the importance of age in the development of reading comprehension skills and strategies. Results obtained from these studies, in fact, showed that learners' spans of working memory improved with their age (Gao, 2012).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The guiding research questions for this study are:

- 1) How does the redundancy effect influence L2 reading comprehension skills when listening to the exactly same text simultaneously?
- 2) How does the redundancy effect vary across different proficiency levels?

METHOD

Context and participants

The participants in this study were two groups of students learning English as a foreign language of two different age groups and proficiency level. The group of young learners consisted of twenty four students aged 13 enrolled in a low-intermediate course at CADS (Colegio Atlántico del Sur), Mar del Plata, Argentina. CADS is a private school where students have English classes twice a week, and receive a total of 4 weekly hours of instruction, starting at kindergarten and finishing in High School. These learners were preparing to take the PET Cambridge Exam. The group of adults was formed by 35 students aged 20 or over, with an advanced level of English. These students were taking Advanced Communication I and II at the English Teacher Training Course (ETTC) at Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata (UNMdP), that is, the two last courses in the area of Linguistic Skills.

To carry out this experiment, researchers worked separately with each group of learners (young learners and adults). Each group of students was randomly arranged in two subgroups (A & B), in order to complete a task separately. Group A of both young learners and adults was exposed to a single mode of instruction (reading alone), while Group B was asked to read and listen to the same scripted text simultaneously.

Research instruments and Procedures

The instruments utilized to gather the data were two different texts to be used with young learners and adults, accordingly. Level of linguistic challenge as well as length and topic were taken into consideration in the selection of the texts, in an attempt to choose pieces of discourse appropriate for each group. The text chosen for young learners was "Plastic Ducks Lost at Sea". It consisted of about 500 words, and was taken from the students' course book PET Result (Baker, 2010). Because students were preparing for PET in their English class, they were familiar with the type of material, which assured that no extra complexity was being imposed by the text itself.

In the case of the adults, the text used was an extract from a short story called "Window in the Sea", by Ralph Nading Hill (1856). This text consisted of 367 words. It was a little shorter than the one used with young learners because it contained more complex vocabulary and grammatical structures.

To evaluate the data that would be obtained from the students, both texts were segmented into linguistic units or clauses, following the usual procedure used to measure prose objectively (Lee, 1987). A group of eight evaluators from the research group "Cuestiones del Lenguaje" at Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata (UNMdP) classified those linguistic units into main and secondary ideas, following Johnson's methodology (1970).

Discrepancies in the classification of ideas were discussed and finally agreed upon among the evaluators. In the end, 9 main ideas were identified in each of the texts (See APPENDICES 1 and 2).

The days in which the data were collected, researchers introduced themselves to students, and let them know that they should all carefully read a text that would be screened, trying to understand and remember the greatest amount of information as possible. To facilitate the screening of the texts, each of them was fragmented into different paragraphs, each similar in length. These paragraphs were shown to both young and adult learners respectively on successive power point slides. Each slide was held on display for about 30 seconds. The pacing of the slides was controlled by the researchers. Both young and adults learners were then separated into subgroups A and B: "Read Only" (RO) and "Read and Listen" (RL), respectively, and worked in two different rooms.

The RO group was subjected to a single mode presentation of the text, as students just silently read the text from the screen, while participants in the RL group were exposed to a dual format, as they were presented with the on-screen text (just as group A), along with a synchronized redundant audio narration.

Right after completion of the reading /reading+listening tasks, learners were asked to write a summary of the text, containing as much information as they could retrieve. The methodology of free recall utilized by Diao and Sweller (2007) was applied, considering that what is understood can be remembered. Students were told not to worry about expressing ideas in the same chronological order in which they appeared on the screen. Researchers pointed out, too, that grammar and spelling mistakes would not be considered, as the focus of the task was on ideas remembered, and not on how accurately they were expressed. Students were also allowed to write their summaries in L1 or L2 according to their preference to facilitate the expression of their ideas.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data analyzed were the summaries collected from groups A and B of both young and adult learners. In order to evaluate how many main ideas students had remembered, researchers carefully examined students' productions, identifying and counting how many main ideas out of the ones previously selected students had recalled. The "master rating" (total number of main ideas counting all students within a group) for both groups of young learners was 108, and for adult learners, 153. The total number of main ideas recalled in each group was compared to its corresponding master rating.

RESULTS

Results were analyzed on two different levels:

- 1) Differences between RO and RL groups within each age group; and
- 2) Differences between intermediate and advanced learners

Considering the first level of analysis, there were significant differences in gain scores across the two presentation modes. In the case of young learners, students exposed to the reading alone treatment identified 51 main ideas out of the total average of 108, while those presented with the dual mode of instruction spotted 32 main ideas. Table 1 below summarizes the means score for each group and the difference between the means in percentages:

LOW-INTERMEDIATE LEARNERS		
Group A (Read only)	47.22 %	17.6%
Group B (Read and Listen)	29.62 %	

Table 1: Difference between the means for Low-Intermediate learners

As the table shows, students from group A, who were presented the text through a single mode, obtained better results than those in Group B, who were subjected to the redundant instruction modality. As presented in the table, the difference between the means reached 17.6%, which shows that Group A could recall more main ideas than Group B on the whole.

Similar results were obtained with the advanced students, though the gap between groups A and B was not as significant as those of young learners. Students exposed to a single-format presentation were able to retrieve 85 main ideas out of 153, whereas learners who read and listened simultaneously recalled 68. The means score for each group and the variations between the means in percentages are represented in Table 2, below:

ADVANCED LEARNERS		
Group A (Read only)	55.5 %	11.05%
Group B (Read and Listen)	44.45 %	

Table 2: Difference between the means for Advanced learners

As it was anticipated before, the results obtained with advanced students correspond with those gained from the young learners, favoring a single mode presentation. In this instance, the variation between means was of 11.05 %, supporting the use of a single format presentation.

Taking into consideration the second level of analysis, the results obtained from low-intermediate students were compared with those gathered from advanced learners. The findings obtained from this comparison showed that, though in both groups there was a clear improvement in recalling main ideas when using a single mode presentation, whereas the redundancy effect instilled by a simultaneous dual format instruction decreases with students with an advanced linguistic level.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results obtained in this study indicate that applying a dual mode presentation increases the redundancy effect in reading comprehension tasks. Exposing students to a double format hinders the recall of main ideas after reading a text, by imposing an extraneous cognitive load. A single mode method in the presentation of information is more appropriate, as it increases the likelihood of retrieving key ideas to be retrieved.

While students of varied ages and, more importantly, different levels of linguistic proficiency benefit from single-modality presentation, advanced students do not much. Their knowledge of the target language is greater and consequently they can develop strategies to cope with difficulties when reading a text, so the redundancy effect is not as detrimental to advanced learners as it is to less proficient students.

These findings actually challenge very common practices held by foreign language teachers, and even by some theories of Second Language Acquisition which promote the use of multiple presentations. What needs to be distinguished here is that presenting information in different modalities is beneficial to attend to different learning styles (kinesthetic, visual, auditory, etc.) and to bring variety into the classroom. However, the assumption being defied here is that of presenting *exactly the same information* in more than one mode *simultaneously*.

CLT argues that the load directed towards constructing, processing and automating schemas can be manipulated and optimized by means of good instructional design in ways that help learning by directing attention to more relevant learning processes. The findings of the present research show that this outcome was achieved more effectively by one modality mode than the redundant mode.

Implications of this study

First, from a pedagogical and instructional perspective, the results obtained in this study indicate that some habitual practices in the Foreign Language classroom need to be reconsidered and readapted. Teachers should not ask their students to read and listen to the same information at the same time when reading comprehension is trying to be developed. Approaching a text in a foreign language is already a very challenging task for students, so instructors should ensure not to add any extra difficulty that could impinge on reading comprehension tasks. The intrinsic linguistic difficulties presented by a piece of discourse are out of teachers' control, but it is through instruction that a difference can be made on the extrinsic burden. In order to facilitate learning, teachers should use instructional methods that will reduce extraneous or unnecessary cognitive load.

An analogous reasoning can be applied when approaching instructions to fulfill tasks. Even if the primary aim of a task is not reading comprehension, but, for instance, writing, learners need to process and *understand* instructions accurately before solving the activity provided. Therefore, if teachers read instructions out at the same time that students are reading them, they are impinging on their understanding. The most appropriate practice in this scenario is to let students read instructions on their own, give them time to process and comprehend that information, and only then, the teacher could paraphrase, clarify or enlarge on the written instructions provided, to clear up any possible doubts.

As for material designers, it is very common to find reading comprehension tasks in foreign language course books that encourage the simultaneous reading and listening of a text. This could be done as a second step, or as a follow-up activity to focus on, for instance, pronunciation. However, if the task that students are required to solve focuses on understanding ideas in the text, instructions should guide students into only reading, to reduce an unnecessary cognitive load.

Limitations of this study

However revealing the results of this study have been, there are some limitations that need to be taken into consideration. First, the number of participants in this experiment represents a small portion of the student population learning English as a Foreign Language both in the school and college selected. To obtain results that are more representative of the student population, and therefore able to generalize results, the study could be carried out with more students in the selected institutions or replicated in others.

On a second note, all the data collected for this study have a quantitative nature. Even though this type of data offers compelling results than can be easily organized and processed into percentages to compare performances, the collection of qualitative data would have made the analysis of the results more comprehensive. This could be done by having one-to-one or group interviews between the researchers and the students, or by asking students to write about their feelings or responses to the activity. These data could then be compared to the quantitative ones to evaluate any possible correlations or disparities in the results. This triangulation procedure would increase the validity of the results.

Avenues for further research

As it was stated in the previous section, it would be interesting to carry out this experiment with a larger student sample in order to make generalizations on the results. The collection of qualitative data would as well expand the reach of the study.

A thought-provoking variation that could be applied to this experiment is analyzing, not only students' recall of main ideas, but of secondary, and distracting ideas as well. This could help researchers evaluate if the RE when presenting information in a dual format also affects the type of ideas remembered.

Finally, as it was hinted at in the "Implications" section, it could be interesting to carry out a similar experiment focusing on learners' understanding of instructions, in particular. Again, the triangulation of both qualitative and quantitative data should be applied to obtain more valid results.

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APPENDIX 1

Window in the Sea

Human beings have lived on earth for at least two million years. For most of the time, people did not live in cities. They used to live in caves or built camps in the forest or on open ground. These camps were just groups of simple houses that were made of branches and leaves or grass.

Only about thirty people lived in each camp. The men hunted while the women and children collected food from the trees and other plants around the camp. All the food was shared among everyone in the group. After a few weeks they moved to another place in order to find more food there. It was a simple life, but people had to be creative. They had to make everything they needed, and they had to know a lot about plants and animals. The human body and brain were formed by this kind of life.

Today a lot of people live in cities. Life is much easier than it was in the past. There are fewer dangers, and most people do not have to hunt for food. They stay in one place for most of their lives.

But perhaps life today is less exciting than it was in the past. People get some excitement from sports and movies, but many feel that modern civilization is boring and unnatural. That's why some people look for adventures, they sail around the world, climb mountains, drive race cars or explore caves.

A lot of people go camping in the country or near the ocean. They try to get back to nature and live like people lived thousands of years ago. But they usually take a lot of modern conveniences with them. So, even when they go camping, they are not really a part of nature, and there is no real danger or excitement. Camping today is very different from camping in the past.

Main ideas

- 1) Human beings used to live in caves or built camps in the forest or on open ground
- 2) Men hunted
- 3) Women and children collected food from the trees and other plants around the camp
- 4) After a few weeks they moved to another place in order to find more food
- 5) Today a lot of people live in cities
- 6) Life is much easier than it was in the past
- 7) Some people look for adventure
- 8) A lot of people go camping in the country or near the ocean
- 9) But they usually take a lot of modern conveniences with them

APPENDIX 2

Plastic ducks lost at sea

In 1992, a ship travelling from China to the US was hit by a storm in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Its cargo of containers was washed overboard and at least one of them split open. The container held around 29,000 yellow plastic ducks as well as plastic frogs and turtles. The toys floated out into the water and have been travelling across the oceans ever since. It isn't unusual for things from ships to get lost in the sea. Every year, as many as 10,000 containers fall into the ocean, spilling out everything from sports shoes to plastic bricks. These objects have already done harm to both our seas and our wildlife, and if the accidents don't stop, the situation will get worse. However, in the case of floating ducks, something positive has happened. Scientists know that the direction the water moves in our seas and oceans affects our climate. Dr. Ebbesmayer, a scientist in the US, realized that observing the ducks as they float around the world can help us understand how ocean currents work. In order to collect information, he began to track the ducks' progress; predicting where they would go, and listening to reports of where they were found. It seems that after travelling together for some time, the ducks went in different directions. Many of them floated south to the shores of Indonesia, Australia and South America. Meanwhile, the rest headed north into the Arctic Ocean, becoming trapped in ice until the winds and the movement of the water sent them over 3,000 kms to the North Pole. Today, although many ducks have been found washed up on different shores around the world, thousands of the ducks are still floating. So, if you see a plastic toy, bleached and worn after so much travelling, with the words "First Years" printed on it, and you report your find, you will help towards our understanding of the world's climate.

Main ideas

1. A ship travelling was hit by a storm
2. One of the containers was split open
3. The container had plastic ducks, frogs and turtles
4. The toys have been floating/ travelling across the oceans ever since
5. Many objects lost in the sea have done harm to the seas and wildlife
6. However, the floating ducks didn't cause any harm
7. Floating ducks have been used to understand how currents work and their effect on climate
8. Many ducks are still floating
9. If you find one you'll help towards the understanding of the world's climate

Abstract

The inclusion of critical-thinking oriented activities in our teaching practices is a topic of recurrent concern in the TEFL field. This is especially so in the context of teacher training courses in which student teachers start working in the field and delivering lessons that should incorporate this dimension in the learning objectives proposed. This article analyzes the writing of learning objectives in the lesson plan activities designed by student teachers in a third course subject at the English Teacher Training Program at Universidad Autónoma de Entre Ríos, Argentina, in the light of the knowledge and cognitive process dimensions proposed by the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, to finally discuss the pedagogical implications of incorporating critical thinking skills in learning objectives.

Key words: critical thinking – revised Bloom's taxonomy - learning aims – teaching training – lesson planning.

INTRODUCTION

Seminario de la Práctica Docente II (Teaching Practice Seminar II), a third course subject in the English Teacher Training Program at Universidad Autónoma de Entre Ríos, is the first instance of this course of studies in which student teachers carry out their teaching practices. It entails designing lesson plans for a previously observed class, teaching during two weeks and subsequently reflecting on the experience in the form of a narrative.

The conscious design and preparation of activities that aim at developing higher order cognitive skills in secondary school learners has been a topic of much concern and discussion among the members of the team of teachers who teach this course. The need to help learners acquire knowledge on the basis of the analysis and criticism of information seems to be missing in the secondary school context. In general, student teachers' narratives on aims for a class indicate that they are not aware of this need.

Even though there is a considerable amount of research focused on lesson plan design criteria (see, e.g. Doff, 1988; Woodward, 2001; Spratt, Pulverness & Williams, 2005), teacher trainers teaching Seminario de la Práctica Docente II (Teaching Practice Seminar II) have followed Harmer's (2007) lesson planning proposal to instruct students in this practice given the simplicity with which this topic is explained.

Consequently, the aim of this article is twofold. In the first place, Harmer's principles in connection with aim production will be examined in order to delve into the appropriateness of this model to meet the objectives set for student teachers. In the second place, those learning aims included in the lesson plans activities designed by student teachers with regard to knowledge dimension (i.e. the type of knowledge learners are expected to acquire or construct) and the cognitive process dimension (i.e. the thinking skills required from learners) will be analyzed. In this way, it will be possible to prove that the present approach to aim writing is not yielding the intended results.

Current approach to aim writing

According to Harmer (2007), a number of elements should be taken into account when planning a lesson, namely general and personal aims, class profile, assumptions, skill and language focus, timetable fit, potential learner's problems and possible solutions and success indicators (pp. 371-374). When making the plan formal, student teachers need to include the activities and procedures, and interaction type and activity timing. For the purpose of this study, the focus was placed on aims and activities.

Harmer (2007) defines aims as "outcomes which all our teaching will try to achieve" (p. 371). In other words, aims describe the skills student teachers expect their learners to manage by the end of each activity, stage, lesson or sequence of lessons. Harmer poses that there are some considerations that need to be taken into account in relation to aim writing:

- a) given an aim, a number of activities can be designed to achieve it;

- b) the acronym SMART is used to evaluate the validity of aims, i.e. aims should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timed (Harmer, 2007, p. 371);
- c) aims and their corresponding activities are organized as "a coherent sequence of lesson stages" (Harmer, 2012, p. 178).
- d) following the lesson plan model this author provides in his work, aims are written using a verb in the to- infinitive form.

A further point that needs to be considered when analyzing aim writing is the following:

- e) it is necessary to distinguish between aims and purposes, the latter being the intentions in terms of what the teacher expects from a course (Feldman, 2010, p. 42)

These five points provide a critical framework which encourages some reflection upon the criteria for effective aim writing. Even though some aims may seem to be effective at first sight, upon analysis, there are some problematic aspects that need to be further developed. An aim such as *to allow students to practice reading comprehension* may seem correct according to Harmer's proposal but, if studied in depth, it presents some pitfalls.

Regarding Harmer's considerations, a) the aim *to practice* can be fulfilled by performing a wide variety of activities because to understand what the instructor intends to do it is necessary to focus both on the aim and the activity itself, its procedure; b) the action *to practice* cannot be measured in terms of grading; c) the vagueness of the verb does not determine the lesson stage the aim belongs to, that is, how the activity deriving from that aim fits into a sequence of activities; finally, with respect to d) and e), although the aim is written using the to-infinitive form, the implicit subject of it would be the instructor, i.e. it is the purpose of the instructor to allow learners to practice reading comprehension. What learners will actually do is *to practice*.

The most salient problems student teachers seem to find when writing aims following Harmer's proposal are related to the lack of explicit subject, the broad nature of the verb and its corresponding object. An alternative approach to aim writing is to observe a method of classification for thinking behaviors that are considered important in the learning processes.

In order to provide a framework to classify the nature of the educational objectives according to the skills put into practice, a team led by the educational psychologist Dr Benjamin Bloom (1956) identified three domains of learning, namely, the cognitive (knowledge), affective (attitudes and feelings) and psychomotor (physical skills) domains. The present study focuses only on the cognitive domain.

Some decades later, Bloom's former students, Anderson and Krathwohl, introduced some changes to the original Taxonomy, in an attempt to update the taxonomy in accordance with the needs of present-day teachers. Anderson and Krathwohl's Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (2002), hereafter RBT, represents "a multi-tiered model of classifying thinking according to six cognitive levels of complexity" (as cited in Forehand, n.d., p. 1). Thinking skills are classified as lower order cognitive processes, remembering, understanding and applying, and higher order cognitive processes, analyzing, evaluating and creating. Anderson and Krathwohl (2002) defined these six cognitive levels of complexity as follows:

- Remembering: Retrieving, recognizing and recalling relevant knowledge from long-term memory.
- Understanding: Constructing meaning from oral, written and graphic messages through interpreting, exemplifying, classifying, summarizing, inferring, comparing and explaining.
- Applying: Carrying out or using a procedure through executing, or implementing.
- Analyzing: Breaking material into constituent parts, determining how the parts relate to one another to an overall structure or purpose through differentiating, organizing and attributing.
- Evaluating: Making judgments based on criteria and standards through checking and critiquing.
- Creating: Putting elements together to form a coherent or functional whole; reorganizing elements into a new pattern of structure through generating, planning, or producing (as cited in Forehand, n.d., p. 2)

A further innovation proposed by the RBT is the change in nature of the Knowledge category. In the example above, *to practice reading comprehension*, this aim can be divided into two parts: a verb – *to practice* – and a noun phrase – *reading*

comprehension. These separate aspects are recognized in the RBT “to form separate dimensions, the noun providing the basis for the Knowledge dimension and the verb forming the basis for the Cognitive Process dimension” (Krathwohl, 2002, p. 213). The knowledge dimension is thereby divided into four subcategories. Following Grant (2008) these subcategories respond to factual knowledge (basic information), conceptual knowledge (the relationships among pieces of a larger structure that make them function together), procedural knowledge (how to do something) and metacognitive knowledge (knowledge of thinking in general and your thinking in particular) (pp.4-5). In this respect, critical thinking, which is defined as “a process which stresses an attitude of suspended judgment, incorporates logical inquiry and problem solving, and leads to an evaluative decision or action” (Tama, 1989, p.1), is usually considered to be related to metacognitive processes (Pineda Baez, 2004, p. 52) as well as to the practice of higher order thinking skills.

One of the main aims trainers teaching Seminario de la Práctica Docente II (Teaching Practice Seminar II) pursue is to make student teachers aware of the importance of higher order thinking skill development when writing on learning objectives. Accordingly, student teachers need to critically examine the type of knowledge and cognitive processes they require from their learners. RBT can be considered a tool for aim writing that may aid in the inclusion of more varied knowledge types and cognitive skills that secondary school learners are demanded to put into practice. A final outcome of this reflection may be the incorporation of critical thinking skills in student teachers' learning aims.

METHODOLOGY

Since the intended purpose of this study was to analyze the learning aims included in the lesson plan activities designed by student teacher attending Seminario de la Práctica Docente II (Teaching Practice Seminar II), in the second term of 2014, 11 third-year undergraduates planned and carried out three or four lessons in local state secondary schools. These student teachers were divided into four pairs and a group of three. The learning aims included for each activity (n= 11/19) were designed following Harmer's (2007) aim writing proposal so they included a verb written in the to-infinitive form and were broad in nature, thus, deriving in the need of analyzing the activity-procedure as well.

Learning aims were analyzed with regard to the knowledge dimension (i.e. the type of knowledge learners are expected to acquire or construct) and the cognitive process dimension (i.e. the thinking skills required from learners) that each learning aim required. A double-entry table designed by Krathwohl (2002, p.16) was followed for the analysis. This table helped determine the type of knowledge and the thinking skills demanded from learners.

The study was quantitative in nature. Descriptive statistics were utilized to explain the type of knowledge and cognitive processes required in the learning aims included in the lesson plan activities designed by student teachers. The data were then collated by means of Excel spreadsheets and plotted out in pie charts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In following Harmer's (2007) aim writing proposal, and given the broad nature of the verbs, it was necessary to analyze both the learning aims and its corresponding activities. This means that an aim such as *For students to identify new vocabulary about school subjects* was studied together with its activity – *listening to some sentences and choosing the correct school subject*.

There were a total of 70 aims in the eleven lesson plans analyzed. However, all of them were interpreted by the researcher as purposes, as Feldman (2010) posits it. They were written following the to-infinitive structure proposed by Harmer (2007) but, in terms of meaning, they represented the student teachers' intentions for that activity, given that the implicit subject was 'the student teacher' (e.g. “to present new vocabulary”).

The rest of the aims (n=59) were collated in an Excel spreadsheet (Figure 1 shows the knowledge category in its dual nature, as proposed by the RBT). They were tabulated according to the type of knowledge and cognitive process required, following Kathwohl's two-dimensional table (2012, p. 16), so the type of knowledge presented in each aim was placed in the horizontal axis while the thinking skill demanded from learners was classified in the vertical axis.

Figure 1: Aims classified according to the Cognitive Process and Type of Knowledge dimensions. **Note:** Adapted from Krathwohl (2002, p. 16)

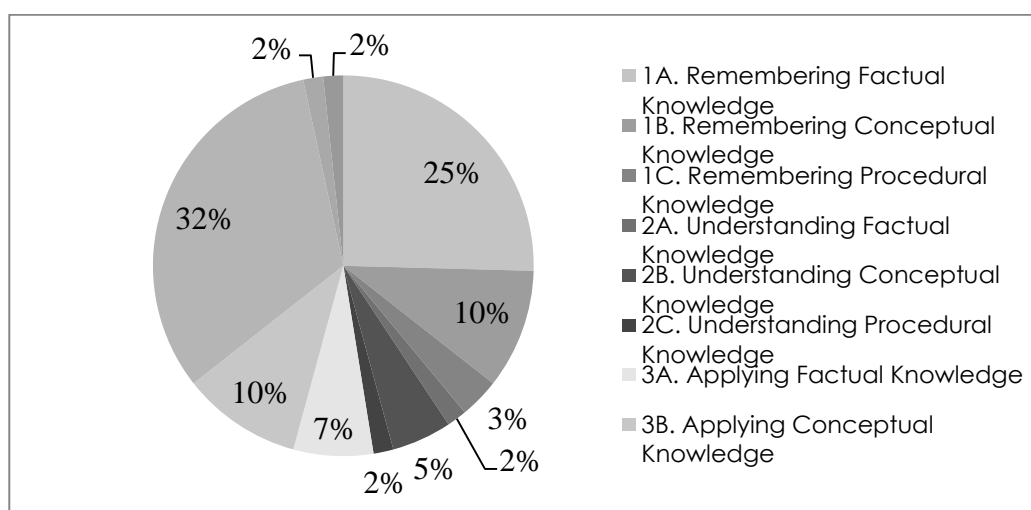
Knowledge Dimension	Cognitive Process Dimension					
	1.Remember	2.Understand	3. Apply	4.Analyze	5.Evaluate	6.Create
A. Factual Knowledge	15	1	4	0	0	1
B. Conceptual Knowledge	6	3	6	0	1	0
C. Procedural Knowledge	2	1	19	0	0	0
D. Metacognitive Knowledge	0	0	0	0	0	0

Regarding the first analysis, it can be observed that most of the objectives fell into the factual and conceptual knowledge categories. There were no learning aims which included metacognitive knowledge. Factual knowledge was mainly related to knowledge of vocabulary and terminology, conceptual knowledge was connected to verb tense patterns and their interrelationships, and procedural knowledge was linked to sentence, question and answer formation in English. It seems that student teachers focused mainly on their learners gaining basic information and the way they related it within a larger structure. These learning aims have left aside metacognitive knowledge that “allows learners to orchestrate and self-regulate their own learning” (Pineda Báez, 2004, p. 52). Metacognitive knowledge is, therefore, of utmost importance to foster critical thinking in learners.

With respect to the cognitive process dimension, results show that the categories *remembering*, *understanding* and *applying* were included in 96% of the aforesaid aims (n= 57 out of 59 aims). Only 2% of the aims included a verb related to *creating* and the same number was found in the process of *evaluating* (n= 1 learning aim each). There were no aims connected with the process of *analyzing*. It is necessary to clarify that for the RBT, compared to the original Taxonomy, “the requirement of a strict hierarchy has been relaxed to allow the categories to overlap one another” (Krathwohl, 2002, p. 215). However, this theory sheds light on the fact that one process is more complex than the other, which means that learning aims in the lesson plan activities analyzed were mainly concerned with lower order thinking processes.

Results from the previous table were plotted in a pie chart (see Figure 2 below), leaving aside those categories with no corresponding aim, to add clarity to the presentation of the results.

Figure 2: Percentage of the type of knowledge and thinking skills required in learning aims.



As for knowledge and cognitive process dimensions, most aims aimed at *remembering procedural knowledge* (n=19; 32%) and *remembering factual knowledge* (n= 15; 25%). An

important number of aims also focused on *remembering conceptual knowledge* (n=6; 10%) and *applying conceptual knowledge* (n=6; 10%). This may imply that learning aims seemed to be related to the intention of basic knowledge and procedure learning as well as their use in a familiar situation. There is a lack of emphasis on metacognitive knowledge and more complex thinking skills. However, it is the latter, "generally recognized as the more important and long-lasting fruits of education" (Krathwohl, 2002, p. 217), which may give rise to the practice of critical thinking.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that cognitive processes in student teachers' learning aims did not follow the hierarchical order suggested by the RBT. It was not possible to determine the lesson stage from the cognitive process that student teachers expected their learners to develop. For instance, given a consolidation lesson, aims included a verb related to *applying*, then to *identifying* and finally to *applying* again a certain procedure, such as *how to tell the time*. Therefore, activities were not efficiently sequenced.

CONCLUSIONS AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The present study focused on the analysis of learning aims included in the lesson plans designed by student teachers. The purpose of this analysis was to observe whether there is inclusion of critical-thinking oriented activities. On the basis of the previous discussion and findings, it can be concluded that student teachers find some difficulties in following Harmer's (2007) aim writing proposal. For the purposes of this Teacher Training Program subject, this approach to aim writing has fallen short of instructors' expectations of offering student teachers a criteria-based tool with which to properly set the learning aims.

Even though Harmer's approach may seem to be much simpler to introduce student teachers into the practice of aim writing, the RBT may be considered a step forward towards the inclusion of more varied knowledge types and cognitive skills required from secondary school learners. In this regard, Pineda Báez highlights the need of re-orienting "the process of reformulation of (...) objectives and instructional procedures to promote the development of language competence while fostering criticality" (2004, p.77). Therefore, upon first analysis, the RBT appears to be an effective tool to write learning aims which include critical thinking in the EFL context.

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