

Recognizing Myself in an EFL Classroom

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To Universidad Pedagógica Nacional that opened the doors to a whole new world for me
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Abstract

This qualitative action research aimed to describe the processes that contribute to the consolidation of personal identity and engagement among seventh-grade students in an EFL classroom at Guillermo Cano Isaza public school in Bogotá. The problem was identified through diagnostic tests and classroom observations, which revealed that students perceived English as a subject without meaning, showed low motivation, and lacked basic foundations in vocabulary and grammar. Therefore, this research employed the theoretical constructs of identity, autobiography, engagement and teaching materials to explore how these issues could be addressed through a pedagogical intervention based on autobiographical and self-recognition activities. The implementation was designed to connect language learning with students' personal realities and emotions. Data collected through four instruments were analyzed, demonstrating that autobiographical tasks played a central role in the self-identity process, teaching materials fostered engagement, and identity-related activities promoted emotional investment.

Keywords: Identity, engagement, autobiography, teaching materials.

Resumen

Esta investigación-acción cualitativa tuvo como objetivo describir los procesos que contribuyen a la consolidación de la identidad personal y el compromiso entre los alumnos de un curso de grado séptimo en el aula de inglés como lengua extranjera de la escuela pública Guillermo Cano Isaza de Bogotá. El problema se identificó mediante pruebas de diagnóstico y observaciones en el aula, que revelaron que los alumnos percibían el inglés como una asignatura sin sentido, mostraban poca motivación y carecían de fundamentos básicos en vocabulario y gramática. Por lo tanto, esta investigación empleó los constructos teóricos de identidad, autobiografía,

compromiso y materiales didácticos para explorar cómo se podían abordar estas cuestiones mediante una intervención pedagógica basada en actividades autobiográficas y de autorreconocimiento. La implementación se diseñó para conectar el aprendizaje de idiomas con las realidades personales y las emociones de los alumnos. Se analizaron los datos recopilados a través de cuatro instrumentos, lo que demostró que las tareas autobiográficas desempeñaron un papel central en el proceso de identidad personal, que los materiales didácticos fomentaron el compromiso y que las actividades relacionadas con la identidad promovieron la implicación emocional.

Palabras clave: Identidad, compromiso, autobiografía, materiales contextualizados.

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CHAPTER I: CONTEXTUALIZATION

This chapter deals with a general contextualization of the population. First, a characterization of the school in terms of institutional and structural characteristics. Second, a brief description of students regarding some sociodemographic aspects, personal likes, their perception about English and the English class, and their behavior. Third, the diagnosis of the English level the population had. Fourth, the statement of the problem and the rationale based on the findings. Finally, the chapter presents the research question and the general and specific objectives that guide the proposal.

Context

This research was developed at Guillermo Cano Isaza (GCI) school. This is a public institution located in Bogotá. Moreover, it is a technical school with emphasis on commerce, food and industry. For this reason, it has a food plant, a mechanical workshop and a trade laboratory in its facilities. In addition, it has an agreement with the National Service of Learning (SENA) in the specialties of accounting and finance, electromechanics and design, and food agroindustry. This agreement is useful for the continuity of the students' learning process based on the emphasis they choose. With this in mind, the subjects that build these approaches begin in sixth grade.

The school's Institutional Educational Project (PEI) (2019) is titled *The Guillermista Community: A Life Project, because planning for the future is the essence of human life*. This is the basis in which the school is committed to answering five questions that will help shape each student's Life Project. These questions are: Who am I? Where am I going? How do I see myself in the future? How do I want others to see me in the future? and How can I transcend? Furthermore, this document establishes the school's mission as contributing to the training of

children and teenagers so that they can be autonomous with social responsibility based on the development of academic, technical, humanistic and necessary competencies for an adequate coexistence in society (2019).

The school has different buildings, B being the largest of them as it has three floors where the high school classrooms, the teachers' room, the library, an auditorium, a basement and different laboratories such as the bilingual and commerce are located. There are also a store and a dining room near the school entrance. A curious fact is that the students do not have lunch there but, in their classrooms, as was noted in some observations registered in field notes (see annex 1). In addition, within the curriculum the school has decided to combine the English and Spanish classes into a subject named Humanities. This means that the performance of this hybrid subject is measured through the performances students have in both, Spanish and English classes.

Population

This research was carried out with seventh graders. According to the answers gathered through a questionnaire (see Annex 2), the course was made up of thirty-six students, nineteen girls and seventeen boys, whose average age was between 12 and 15 years old. Twenty-five of them were born in Bogotá and eleven in other cities of the country and Venezuela. All of them lived in Ciudad Bolívar which was the area where the school was located. This fact makes it possible to determine that their socioeconomic stratum was between 1 and 3.

Regarding English, the answers suggested students enjoyed the class, as they understood how this class could help them have a better future in terms of academic and professional development. In this line, 90% of the students answered they considered English would have an important role in their lives, while the 10% left answered they did not like neither

learning, nor the class, nor English for their future. Finally, in relation to students' behavior, through the observations it could be noticed that all of them got along well with each other as they usually tended to work in groups in a responsible way and under respectful standards.

Diagnosis

Continuing with the characterization process, a diagnosis test was performed in order to know the English level students had in the four skills (Annex 3). The test was designed based on what it is proposed in the Basic Standards of Competence in Foreign Languages by the National Ministry of Education (MEN, 2015) as in the class there was not a syllabus established. Having this in mind, the diagnosis test was composed of three parts: one for listening and reading, one for writing and the last one for speaking.

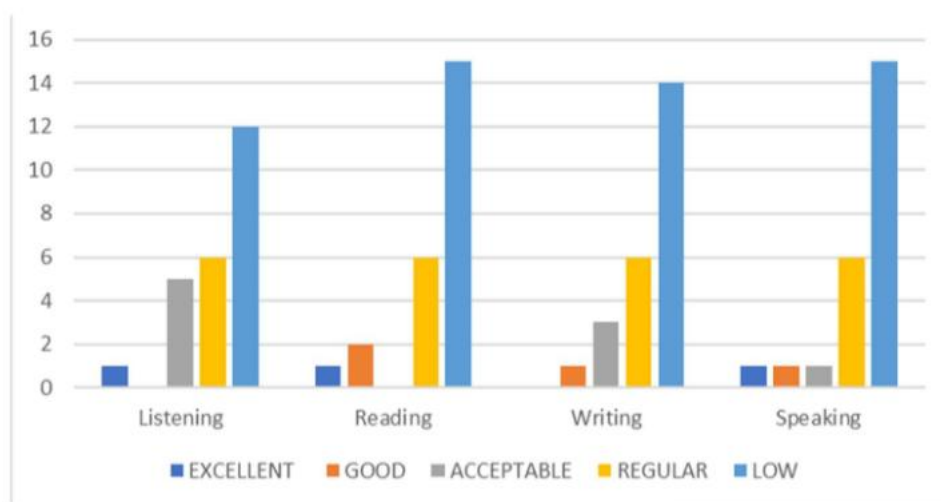
The first part corresponded to listening and reading skills. Taking advantage of the time of the year back then, a paragraph about Halloween was presented. Within the text, there were five blank spaces that corresponded to words mentioned in the audio such as monster, candy, school, classroom, and special. Then, there were four questions about the paragraph. Two were literal and the other two were inferential. The purpose of those parts was to check if students had the competencies to “understand the general idea in a description and extract general and specific information from a short text written in simple language.” (MEN, 2015, p.22) that are established as basic competences for sixth graders.

For the former skill, general comprehension, understood as the ability to identify specific information and answers to literal and inferential questions was evaluated. For the latter, literal and inferential comprehension, grammar and following instructions were checked. Nevertheless, 50% of students scored low in these two skills in each criterion. On the other hand, just one person obtained an excellent score, as is shown in figure 1. Those results were connected

to the lack of exercises of listening and reading in the classroom as the English headteacher pointed out in the interview (Annex 4). Then, most students had difficulty identifying some vocabulary in the audio which led them to not understand the information and prevent them from responding successfully to literal and inferential questions.

Figure 1.

Results of the diagnostic test in each skill.



The second part was related to writing skills. A drawing of two kids in costumes with a spooky background was shown on the TV and given to each student on paper. To verify that they were able to “describe in short sentences people, places, objects or events related to known topics and situations” (MEN, 2015, p.23) the instruction was to write five sentences describing the image. They could write about children, background and all the things that could be described. In this part, clarity and coherence, grammar, spelling, and punctuation were tested. However, just over 50% of students again scored low. The students' responses indicated clearly areas for improvement. Firstly, the students who wrote did so without any notion of sentence structure, without knowing how to use the verb to be and with spelling errors. And secondly, there were others who did not write at all.

Finally, the third part aimed to rate the speaking ability based on criteria such as pronunciation, vocabulary, intonation, and self-confidence. To do that, students were asked to read a sentence of the paragraph presented in the reading part. The results revealed that more than half of the students had difficulties with some or all the above criteria. Regarding pronunciation and vocabulary, despite the audio being played many times, they did not recognize the words and read them as they were written. This factor may be due to the lack of oral communication exercises in class as well. Finally, in relation to intonation and self-confidence, because of the lack of knowledge of key aspects such as basic vocabulary and grammatical structure, students did not feel confident enough to be able to adequately read what was asked of them, especially if it was in public and out loud.

To sum up, the results of the diagnostic test showed that over half of the students had a low level of English in all four skills, in other words, the majority of the population did not reach some of the competencies set out in the basic standards and the goals established in the English class at school.

Statement of the problem

It is important to note that the population was transitioning from elementary school to high school, since the research began when they were in sixth grade and ended when they were in seventh grade. This fact implies that the English teachers they had in elementary school were not English teachers but taught all subjects. In addition, some problems related to the school and the interaction with the English teacher were part of the daily dynamics lived by the students. On one hand, according to the interview with the English teacher they had when they were in sixth grade (Annex 4), they had difficulties in the development of the classes since at the beginning of

the school year, the school was undergoing infrastructure remodeling, so children did not go to school regularly and the teacher had to leave them worksheets to continue learning.

Moreover, according to the field diary notes (Annex 1), the English class spaces were focused on practicing the song The Eye of The Tiger by Survivor to be performed in an institutional event, in which in fact, only 4 students participated singing and 10 others dancing. This excluded the other half of the class who were not doing anything related to English. The teacher stated that the reason why the other students did not want to be part of the performance was because

“They come from fifth grade, where the Song Festival, which is also done in elementary school, was a little easier, and when they saw and heard the song, which is a little more complicated, they were a little shy. I think it was more shyness.” (Personal communication, September 25th, 2024)

On the other hand, as was mentioned in the diagnosis part, the teacher was absent most of the time due to personal issues, especially on Mondays and Thursdays (schedules from sixth grade). In fact, she mentioned that because of these issues she had to take a leave of absence for a month which along with the Song Festival did not allow her to teach the last period of the year of the English class because when she left there was no replacement, and the students did not have neither a teacher nor English class.

In this order of ideas, it could be established that the students did not have the necessary foundation in English. This fact was confirmed by the results obtained from the diagnostic test that showed lack of knowledge in English as basic vocabulary and use of basic grammatical structures such as the verb to be. These results showed that more than half of the students did not

reach any of the four competencies, consequently, they did not reach the A2 basic level stipulated in the Basic Standards of Competence they were supposed to have. This situation indicated a problem since a duty established in the Basic Standards was not being fulfilled, which stated that “the task of all educational institutions is to ensure that their curricula and the strategies they employ contemplate, at a minimum, the achievement of these standards in these grade groups and hopefully exceed them”. (MEN, 2015, p. 11).

Another relevant aspect the English teacher mentioned was that she perceived that the students saw the English class as a gap-filler since it, together with Spanish, made up the subject called humanities, so she noticed that the students got relaxed and told her that with the Spanish grades they were able to balance the low scores in English. Moreover, according to the observation and the field notes, students seemed confused and frustrated because many of them stated they did not understand anything of the English worksheets used in class. In one of the sessions, one student even asked why they had to learn English. Thus, it was possible to set out that another problem identified was the lack of interest or motivation towards the language. Indeed, this last fact could be the reason why in the diagnosis test more than half of students did not try to answer the questions or write some sentences, the spaces were left unanswered. Therefore, it seemed that students did not have a purpose to use the English language.

Rationale

Considering the students' ages, it was possible to establish that they were in a developmental stage which Erikson (1998) identifies as identity vs. role confusion and that occurs in adolescence. At this stage, in the formation of personal identity some significant aspects are encompassed such as psychosexual identity, which refers to the construction of loyalty and trust with whom love can be shared; ideological identity, which is the person's set of

values; psychosocial identity, which is the one in which the individual's social relationships are established; professional identity, in which the individual begins to show interest in some profession for his or her future; and cultural and religious identity, which constitutes the formation of spirituality and the development of the individual's customs.

It is also important to note that this vision aligns with the MEN (2006) Basic Competence Standards for sixth and seventh grade, which emphasize, in terms of cognitive skills

“that students recognize their membership in various groups (family, school, community, nation) as part of their identity, and, regarding communicative competencies, that students understand that there are multiple ways to express identity, whether through physical appearance, artistic expression, or verbal communication, and that they must respect them”. (p. 175).

Furthermore, MEN (2006) emphasizes that working on the development of personal identity is essential to understanding the world. Without this recognition, students may struggle to distinguish themselves, appreciate human diversity, and/or contribute their unique perspectives to the collective good.

This perspective is reinforced by the Curricular Guidelines in Ethics and Human Values, which state:

“A wide variety of activities, experiences, and relationships must be proposed to allow students to recognize themselves and develop an awareness of their individuality and their relationships with others. Dramatic games, role-playing, autobiographical narrative activities, and life stories can create opportunities for self-knowledge of the body, as well as of one’s own sensations, preferences, desires, knowledge, skills, and difficulties”.

(MEN, 1998, p. 46).

In line with this, encouraging students to explore and articulate their identity could therefore support both psychosocial development and academic engagement. In regard to this, one strategy suitable to address this situation is the creation of autobiographies which allow learners to reflect on their personal experiences and how they give meaning to their narratives. (Ibañez & Maganto, 2010)

Furthermore, while approaching this resource, teaching materials play a crucial role in its process of creation as they are linked to self-recognition activities. Those materials are tangible resources that function as tools for achieving teaching and learning objectives and form part of the set of teaching resources used in the classroom. (Szököl, 2024). Thus, the role of these materials is important since they foster interest and motivation in the classroom and not only support vocabulary and grammar learning but also encourage students to express themselves authentically in English, giving them a purpose to use the language. Thus, by integrating autobiographical activities into the teaching of English as a foreign language, this research addresses both the observed motivational challenges and the national standards and curricular guidelines that require students to have identity recognition and communicative competence.

Research Question

How do seventh graders recognize their self-identity and feel engaged in the EFL classroom through the creation of their autobiography at Guillermo Cano Isaza school?

General Objective

To analyze the processes that guide the recognition of personal identity and engagement in seventh grade students in the context of the EFL class.

Specific Objectives

- To explore the role of the autobiography in the self-identity recognition process in the EFL classroom.
- To describe the connection that teaching material based on self-identity recognition has over engagement in an EFL class.
- To develop engagement towards EFL learning through activities related to identity and self-recognition.

CHAPTER II: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

State-of-The-Art and Theoretical Framework

This chapter, to provide a research background, introduces the state-of-the-art by presenting a review of some local, national and international studies that contributed to the extension of this research project. The first part includes information such as the objectives, type of study, instruments, findings, conclusions and the relevance they had in the development of this study. The second part, which is the theoretical framework, presents the following four constructs that are the basis for the research: Identity, Autobiography, Engagement in EFL class and Teaching Material.

Research Background

The following chart shows a list of the different studies collected as a research background for this project. Key words such as identity, autobiography, didactic material, and engagement in the EFL classroom.

Table 1. *State of the art documents information.*

Title	Author(s)	Year	Published by
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Local	La construcción de la identidad en la adolescencia	Leidy Diana Chala Bernal y Laura Viviana Matoma Fetiva	2013	Universidad Pedagógica Nacional
Local	Autobiographies: a tool to depict English language learning experiences	Julia Posada Ortiz y Eliana Garzón Duarte	2019	Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas
Local	Getting to know myself: fostering self-awareness through the use of picture books	Ángela Brighth Salas Uribe	2024	Universidad Pedagógica Nacional
National	La autobiografía: Estrategia pedagógica para la construcción del proyecto de vida en la comunidad educativa	Rubiángel Nieto Hernández	2024	Universidad Nacional de Colombia
National	Autobiografía: Una herramienta para el fortalecimiento de la escritura de los adolescentes de grado séptimo del colegio Santo Tomás	Daniel Eduardo López Rodríguez	2024	Universidad Santo Tomás
National	La importancia del interés en el aprendizaje del idioma inglés	José Everardo Castaño Aricapa	2025	Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia, UNAD
International	Construcción de identidad como aprendices de inglés en prácticas de escritura	Paula Alejandra Camusso y María del Carmen Lorenzatti	2021	Universidad Nacional de Villa María
International	From Narration to Performance: The study of Identity Development of EFL Students at Bejaia University, Argelia	Souad Smaili	2021	University of Northampton
International	La literatura y los recursos y materiales didácticos para el fortalecimiento del aprendizaje del inglés: caso de estudio desarrollado en el 2018	Priscilla Carranza Marchena e Isabel Badilla Zamora	2022	Universidad Nacional (UNA), de Costa Rica

The first study considered was a descriptive research that aimed at describing, recording, analyzing and interpreting the nature of the processes of identity construction in one of the stages of human beings such as adolescence. In order to do that, some instruments such as questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used. Those tools were applied in two different contexts. The former, in the Instituto Pedagógico Nacional (IPN) and then, in Liceo Gran Betania school for students between the ages of thirteen and sixteen. The latter was conducted on a qualified psychology and pedagogy graduate specializing in the field of educational guidance.

The main conclusions were that in the construction of adolescent identity, individual, social and temporal factors are essential for the integral development of adolescents. Likewise, adolescence should not be thought of as a stage of rebellion, but rather as a stage of crisis as it generates changes that provoke instability, which leads the subject to want to explore, to search for him/herself and to be understood from his/her way of looking at life. This study has made a great contribution to this research as it provides a wide range of information related to this stage of adolescence and the various processes through which young people go through in the construction of themselves.

The second study was an article called *Autobiographies: a tool to depict English language learning experiences* by Posada & Garzón (2019) that described a research project conducted with 26 students in an English-language bachelor's degree program at a public university in Bogotá, Colombia. The purpose of the study was to describe the language learning experiences of the teachers in training and to characterize the most meaningful experiences they had. Thus, autobiographies were used as the data collection tool and narrative inquiry to analyze the gathered information.

The conclusions stated that the narratives analyzed provided insight into the students' experiences, needs, and interests. Consequently, the following points were identified: First, the National Bilingualism Program had a significant impact on English instruction, but there were limitations, such as a lack of trained teachers—since it was evident that many were taught in elementary school by teachers who lacked knowledge of English—and fragmented curricula, as university students perceive a lack of continuity in the content, highlighting the need for a more cohesive plan in foreign language instruction. Second, students viewed the language primarily as a tool for social mobility, travel, and better job opportunities. Third, future teachers valued a

teacher who was approachable. Fourth, students believed that while the use of ICT is important, it should not be the sole resource; it is more important to conduct needs assessments and engage in meaningful activities. Summing up, most students viewed teaching as part of their life plan, although few saw themselves as researchers. Finally, this study was also relevant since it showed the importance of autobiographies in EFL classroom as a way to get to know the students a little better and find out why they behave the way they do in class, their needs and interests, which helps foster a closer connection with the students.

The third study, titled *Getting to know myself: fostering self-awareness through the use of picture books*, was an action-research proposal for second-grade children between 6 and 8 years old at Domingo Faustino Sarmiento school. The objective that Salas (2024) approached in her project was the use of picture books to foster self-awareness and English vocabulary learning. During the study, the researcher used 4 instruments to gather information: field notes, diagnostic tests, artifacts, and interviews.

The intervention sought to provide students with a meaningful initial experience in learning English, keeping them constantly interested and motivated. Activities focused on self-awareness, emotional regulation, and the development of values such as companionship, empathy, respect, and kindness were integrated alongside the teaching of English vocabulary. In regard to the main objective, the findings revealed that picture books were a valuable instrument in fostering not only children's enthusiasm for acquiring new English vocabulary but also in encouraging them to comprehend the textual content by associating the visual aids with the narrative.

The next study considered was *La autobiografía: Estrategia pedagógica para la construcción del proyecto de vida en la comunidad educativa* by Nieto (2024). This study

followed a qualitative, narrative, and interpretive approach through participatory action research which was conducted with 42 sixth-grade students and 19 eleventh-grade students at the San José de La Pesquera School, located in the rural area of the municipality of Arauquita. The aim was to develop teaching strategies based on the use of autobiography as a tool to help students plan their life projects. Within the data collection techniques used were participant observation and semi-structured interviews.

Regarding the outcomes, the study fostered students' self-awareness, identity, and communication skills, as well as the promotion of social cohesion and a sense of belonging within the educational community through the reading of biographies of important figures in various spheres of society and the writing of an autobiographical micro-story that included not only the students' own experiences, but also details about their lives provided by their family members and their peers' perceptions of them. This study does demonstrate the importance of using tools such as this for the development of students' identity, which are key to their lives. Bearing this in mind, the findings regarding the importance of autobiography, both for understanding students' identity and for the development of discursive skills, are significant for the current study.

The fifth study was an action research called *Autobiografía: Una herramienta para el fortalecimiento de la escritura de los adolescentes de grado séptimo del colegio Santo Tomás* by López (2024) which worked with seventh graders whose average ages were between thirteen and fourteen years old. The main objective of this intervention was to strengthen their writing skills through the tool of autobiography by designing and implementing 4 pedagogical workshops. In this sense, data collection techniques and instruments included observations, workshops and the creation of a learning portfolio.

Some of the conclusions indicated that firstly, the autobiography provided them with both the opportunity to explore and better understand their own lives and experiences, realizing that through writing they discovered aspects of themselves that they had not previously considered. Secondly, the autobiography had a positive impact on the improvement of their writing skills. The contribution of the previous study to this research lies on the importance of the implementation of tools that allow the student to be the center of learning as is the autobiography and that also strengthen skills related to writing, that although it is not the main purpose here, are contributions directly related to language learning.

The sixth reviewed study, based on a qualitative approach, was *La importancia del interés en el aprendizaje del idioma inglés* by Castaño (2025), which analyzed the importance of interest in learning English, considering the fundamental role it played in the learning of this language. This study was conducted at the Llano Verde school located in Comuna 6 in Cali with 30 students from eighth grade. Its objective was to increase student engagement through the use of motivational techniques and the application of ICT. Observations, strategy implementation, and post-experience questionnaires were used to collect data.

The information gathered in this study provided insight into students' responses and the changes brought about by the use of ICT and the application of the motivational approach. Thus, some points were highlighted starting with the fact that the combination of ICT and motivational elements generated positive changes in students' attitudes and interest as they showed enthusiasm for learning English. At the beginning, students were attentive thanks to the motivational video and ICT activities. This combination led to significant results since the strategy enabled students to participate actively in the English class. In terms of the use of strategies that foster student motivation and engagement, the previous study and the present one

are in agreement. Both aim to make students interested in using English, and to this end, through various activities, they seek to give students a purpose for using the language.

In relation to international research, a study chosen was titled *Construcción de identidad como aprendices de inglés en prácticas de escritura*. The study's goal was to explore how a group of women who attend Tutorial Centers in Villa María city (Córdoba, Argentina) to complete their secondary education expressed their identities in their writing using an ethnographic socio-anthropological approach. Thus, the authors Camusso & Lorenzatti, (2021) used two data collection methods: participant observation and in-depth interviews.

After analyzing the gathered information, the authors concluded that writing practices provided a social environment in which the identity of English learners was constructed and negotiated through their interaction in activities with other participants, thereby giving their identity both social and personal dimensions. The study is relevant to this research since it provides from a positive perspective regarding the exploration of identity in the EFL classroom. It establishes that learning is intrinsically linked to classroom social practices, and that this process shapes different forms of identity, starting with the students' ones.

Another relevant international study was *Narration to Performance: The study of Identity Development of EFL Students at Bejaia University, Argelia*. This study introduced a new course of English at Bejaia University that combined autobiographical writing with theatre-based activities. The purpose was to examine how such a course influenced both the way students built their sense of identity and how they improved their language abilities. Therefore, the population included students of EFL bachelor's and master's levels, that were selected through purposive and opportunity sampling, and eight EFL teachers who were also interviewed. Ten sessions of autobiographical writing, script creation, and theatrical performance were carried out.

In terms of data collection, Smaili (2021) applied semi-structured interviews and diary writing. Among the findings, the course helped students to express and articulate their multiple identities, improve their language skills especially writing and speaking, and strengthen self-expression, social interaction and confidence. This study makes a significant contribution to the present study, as it highlights the improvements achieved through the use of tools such as autobiography, not only in terms of language development but also in the construction of agency and diverse identities within the learning process.

The last international study was a qualitative case study called *La literatura y los recursos y materiales didácticos para el fortalecimiento del aprendizaje del inglés: caso de estudio desarrollado en el 2018* by Carranza & Badilla (2022). This research was conducted in two courses: Children's Literature and Didactic Resources and Materials. Those courses belonged to the bachelor's degree of Teaching English for elementary school, from Universidad Nacional (UNA), Costa Rica. The population were learners from their second year of the major and their ages ranged from 19 to 30 years old.

Its main objective was to foster English as the target language through the use of literature and the implementation of varied didactic resources and materials. Three methods were used to gather information: observations, journals, and an open-ended questionnaire. The findings suggested that the study's participants genuinely believed that using literature together with didactic resources and materials was beneficial and effective for teaching English. In this regard, the research focused on the importance of promoting motivation in EFL class through didactic material as they act as engaging tools.

Theoretical framework

This section deals with four key theoretical constructs that drive the exploration and examination of the main themes of this project: identity, autobiography, didactic material, and engagement in the EFL classroom. These concepts are fundamental to understanding how they relate to and apply to the population of this project.

Identity

Personal identity is a process of actively constructing the mental structure that gives a sense of selfhood and a sense of permanence through time (Sepulveda, 2020). It is a complex concept that involves many aspects such as personal, social and cultural ones. Thus, personal identity is an evolving process of transformation and incorporation, becoming a continuous exercise of construction of meaning between the self and the world, giving the possibility of being recognized and recognizing others as unique beings, immersed in a social context and culture (Sepulveda, 2020). Regarding the specific stage of adolescence, Erikson (1980) states that there is a crisis in this process of construction of identity that he calls “a normative crisis, in other words, a normal phase with a kind of conflict characterized by an apparent fluctuation of ego strength, as well as by a high potential for development”. (p. 140). This means that in order to go to the next stage of development the person has to struggle against this crisis.

On the other hand, Jenkins (2008) defines identity as “the human capacity to know who is who” (pg. 5). He establishes identity as a continuous process of identification; people know themselves, who the others are and so on, creating a perspective on humanity and the places they occupy as individuals and members of groups. In addition, part of this identity is based on the interests that people have; if people identify their interests, they may identify themselves in particular ways as well.

In addition, people have social and individual identities. The former describes a person's perception of themselves depending on their affiliation with particular organizations. Ability, age, economic status, ethnicity, gender, country, language, race, religion, and sexual orientation are some of the major social categories, while there are many others. People's lives are constructed with greater significance by belonging to certain social groups. The latter is their perception of themselves as unique individuals (Jenkins, 2008). Also, both identities are closely intertwined since a person's identity is always rooted in their physical body. This aspect is very important, and it is well illustrated in Goffman's (1990) ideas, in which in contrast to non-physical impairments, which may be more easily concealed, he demonstrates how disabled people, for instance, might be more easily stigmatized on the basis of readily evident physical impairments, which make individual identities more difficult to "manage."

Autobiography

An autobiography is a narrative inquiry in which the story of a person's life is written by that person (Lodico, M. et al, 2010). In this regard, this is a production in which the narrator is the protagonist as well. This fact allows the person's life, his or her moods, emotions and feelings, his or her personal development, to be the thematic content of the story (Kohan, 2002). In this sense, this tool is deeply related to the subjectivity of each person and subsequently, to their identity.

Additionally, Ibañez & Maganto (2010) establish some advantages of writing an autobiography such as personal encounter, which refers to the intimate conversation with one's own being that responds to a need for internalization and emotional attunement. Similarly, self-knowledge as the writing process allows the person to decide what will be addressed or not, what to emphasize which leads the person to know new things about himself or herself and to become

aware of what he or she writes. In addition, experiential memory which would be the recovery of fragments of life associated with memories of experiences and feelings. Finally, catharsis which is defined as a liberating process. In this line, Gusdorf (1991) states that an “autobiography is the mirror in which the individual reflects his own image” (p.3). Thus, the act of autobiographical writing not only provides opportunities for self-discovery, emotional release, and the reconstruction of personal memory, but also becomes a reflective practice through which the individual can recognize and reconfigure his or her own identity. In this sense, the advantages identified by Ibañez and Maganto (2010) converge with Gusdorf’s (1991) metaphor of the mirror, highlighting the autobiography as a pedagogical and transformative resource that fosters both introspection and the conscious construction of the self.

Engagement in EFL class

One of the main challenges that arise in an EFL class is the engagement of the students towards the language since it is something they do not need to use in their daily lives. Hence, engaging in activities of mutual interest with educators and other learners that create learning opportunities is the main way by which learning occurs. As Walqui (2006) points out, engaged learners are more willing to study and share knowledge with others, which highlights the centrality of participation and interaction in the learning process.

In this regard, academic engagement is a versatile concept that includes behavioral, cognitive and affective aspects (Hiver et al., 2021). This multidimensionality explains why engagement is often associated with students’ enjoyment, motivation, confidence, perceived utility, performance, and perceptions of flow in technology-enhanced language learning (Liu, Wang, & Tai, 2016). Thus, engagement is not a single construct but rather a complex factor that integrates emotional, cognitive, and behavioral components.

Closely related to this, the notion of flow has frequently been linked to engagement, with overlapping conceptions (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). Flow refers to a condition in which individuals are fully absorbed in an activity and enjoy it for its own sake, rather than for external rewards. This state shares several characteristics with engagement, such as focused attention, immediate feedback, a sense of control, and intrinsic motivation.

Moreover, some studies show that there is a connection between academic engagement and contextual adaptation. The frequency and depth of teacher-student interactions significantly predict the level of satisfaction or stress among EFL learners (Al-Hoorie, 2016; Wang et al., 2021). This suggests that engagement is not only an internal state but also a relational construct shaped by the quality of social and pedagogical exchanges in the classroom.

Taken together, these perspectives indicate that fostering engagement in language learning requires a holistic approach: one that promotes meaningful and interactive activities, creates conditions for flow, and ensures supportive teacher-student relationships. When these elements converge, learners are more likely to sustain motivation, experience satisfaction, and achieve deeper levels of language learning. (Kearsley & Schneiderman, 1998).

Teaching Materials

In teaching, especially in EFL, it is important to make use of different materials in order to engage students both in class and in the language. Accordingly, materials can be anything that is purposefully employed to improve the learners' language proficiency (Tomlinson, 2011). They can be from coursebooks, which are the most common material used in EFL class, to videos, dictionaries, photocopied exercises, etc. Teachers become material creators when they use teacher-made materials and responsible for the material employed in class. In addition, there are

different types of materials according to the growing body of research done in this field. Thus, these are more precisely described as authentic materials, such as newspapers, magazines, songs, etc.; teacher-made materials, such as worksheets, presentations, etc., and published materials, as textbooks, audio-visual aids, workbooks, dictionaries, etc.) (Gray, 2016).

Additionally, according to Rutherford and Sharwood-Smith (1988), the purpose of the classroom and teaching materials is to help students make effective use of the resources in order to promote self-discovery. It appears that students learn the most when they engage their interest, energy, and focus on the learning task. Through learner-centered discovery activities, topic management, and choice of focus and activity, materials can assist students in achieving this.

Regarding materials features, when those have visible effects on students, that is, when their attention, curiosity, and interest are sparked, impact is reached. Tomlinson (2011) identifies the following key factors that contribute to this positive development in language learning through the use of resources.

“(a) novelty (unusual topics, illustrations and activities)

(b) variety (breaking up the monotony of a unit routine with an unexpected activity; using many different text-types taken from many different types of sources)

(c) attractive presentation (use of attractive colors; lots of white space; use of photographs)

(d) appealing content (e.g. topics of interest to the target learners)

(e) achievable challenge (e.g. tasks which challenge the learners to think).” (p. 8)

Hence, the way the materials are displayed has a significant impact in relation to promoting students learning and engagement. This implies that instructional resources, when carefully designed and presented, transcend their role as mere support for teaching and become active mediators of learning. By stimulating curiosity, sustaining motivation, and encouraging cognitive effort, materials contribute to the creation of meaningful learning environments in which students are not passive recipients of information but active participants in the construction of knowledge.

As Tomlinson (2011) and Gray (2016) point out, EFL teaching materials are effective when they spark students' curiosity, interest, and motivation through features such as authenticity, variety, novelty, attractive presentation, and achievable challenges. Likewise, Rutherford and Sharwood-Smith (1988) emphasize that resources should facilitate self-exploration and autonomous learning. These principles are directly linked to the objective of this study, which seeks to describe the connection between materials based on self-identity recognition and engagement in EFL classrooms. Indeed, when materials incorporate elements of the student's identity—their culture, experiences, and personal perspectives—they not only meet the criteria of impact and discovery but also create a space of recognition that fosters active participation and emotional engagement in the learning process.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

Methodological design

This chapter presents the research paradigm, the type of study, the data collection instruments and the ethical considerations that were used to develop this research project.

Research Paradigm

The research paradigm that this project followed was the qualitative paradigm that according to Lodico et al. (2010) is a method that comes from fields such as sociology and anthropology but throughout time it has been addressed in educational research. In addition, as noted by Barraza Macías (2023) and Miranda & Ortiz (2020), the qualitative research paradigm seeks to establish a shared understanding of the meanings and experiences of the people involved in the contexts being explored. In this sense, its object of study is to understand how social actors represent and construct their reality in subjective and intersubjective ways, without detaching themselves from culture and pedagogy as context.

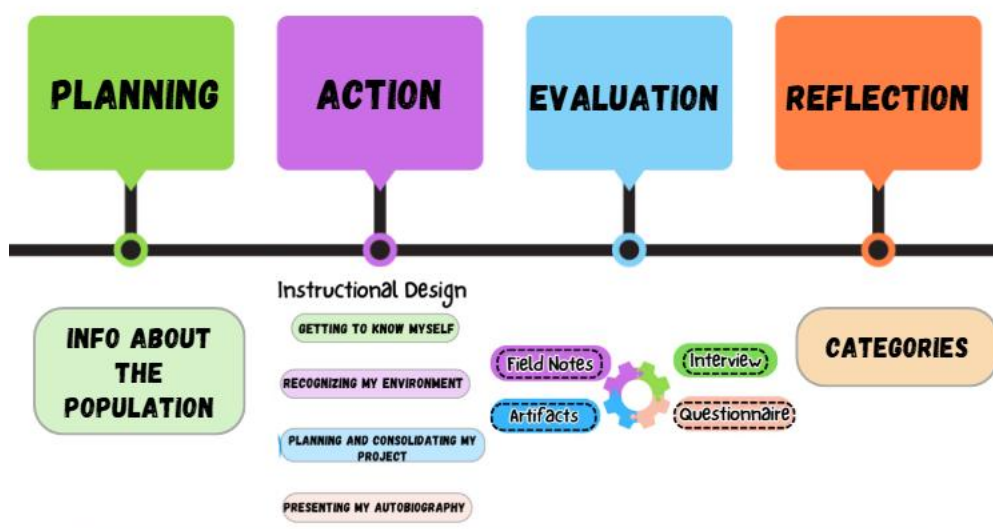
Type of research

This research corresponds to an Action Research Methodology which, based on Ebbutt (1985), is a study that includes action and reflection in order to enhance a praxis. This kind of research combines two important aspects in the field of research since it does not only stay in theory but goes to the action where it implements a project that tries to change, usually to improve or strengthen a problem or situation found during the observation and data collection. As Zuber-Skerritt (1996) establishes “the aims of any action research project or program are to bring about practical improvement, innovation, change or development of social practice, and the practitioners’ better understanding of their practices” (p. 83).

Additionally, this author also suggests a series of steps to be followed in Action Research which are first: the planning. In this part the researcher gathers information about the population and the context that she or he is working with and establishes objectives, collects supporting information and plans the intervention. Second, the action which is the implementation of the plan. Third, observation, evaluation and self-evaluation, this part consists in gathering information about the implementation of the project and evaluating the pros and cons and the impact that it had on the population or the context. And fourth, the reflection of the results of the previous stages.

Figure 2.

Steps of Action Research.



Data collection instruments and procedure

For the purpose of collecting the necessary information for further analysis, a series of instruments were used, including field notes, a semi-structured interview, artifacts and a questionnaire.

Field Notes

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1982), there are two types of field notes: descriptive and reflective. On one hand, the descriptive field notes correspond to the most extensive part of most research diaries. These are detailed descriptions of what the researcher sees and experiences. Details are important here as superficial descriptions would not allow further analysis. On the other hand, the reflective field notes move on from the descriptions presented previously, to include thoughts, feelings, problems, ideas, impressions, preconceptions, analyses, plans for future directions, connections, and other ideas about what the researcher is learning in the finding. In this study these two types of field notes were used in order to provide enough information that later would be analyzed.

Interview

The interview is an appropriate technique for qualitative evaluation as it allows certain data to be collected from interviewees about attitudes, opinions, expectations, dispositions, etc. (Moreno, 2016). In this regard, this instrument allows the researcher to gather in-depth information about something, in this case about the experience of some students in terms of how they felt during the different classes, as well as the creation and presentation of the autobiography. In this way, an interview can be understood as “a conversation between interviewer and respondent with the purpose of eliciting certain information from the respondent” (Moser and Kalton, 1971, as cited in Bell, 2005, p.157).

There are some types of interviews that vary depending on the structure of the questions. In this case a semi-structured interview was carried out. Based on Easwaramoorthy & Fataneh (2005) in this type of interview the researcher has a set of questions pre-established and during the interview more questions appear according to the respondent's answer. In this way, “it allows

for a deeper exploration of aspects that the interviewer could not have anticipated until certain answers were received.” (Moreno, 2016, pg. 208). This implies flexibility in the process of asking questions that seek to reach more specific or in-depth answers.

Artifacts

Artifacts are an important source of qualitative information. Almost all individuals, groups, organizations, communities, and societies generate them. They help researchers understand the context of an environment, including the experiences or circumstances that occur within it. (Baptista, P., Fernandez, C. & Hernández, R., 2014). Those artifacts can be letters, personal diaries, and any kind of artistic production done by the population subject of the research project. Regarding this research, the artifacts were all the activities students developed in the classes.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire is defined as a standardized tool used to collect information during the fieldwork process. It is an instrument that enables social researchers to formulate a series of questions in order to obtain organized information from a specific group of people. (Meneses, J., 2016) As the questionnaire responds to different research questions and context, the type of questions varies. They could be open-ended questions, closed-ended or both. In this case, open questions were proposed since they provide more extensive data and are particularly valuable when the possible responses of participants are unknown or when the available information about them is limited or insufficient. (Phillips, Phillips y Aaron, 2013, as cited in Baptista, P., Fernandez, C. & Hernández, R., 2014, p.221)

Ethical considerations

It is important to mention that this project was carried out taking into account ethical considerations in order to protect the privacy of the population whose ages were under eighteen (Arhar et al., 2001). Thus, an informed consent (Annex 5) was given to students' parents and/or legal guardians so that their personal data such as names or faces was not exposed. In this way, confidentiality was achieved.

CHAPTER IV: PEDAGOGICAL INTERVENTION

Pedagogical Approach

This study agrees with the Project Based Learning (PBL) approach that allows students to guide their own learning process through inquiry and collaborate in teams to research and develop projects that demonstrate the knowledge they have built. Those projects incorporate elements that give them an authentic character for students. These aspects include the topic addressed, the activities proposed, the roles assumed by students, the context in which the project is developed, the collaborators involved in the process, and the final products produced, among others. (Thomas, 2000).

Based on the approach selected to develop this project some cycles were created. It is important to mention that this teaching method has three main stages divided according to Jalinus (2017). First, skill competences debriefing which purpose is for students to understand the skills they are expected to develop, feel highly motivated knowing that their project will be applied in a real-world context, understand the meaning of the teaching material, and consolidate the fundamental skills related to the content covered in the teaching-learning process. Second, project work understood as a process based on real-world situations, involves students carrying out tasks linked to authentic contexts and following the stages typical of a real work

environment, aligned with learning outcomes. Finally, evaluation is the final reflection when students and teachers assess and recognize the whole process and the final creation.

Vision of learning

Learning is conceived as a dynamic, continuous, and socially mediated process that integrates cognitive, emotional, and pedagogical dimensions. It involves not only the acquisition of knowledge but also the development of critical thinking, collaboration, and self-reflection. From a pedagogical standpoint, learning occurs through interaction and dialogue, allowing students to construct meaning collectively and connect new experiences with prior knowledge. Within this broader framework, Project-Based Learning (PBL) encourages active participation in real-world and personally meaningful projects. As Blumenfeld and Krajcik (2014) note, learning is situated in authentic contexts that help students recognize and value the relevance of their tasks. Furthermore, drawing on Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, learning is understood as a process of meaning-making that emerges through social interaction and the mediation of cultural tools, highlighting the importance of collaboration and scaffolding in the development of student agency. This vision emphasizes learning as a transformative process that fosters autonomy, social engagement, and the integration of cognitive and affective growth.

Vision of the teacher

The teacher is not in the teaching-learning environment to impose certain ideas or to create habits in the students but is there as a member of the community who decides the input that the students will receive in order to help them answer in an adequate way to this feedback (Dewey & Small, 1897). Therefore, the teacher is conceived as a facilitator, because teachers guide students through the project process, encouraging collaboration, critical thinking, and self-

directed learning. And as mentors, teachers provide feedback, insight, and guidance, and help students identify their needs and access resources.

Vision of the student

From a pedagogical perspective, students are conceived as active agents in their own learning process. Their role transcends participation to encompass autonomy, reflection, and collaboration. Within Project-Based Learning (PBL), students are not passive recipients of information but co-constructors of knowledge who engage in inquiry, problem-solving, and decision-making. This approach aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which emphasizes learning as a socially mediated process where interaction and dialogue foster cognitive development. Through these collaborative experiences, students exercise agency, express their voices, and take ownership of their learning, making their contributions essential to the design and implementation of projects. Thus, the student's role is defined by active engagement, critical thinking, and the capacity to connect learning with real-world contexts.

Having all these ideas in mind, the following intervention was proposed to address the problems identified at the beginning of this research project:

Pedagogical Intervention

Cycle #1: Getting to know myself

This first cycle of the pedagogical intervention was focused on self-awareness. Therefore, four lessons were conducted aimed at students to recognize part of who they were in terms of their physical and personality traits, their feelings towards different situations and their likes and dislikes. Likewise, the use of didactic material that motivated them towards the English class, such as the Guess Who Game and a Thermometer of Feelings with dice were used in

connection with other activities that involved the creation of drawings and writings about themselves (See table 2).

Table 2. *Cycle #1: Getting to know myself*

Lessons	Learning Objectives	Project Objectives	Content	Activity
Guess Who	-To use the verb <i>to be</i> and the verb <i>have</i> , and adjectives to describe people physically. -To create simple sentences about physical appearance of a person.	-To recognize different physical features of people.	- <i>Verb to be</i> - <i>Verb have</i> -Physical adjectives	In groups, students are given some cards and boards with different characters. They play Guess Who. So, each student has a different character that must be described by them, and the rest of the students must guess. At the end, each one writes 5 sentences on a paper describing physically their character. That paper is collected by the teacher.
Who am I?	-To use the verb <i>to be</i> and <i>have</i> , and adjectives to describe students. -To write simple sentences about students' physical appearance and personality.	-To recognize students' physical traits and personal qualities. -To identify what makes them unique as a person.	- <i>Verb to be</i> - <i>Verb have</i> -Physical adjectives -Personality adjectives	Students draw something that they feel could represent themselves on a piece of paper. It could be a thing or a drawing of themselves. Then, around the picture they write their qualities and appearance with short phrases such as " <i>I am tall. I am creative, etc.</i> "
How do I feel when...?	-To use vocabulary of feelings and the present simple to describe emotions. -To write and say short sentences expressing how students feel in different situations.	-To become aware of students' emotions in everyday life. -To reflect on situations that make students feel happy, sad, angry, or excited.	-Vocabulary of feelings: happy, sad, angry, excited. -Present simple in contexts: <i>I feel happy when...</i>	In groups, students complete a feelings thermometer sheet based on situations presented on the different dice. They complete the thermometer, which in each section of feelings says a phrase such as "I feel happy, sad, angry, and excited when...", with the different situations that come up on the dice.
What do I like/not like?	-To use simple expressions to talk about likes and dislikes. -To expand vocabulary related to hobbies, interests, and objects close to students' lives.	-To identify the activities and things that students enjoy or reject. -To recognize how students' interests reflect who they are.	-Structures: <i>I like / I don't like...</i> <i>My favorite _____ is...</i> -Hobbies and animals -Nature and superheroes -TikTok / YouTube / cartoons -Colors (blue, red, etc.) -Music (pop, rock, rap, etc.) -Sports (football, swimming, running, etc.)	In a piece of paper students create a short paragraph about their likes and dislikes. They have a structure and vocabulary given by the teacher through a sheet, and then, they share what they wrote in groups and hand in their paragraphs to the teacher.

Note: Own elaboration

Cycle #2: Recognizing my environment

The second cycle aimed to get students to address their immediate context, which formed part of their identity, such as their family and school, and to make connections with topics covered in the previous cycle. In this case, they were asked to relate how they felt about their family and what they liked or not about their school. To do this, materials such as worksheets were used. (See table 3).

Table 3. *Cycle #2: Recognizing my environment*

Lessons	Learning Objectives	Project Objectives	Content	Activity
Introducing my family	-To introduce family members using verb <i>to be</i> and family vocabulary. -To write simple sentences to describe family relationships and roles.	-To recognize the importance of family in students' life story.	-Vocabulary of family (mother, father, brother, sister, etc.) - Verb <i>to be</i> (is/are) -Types of family	<i>My family tree:</i> Students draw a simple family tree and write sentences about their family: "This is my family. It is a grandparent family. This is my mother. She is kind."
How do I feel about my family?	-To use basic vocabulary related to emotions (happy, sad, angry). -To recognize and use family members vocabulary in simple contexts.	-To promote emotional awareness in students through reflection on family relationships.	-Vocabulary of emotions (happy, sad, angry). -Family members vocabulary. -Emotional expression through visual symbols and colors.	Students receive a worksheet with a flower illustration. Each petal represents a family member. Students write the name of one family member on each petal and color it according to the emotion they associate with that person. Colors represent different emotions (yellow: happy, blue: sad, red: angry).
Recognizing my school	-To identify and use vocabulary related to school places. -To use comparative and superlative adjectives in simple sentences. -To express personal opinions about familiar school spaces.	-To promote students' self-recognition through their school environment. -To encourage student engagement by connecting English learning with their real and familiar context.	- Vocabulary of school places (schoolyard, cafeteria, library, restrooms, hall, lab, etc.). -Comparative adjectives (bigger than, noisier than, cleaner than). -Superlative adjectives (the biggest, the most beautiful, the noisiest). -Opinion expressions (I think..., My favorite..., For me...)	In groups, students receive a worksheet with real photographs of their school spaces (schoolyard, cafeteria, library, etc.). First, students identify and label each place using the vocabulary provided. Then, they complete sentences using comparatives and superlatives based on their own perception of the school (<i>The cafeteria is noisier than the library</i>). Finally, students answer personal questions such as <i>What is the most beautiful place in the school? Why?</i> and <i>What is your favorite place in the school?</i> encouraging reflection and personal connection with their school environment.

Note: Own elaboration

Cycle #3: Planning and consolidating my project

The third cycle of the research focused on reviewing the topics covered in the first cycles and on planning and creating the autobiography. Therefore, with the help of a personal journal, students recalled and established how they wanted to create their project. The fact that the journal had drawings and phrases to guide them encouraged their interest in the English class (See table 4).

Table 4.

Cycle #3: Planning and consolidating my project

Lessons	Learning Objectives	Project Objectives	Content	Activity
Remembering and organizing my story	-To recall vocabulary and grammatical structures learned in previous cycles. -To express basic personal information through short written sentences and drawings.	-To promote self-recognition and reflection through personal narrative construction. -To strengthen student engagement by using creative and personalized materials.	-Review of identity-related topics: -Personal information (name, age, place) -Family -Feelings and memories -Likes and dislikes -Simple sentence structures (I am..., I like..., I don't like..., My favorite...).	The teacher gives each student a personal diary. Students are invited to decorate it freely and complete the blank spaces using words, short sentences, drawings, and colors. The diary includes guided prompts (<i>I am..., My saddest/happiest memory is when..., I like...</i>), which help students remember and organize information worked on in previous cycles in a personal and meaningful way.
Drafting my autobiography	-To plan the structure and content of an autobiographical text. -To use basic English to describe physical traits, personality, feelings, family, and preferences.	-To encourage students' awareness of their own identity through autobiographical planning. -To increase engagement by allowing students to decide how to represent their personal stories.	-Guiding questions: <i>How do I plan to create my autobiography?</i> -Which materials I need? -Use of simple connectors (and, because).	Using the diary, students respond to a planning prompt where they reflect on how they want to create their autobiography, the materials they will use, and the ideas they want to include. Students begin drafting their autobiography by combining written text, drawings, and visual elements, ensuring the inclusion of previously studied topics. The teacher supports the process through guidance and feedback.
Final Version of my Project	-To produce a final autobiographical product in English. -To share personal information with peers and the teacher.	-To consolidate students' personal identity through meaningful language use. -To foster engagement and a sense of belonging by sharing personal stories.	Final autobiographical product.	Students present and share their project with the teacher and define what they are going to share with their classmates. They practice their speaking with the guidance of the teacher.

Note: Own elaboration

Cycle #4: Presenting my autobiography

The last cycle intended to promote project sharing among the students and reflection throughout the entire creative process according to the final stage of the PBL approach. During this cycle, students were also expected to produce using the foreign language with confidence and recognizing their strengths and flaws during the whole intervention. Finally, self-value, respect for others and awareness of others' and one's own feelings were processes the students were encouraged to develop. (See table 5).

Table 5. *Cycle #4: Presenting my autobiography*

Lessons	Learning Objectives	Project Objectives	Content	Activity
Recognizing myself and my classmates	-To build confidence when speaking in English	-To value students' stories as something worth sharing. -To recognize and respect classmates' identities.	-Oral and written language for presentation (This is..., I like..., My family is...). -Respectful listening and peer interaction	Autobiography fair: There are two rounds. In the first round, half of the students put their autobiography on a stand with drawings or photos and show or read what they have done. The others circulate around each stand, listen, and ask questions. They also leave a positive comment on a sticky note ("I liked your drawings" / "Your story was interesting"). In the second round, the students change places and the same activity is repeated.
Reflecting on my autobiography and those of my classmates	-To recognize difficulties and achievements in the process in terms of using English.	-To develop self-awareness by evaluating students' own learning. -To appreciate what students discovered about themselves and others.	-Written language for reflection (The easiest part was... / The most difficult part was... / I learned that I...)	Exit ticket reflection: Each student writes on a piece of paper how did they feel during the different activities, during the creation of the autobiography, their challenges, their strengths in terms of use of English and creating their project.

Note: Own elaboration

CHAPTER V: DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter deals with the analysis of data collected during the pedagogical implementation and its findings. First, grounded theory, which was the procedure that guided the analysis, is explained. Then, the information gathered through the data collection instruments is shown in three categories and its corresponding subcategories.

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is a qualitative technique used to create theoretical patterns based on the pertinent empirical data set (Yu & Smith, 2021). This method was used to classify and examine the information gathered during the different cycles that composed the pedagogical intervention. An important feature of this method is the analysis cannot code for preconceived theoretical codes in order to produce a grounded theory. Thus, theoretical sensitivity applies to any theoretical code that makes sense and must code for each category that appears on any unit in the data (Glaser, 1992). It means that the following categories and subcategories arose from data collected together with color coding, used to discriminate and organize the information.

Moreover, triangulation, understood as a method to improve the validity and trustworthiness of research findings, was employed as well. Specifically, methodological triangulation, that is one of the four types according to Denzin (1970) which encourages the application of many techniques for gathering data, was used as this study obtained data through a variety of methods, including field notes, artifacts, a semi-structured interview with the students, and a questionnaire for the classroom teacher.

First Category: Affective and Motivational Dimensions of Student Identity Development in EFL classroom

This category addresses the development of students' sense of identity through the implementation of the first three proposed cycles, which were the foundation in the creation of their autobiographies. It describes the various factors that contributed to this process through self-recognition activities, which fostered a strong engagement among students for the class. Thus, the category analyzes the relationship between the activities and materials related to students' identity in terms of the way they saw themselves, their preferences, their family and the engagement they had in class.

It is important to highlight that those kinds of activities allowed some of them to express feelings and thoughts regarding the topic using the English language. In this same line, data pointed to a significant progress on aspects such as identity, student engagement, and emotional factors, which were grouped into the following subcategories.

Subcategory 1: Self-identity Formation in the EFL Classroom

This subcategory examines how the integration of topics relevant to students, such as aspects of their own lives, influenced the way they express their identity as well as their engagement as active participants in the English class. Initially, observations revealed that students were only interested in completing the activities assigned by the teacher in order to earn a grade, without even understanding the activity itself.

-The common doubts of all the groups were first, regarding a sentence that had to be completed from the first point that said: you _not sad. you _worried. Because they said that the lines were very short and if that meant that there was the verb "Is". This may indicate that they are only concerned about solving the guide rather than understanding it.

(Field Note: observation March 13th, 2025)

However, as pedagogical implementation progressed and topics related to their identity and lives were introduced, the students began to focus less on grades and more on actively engaging in these activities, answering more consciously and reclaiming their role as active actors of their learning process. In this regard, they were in “flow” since this concept refers to being completely engrossed in an activity and appreciate it for its own reason rather than for rewards from outside sources (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975).

Table 6. *Artifacts of Who am I? Getting to know myself*



(Cycle #1. Artifacts of self-recognition from students 36 and 25)

In these types of activities, students were provided with the vocabulary needed to complete the tasks. Specifically, for this first activity in Cycle #1, students were asked to draw a picture of themselves and write down both their physical and personality traits around it. As can be seen, some of them drew themselves, while others drew objects that represented them or reflected their personal tastes. This showed that the activity was interesting for them and that

they used the language as a bridge to express themselves. Additionally, the data also showed that they were very engaged with the task as they even decorated the sheet with colors or figures when the instruction did not include that step.

Table 7. *Artifacts of How do I feel about my family? Recognizing my environment*



(Cycle #2. Artifacts feelings about family from students 29 and 2)

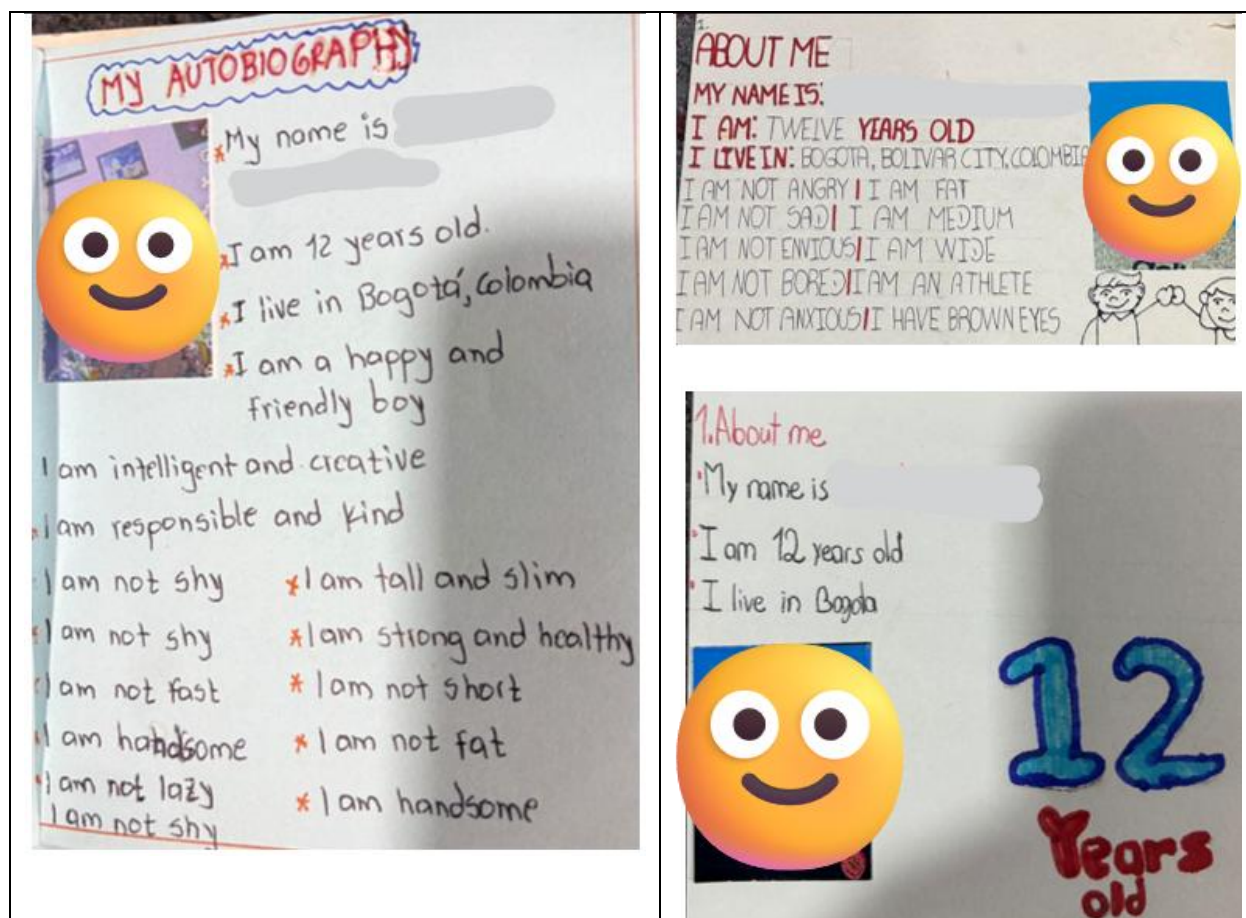
The instructions for this activity were for students to write the name of a family member on each petal of the flower and describe how they felt about that person. Depending on their feelings, they colored the corresponding petal. In this particular case, some students went beyond the instructions by also drawing pictures or including additional information about each person. This indicated that, according to Hiver et al. (2021), this engagement in the classroom encompasses multiple aspects, not only behavioral and cognitive but also affective. The fact of involving students as the central focus of the class allowed them to develop and go beyond the proposed activities. Additionally, this was significant because it revealed a part of who they

were, as the activities promoted the process of identifying themselves and others—in this case, family members—a process that, according to Jenkins (2008), is part of identity construction.

Regarding the construction of the autobiography students had the possibility to review all the different self-recognition activities related to who they were and organize that information in their autobiographies. As a result, different parts of their identity were shown. Firstly, some of them decided to complement the text with drawings or photos of themselves. And this fact was important as, according to Goffman (1990), personal and social identity converge on the idea of “uniqueness,” which stems from two key concepts: on the one hand, the basis of identity, which refers to a person’s biological attributes—that is, their physical appearance—and, on the other hand, elements that are permanently recorded, such as one’s name. In this respect, the students made use of positive markers of self-recognition by displaying their faces and names, aspects that are part of social differentiation.

Table 8. *Artifacts of Final Version of my project*





(Cycle #3. Artifacts of the Final Version of the Project from students 16, 11, 32 & 25)

Secondly, students were able to explore, throughout the implementation, aspects such as their physical and personality traits, their families, their likes and dislikes and their feelings related to some situations. This means that it was a process of intentionally creating the mental framework that provided a sense of individuality and meaning between the self and the world, known as personal identity (Sepulveda, 2020).

Subcategory 2: Factors Influencing Student Self-engagement

The subcategory describes important connections that contributed to student's engagement and participation in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes. Likewise, a good rapport between pre-service teacher and student created trust, facilitated personal growth, and promoted a positive atmosphere in the classroom. Additionally, the resources used for instruction

were included as well, as they contained materials that were both relevant and interesting to the students, thereby creating and maintaining student's engagement and willingness to participate.

During the observation phase, as it was recorded on field notes that students were called by their last names by the teacher.

My idea was to learn students' names so I could address them by name, since both the teacher and the students call each other by their last names. So, I decided to try an icebreaker activity where I introduce myself and then say a word that starts with the first letter of my name, and so on; they have to do the same and repeat whatever their classmates say.

(Field Note: observation September 19th, 2024)

According to Picado's (2001) perspective that effective teachers must be great communicators who can excite students' interest in learning, the necessity of establishing an even closer relationship to the students was paramount. Although the main teacher called all learners by their last names, the pre-service teacher made it a point to learn (and use) each student's first name. When students saw that the pre-service teacher knew them as individuals, they approached in a more open manner, helping develop a warmer and more trusting teacher-student relationship. This change in the way the pre-service teacher communicated with the students not only showed them respect as individuals but also provided a venue for increased involvement and motivation in the classroom.

I arrive and greet the students, and they greet me. Some of them hugged me.

(Field Note: Implementation Cycle #1 March 27th, 2025)

I arrive and greet the students. As we wait outside the classroom to go in, some of them say hello and give me a hug. Others ask me why I'm not the official teacher, because they'd like to see me every week.

(Field Note: Implementation Cycle #1 August 28th, 2025)

Some research indicates that the frequency and effectiveness with which teachers interact with their students significantly influence how students experience emotions in an EFL context (see Al-Hoorie, 2016; Wang et al., 2021). From this perspective, engagement should be

viewed as a relational and evolving process resulting from meaningful social interactions and pedagogical exchanges that occur between teachers and students within the classroom.

Furthermore, student participation through planned activities related to self-awareness was a significant contributor to student self-engagement not only in the classroom but also throughout their English learning experience.

¿Cómo percibe el compromiso de los estudiantes cuando las clases incluyen temas relacionados con su vida o su entorno?

*El compromiso fue **notoriamente mayor**. Al relacionar los **contenidos con su entorno**, los estudiantes participaron más, compartieron sus experiencias y completaron las actividades con entusiasmo. Estos temas les resultan familiares y les permiten aplicar el inglés de manera práctica y significativa.*

¿Ha notado diferencias en la actitud o motivación de los estudiantes cuando trabajan con temas personales?

*Sí, se notó una diferencia significativa. Cuando las actividades estaban relacionadas con sus **emociones, familia o gustos personales**, los estudiantes mostraron **mayor compromiso**, alegría y disposición para escribir en inglés. Se sentían más identificados y valorados, lo que mejoró su actitud frente a la clase.*

(Fragments of Teacher's questionnaire. November 4th _2025)

According to Rutherford and Sharwood-Smith (1988), the teaching methods should assist students in discovering themselves and how to effectively use whatever resources are available to them. When students are given the chance to examine or research issues that apply to their own identity or experience, they are more interested, energized, and focused on the task. The self-recognition activities applied were in line with this principle in that they provided an opportunity for the student to use English as a medium for self-reflection and expression. By using this type of student-centered approach, the students developed greater autonomy as well as a greater emotional bond to the learning process, thereby increasing their overall level of self-engagement.



(Cycle #3. Autobiographies of the Final Version of my Project)

Finally, as Molina (1997) states, meaningful learning takes place when students are regularly prompted to become involved and exposed to creative activities that promote autonomy for example: the learners' autobiographies provided an excellent opportunity for them to engage. The way these students created their autobiographies made a strong statement about their creativeness and individuality, varying from: posters, brochures or mini books; to bulletin boards and even an old-time film roll. This variety of formats not only provided an extrinsic motivation for the students but also provided an authentic way for them to construct knowledge which contributed to their commitment to the learning process.

Subcategory 3: Emotional Investment and Affective Engagement

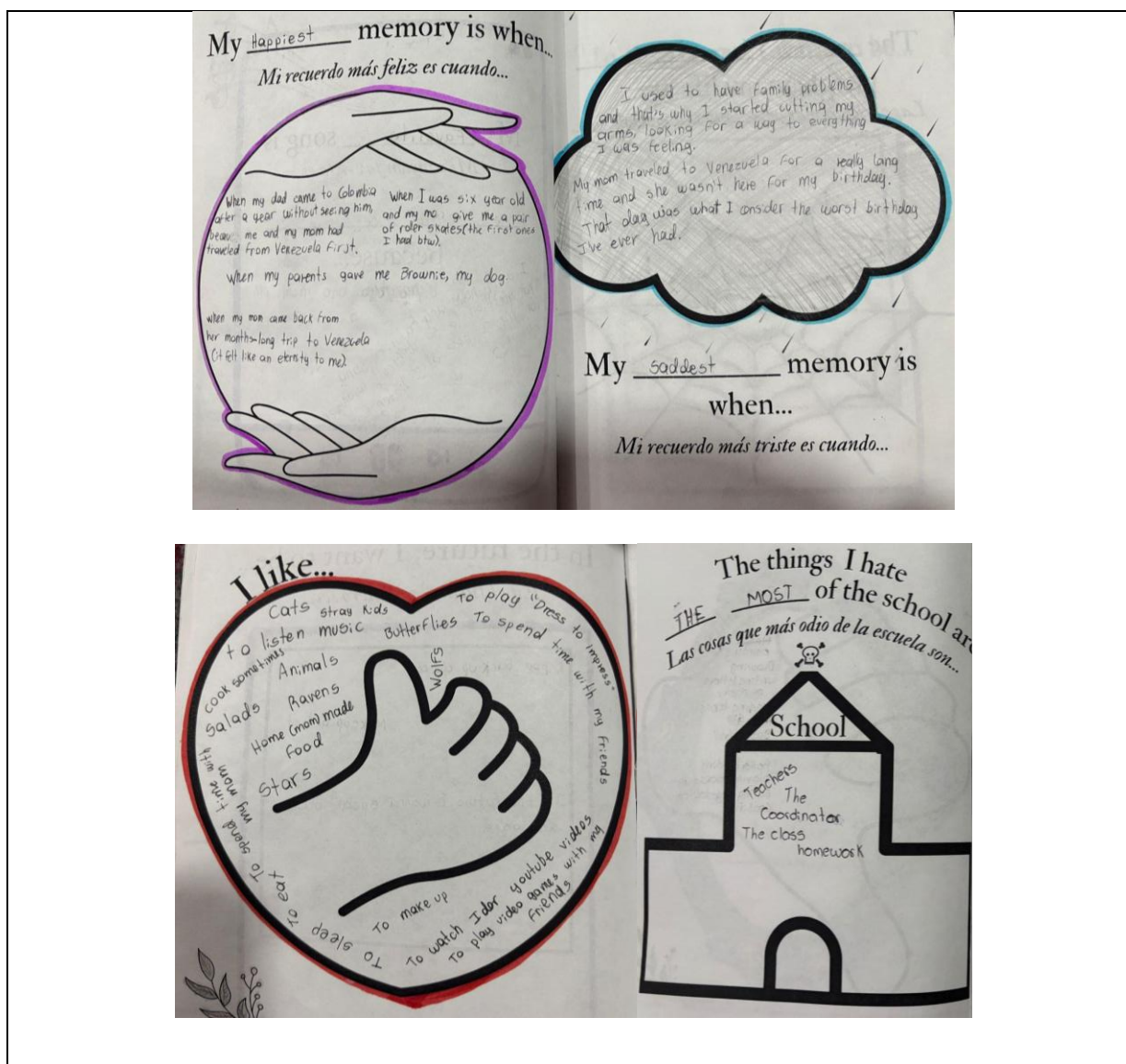
This subcategory explores the role of emotional investment in the learning process, highlighting how self-awareness activities provided students with opportunities to express

aspects of their identity, feelings, and personal experiences. These activities contributed significantly to the development of self-awareness and engagement. By engaging learners in tasks that connected with their inner world, the classroom became a space where emotional expression and identity-building reinforced their commitment to learning.

Although all the classes of the implementation were designed to promote identity development and provide insight into students' lives, there was one particular activity that was especially meaningful for them. This activity was part of Cycle #3 and consisted of each student being assigned a personal journal. This tool had different sections for them to fill out: on one hand, a part related to grammar in which they had to complete with the correct word and, on the other hand, their personal information such as their likes and dislikes, what they hated most about school, their favorite song, the most important people in their lives, the happiest and saddest moments of their lives, and what they wanted to be in the future.

The following examples show that teaching materials played a significant role in students' learning and development of self-awareness in EFL classrooms as, in this case, students saw a chance to convey a portion of their identities—such as significant moments in their lives, their interests and even things they hated about a place where they were constantly residing—in addition to using the vocabulary and structure they had learned in earlier lessons. This fact demonstrated the material's emotional significance.

Table 9. *Artifacts of Remembering and Organizing my Story*



(Cycle #3. Artifacts of Remembering and Organizing my Story from students 8, 11 & 30)

Thus, the personal journals demonstrated how emotional investment could become a powerful dimension of learning English as a foreign language. By combining language practice with opportunities for self-expression, students were able to review grammar and vocabulary while simultaneously exploring their identities, memories, and emotions. This dual approach not only reinforced language learning but also fostered motivation and engagement, as students felt recognized and valued through their own narratives. This was noted not only by the students but

also by the teacher, as illustrated in the following excerpts from the teacher questionnaire and the student interviews.

7. ¿Hubo alguna actividad o momento en particular en el que notara más compromiso o conexión personal por parte de los estudiantes?

*Sí, durante la actividad de los **diarios personales** y la de las emociones, los estudiantes mostraron una conexión profunda. Les gustó escribir sobre sí mismos, su familia y su entorno. Se evidenció mayor entusiasmo y orgullo al compartir sus producciones escritas y dibujos con la practicante y sus compañeros.*

(Extract of Teacher's questionnaire. November 4th 2025)

¿Se sintieron más interesadas en la clase de inglés?

Student MA: *Sí. En cuanto al diario me parece que es una manera muy acertada como de ser introspectivo sobre uno mismo y encontrar otras cosas que a lo mejor y uno no pensaba, pero me di cuenta.*

¿Te gustó escribir sobre ti misma y sobre tu vida?

Student MA: *Sí.*

¿Te pareció incómodo?

Student MA: *No. Me gusta hablar de mí, me gusta que me conozcan.*

¿Cuál fue la actividad que más te gustó?

Student K: *La del diario porque pues digamos que me nunca me había desahogado, así como que en un libro... y pues ahí me desahugué poquito de las cosas que no me gustaba y que me gustaba.*

¿Generó en ti más interés en la clase con las actividades que les di?

Student M: *Sí, obvio, porque digámosle casi todas las clases era ya aprender inglés, pero desde ahí pues ya ya ya que ya ahí uno podía soltar lo que uno tenía por dentro.*

(Extracts of Students' interview. November 11th 2025)

Those comments, especially from students, showed how important emotionally speaking was that material. They saw an opportunity not only to put into practice the vocabulary or the structure worked on previous classes but also to express part of their identity, as it is a continuous process of identification (Jenkins, 2008). In this regard, language learning is most successful, according to academics, when it incorporates possibilities for self-expression and

identity development in addition to grammar and vocabulary. Learners invest in a language when they see it as a means of expressing themselves and negotiating their place in the world, according to Norton (1997). Similarly, Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) note that autobiographical and reflective tasks allow students to connect language practice with their real-world experiences, which fosters motivation and emotional engagement. In this way, personal journals reinforced the idea that emotional investment is an essential component of EFL learning by providing students with a relevant setting in which to examine language structures while expressing their own memories, preferences, and emotions.

Second Category: Pedagogical and Cognitive Dimensions of Teaching and Learning in the EFL Classroom

This category focuses on the interaction between teaching practices and learning strategies, highlighting how classroom dynamics influenced the learning process. It also examines the pedagogical dimension through the teacher's strategies, materials, and activities that were designed to encourage meaningful participation and commitment. Simultaneously, it describes the cognitive dimension by analyzing the strategies students used to personalize, adapt, and make sense of these practices in their own learning. In this way, it highlights the reciprocal relationship between the teacher's contribution and the student's agency, demonstrating how both perspectives contributed to the development of language learning in EFL classes.

Subcategory 1: Teaching Practices: strategies, materials, and activities

This subcategory focuses on the strategies, resources, and activities that the pre-service teacher used to promote student engagement and meaningful learning. It similarly demonstrates how instructional choices influenced the classroom setting by giving students chances to actively engage and link language practice to imaginative and collaborative assignments. The

subcategory points out the importance of teaching in fostering environments that promote language development and student motivation by examining these techniques.

During the observation phase it was noticed that students worked effectively when organized into groups and that this made it easier to manage the class. So, it was decided to go from group to group to answer questions and explain the activities.

Going from one group to another allows me to pay more attention to students' learning process and it creates a closer connection between them and me since I approached them in a personalized way as much as I can.

(Field Note: observation March 6th, 2025)

As it was pointed out, the goal was to build a closer relationship with the students in order to start creating a safe and more welcoming atmosphere in the classroom, and that is why this approach became a strategy for monitoring the students and connecting with them. This seemed to work since it fostered a relationship based on trust and security, and they felt comfortable with the process, as noted in this following interview excerpt.

¿Te sentiste más interesada en la clase, teniendo en cuenta que las actividades que yo les di eran sobre ustedes mismos?

Student I: *Sí, por lo que usted nos explicaba, se sentaba con nosotros a explicar y decía cómo era, qué tocaba hacer, qué tocaba colocar. Entonces es más fácil. Porque el profesor digamos pone una actividad y dice, hágalo como pueda. Y entonces ajá y usted se sienta, nos dice qué toca hacer, que toca poner, qué toca hacer. Entonces es muy chévere.*

(Extract of Students' interview. November 11th 2025)

This is an effective strategy regarding classroom management as moving around the classroom to some degree enables working more closely with smaller groups or keeping students interested when conducting an activity (Harmer, 2010). Beyond its organizational benefits, this practice also fosters a sense of proximity and personalized attention, allowing learners to feel

supported and guided throughout the process. In addition, the teacher not only monitors their progress more closely but also creates a classroom atmosphere based on trust and engagement. In this way, mobility becomes both a management technique and a pedagogical resource that strengthens participation and enhances the overall learning experience.

On the other hand, when it came to teaching strategies, the pre-service teacher made considerable use of the board. That helped demonstrate the students grammar structures, words, and vocabulary. Thus, if someone wanted to know how to spell a specific word, it was written on the board so that not only that student but also the others could see it. This practice was documented both in the field notes and in the interview with the students.

*They asked me if they could first mention what they wanted to describe and then the characteristics of that thing, but I told them that in English, the order is inverted, with the adjective coming first and the noun second. To illustrate this, **I wrote several examples on the board***

(Field Note: Implementation April 1st, 2025)

¿Aprendieron algo nuevo?

Student I: *cuando uno no sabe nada la profesora va al tablero y lo escribe allá y ahí ya sabemos cómo se escribe.*

(Extract of Students' interview. November 11th 2025)

Using the board not only helped students identify and organize language items, but it also served as a shared visual resource that provided all students with identical access to information at the same time. Having a common point of reference improved understanding and helped students to retain information; therefore, using visual references should be an important part of learning languages. Research has shown that visual memory is a crucial element for language learners, as they tend to retain words and structures better when they are paired with either a written or visual representation (Pickering et al., 2022). Because of its multiple uses in

language teaching and learning, the board was not only used as a classroom management tool; it was also used as a pedagogical resource to develop a common understanding and to improve students' ability to remember and use newly learned language.

Additionally, contextualized materials employed played an important role in promoting student engagement and worked as tools to link language learning with personal and emotional expression. For instance, students were asked to complete sentences to identify their feelings using the Feelings Thermometer with examples for each type of feeling, by rolling the handmade dice that represented different situations in which they could identify their feelings. Students could also interact with each other and practice vocabulary in a playful and social way by playing “Guess Who” using personalized cards.

In addition to the teaching materials just mentioned, there were other resources, such as a visual guide using actual pictures of common areas at school to reinforce the contextual vocabulary and a flower-shaped worksheet that had students identify how they felt about their family. Finally, responses to the personal journal that had different sections resulted in students identifying what they liked, what they disliked, and what they hoped to accomplish. All of these teaching materials and activities assisted with engaging and supporting students' efforts in gaining comprehension and vocabulary, constructing identity and emotional engagement so that students could see themselves as part of the classroom and actively contribute to their learning.

Table 10.

Teaching Materials from Cycles #1, #2 & #3



(Some Teaching Materials from Cycles #1, #2 & #3)

In addition, an important thing done was to create the different materials using English first and in parenthesis there was the translation to Spanish. This was because it was noticed that students did not understand the worksheets that the teacher gave them because they were completely in English as it was registered in field notes.

The whole guide is in English and if we consider that the first time the teacher spoke in English with them and they did not understand, it is to be expected that they will not understand in writing either.

(Field Note: observation March 13th, 2025)

Providing the instructions in both languages allowed learners to have confidence and be engaged because they could refer to their first language when clarifying meaning while being exposed to the English language structure. The bilingual format allowed a greater comprehension and willingness to participate among students since they viewed the task as supportive. In this sense, the materials served as a bridge between the two languages, creating an opportunity for

inclusion and demonstrating that effective teaching practices must take into consideration the linguistic situation of their students.

¿Te gustó escribir sobre ti misma?

Student I: *Sí, porque es fácil, porque digamos las guías que usted nos daba ahí salía todo salía en español y en inglés porque digamos hay algunas veces que el profesor saca una guía y la saca todo en inglés. Entonces toca buscar ayuda de Gusgle, si no nos quiere decir, si me entiendes.*

(Extract of Students' interview. November 11th 2025)

Ultimately, the materials displayed meet the key factors established by Tomlinson (2010) for positive language learning development, as they were innovative—particularly those with illustrations, which had not been included before in their English classes; there was variety because, although most were worksheets, they were not all identical in either presentation or topic; they had an appealing presentation, not only because of the drawings and figures included but also because some of these worksheets were in color and contained photographs. Finally, the topics were of interest to the students as they were directly related to them and their lives, which allowed them to reflect and express themselves through the use of English.

¿Cuál es la opinión que tienen ustedes con respecto a los materiales que les di?

Student J: *A mí me gustaron el diario y los dados porque me parece es muy divertidas. Sí. Porque el diario tenía muchas actividades y así, también colorear.*

¿Te gustaba lo del color?

Student AM: *Sí, porque uno puede hacer varias actividades, cosas diferentes, cada clase de inglés y las guías son muy... Me gustó mucho la que tiene como los espacios de todo el colegio porque está bien organizada.*

(Extracts of Students' interview. November 11th 2025)

On the other hand, based on the field notes collected, interview with students, and responses to the teacher's questionnaire, it was found that the implementation of these new materials had a positive impact on student participation. It was observed that students expressed

interest in helping distribute these new materials as soon as they were introduced to them, something that had not happened during the observation phase. Therefore, the students' willingness to help organize and distribute materials (worksheets) beyond their own learning demonstrated how meaningful the new resources were to them and how they contributed to creating a more engaging and interactive classroom environment.

Student 29 comes over and asks me, “¿Qué vamos a hacer hoy? ¿Usted va a dictar la clase hoy?” I nod and tell her to wait for further instructions. She agrees and offers to help me hand out the materials she noticed I brought because I left them on the table. Just then, Student 10 comes over excitedly and also offers to help me hand them out.

(Field Note: Implementation May 27th, 2025)

Student 33 lets me know that she wants to hand out the guides I brought, and I agree, so she hands out the guides group by group, and then I begin to explain what they should do.

(Field Note: Implementation August 28th, 2025)

8. ¿Cómo valora el tipo de material que utilicé en relación con el nivel y contexto del grupo?

El material fue muy apropiado y pertinente. Las guías con traducción al español, los diarios y las actividades visuales se ajustaron perfectamente al nivel y contexto del grupo. Favorecieron la comprensión y permitieron que los estudiantes trabajaran de manera más autónoma. Fueron tan efectivas que como docente titular conservo algunas muestras para replicarlas en futuras clases.

(Extract of Teacher's questionnaire. November 4th 2025)

In short, learners not only expressed enjoyment in using the colorful worksheets, diaries, and games, but also highlighted how these resources made the activities more accessible and motivating. The bilingual format and the inclusion of visual and personalized elements allowed them to feel represented and supported, reducing anxiety and fostering participation. Similarly, the teacher's evaluation confirmed that the materials were appropriate to the group's level and context, enhancing comprehension and promoting autonomy. Taken together, these perspectives demonstrated that the teaching materials were not merely supplementary tools, but

central components of classroom management and pedagogical practice, contributing to a safe, inclusive, and stimulating environment for language learning.

Subcategory 2: Cognitive Strategies: Learner Agency and Autonomy

This subcategory shows the strategies learners applied to overcome linguistic difficulties in order to stay active in participation in the activities. During the implementation, recurring actions were documented across all language classes to facilitate participation in the task: clarifying words they did not know or understand with either the teacher or the researcher, using translation to try to decipher the word or phrase they did not understand, and repeating the answers within their group.

These actions illustrate how students negotiated the conditions of their participation in the tasks, complementing social support resources, technological applications, and peer collaboration. The strategies varied, both in terms of depth and effectiveness, but they demonstrated that the students were active agents who put into practice whatever resources were available to them in order to continue learning. In this way, the analysis highlights the nature of the strategies—developed by the students—as an expression of autonomy, adaptation, and identity construction in the EFL classroom.

First, the attached field notes show that the students frequently asked both the teacher and the researcher about anything they were unsure of, even though the unfamiliar terms, structures, and other concepts that came up during class were written on the board.

The students do not make connections between the examples that are in the guide and what is written on the board since they only ask questions to the teacher and to me.

(Field Note: Implementation September 4th, 2025)

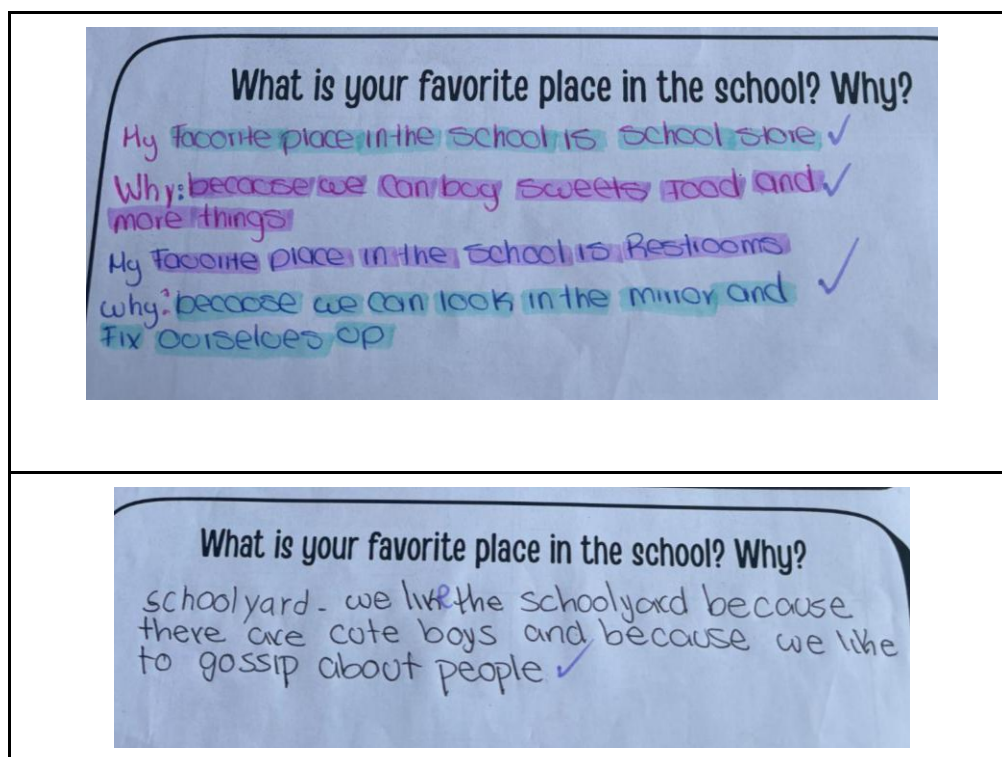
Also, despite having examples on the board of how to use the verb to be or the subject with the verb, they are not guided by that, they only ask me and the teacher for answers.

(Field Note: Implementation August 21st, 2025)

Students used social strategies to make sense of the material and reduce their uncertainty. According to Oxford (1990), learning through social strategies occurs through collaboration and asking questions to get quick answers, which also helps build dialogue and trust among students in the classroom. Thus, when students asked the teacher for help, they took an active role in addressing their own comprehension issues, and this constant interaction became a pathway to learning.

Secondly, another practice that learners used was the use of translation to solve comprehension challenges. This fact could be seen as a compensatory strategy as students looked for external resources such as a translator when their knowledge was not enough. Based on Oxford (1990), those compensatory strategies help learners to fill gaps in communication. In this case, the use of a translator worked as a bridge so that students could continue their participation in the different activities even though their lack of vocabulary or grammar structure.

For example, as it is shown in the following artifacts, it was possible to know that those groups used the translator to answer the question because throughout the implementation those students did not show the knowledge resulting from using verbs as “to fix up” or “to gossip”. However, the fact that they looked for a solution to not only complete the task but also do that consciously, as their answers showed a part of themselves, revealed the engagement they had with the material and the class. Although such strategies may not always promote deep processing of language, they do reflect learners’ agency in seeking immediate solutions and demonstrate their determination to remain engaged in the learning process.

Table 11. *Artifacts of Cycle #3 Recognizing my Environment: Recognizing my School*

(Artifacts of Cycle #3 Recognizing my School from groups 2 & 6)

Lastly, replicating answers within their groups was the third strategy employed. This behavior was seen as a cognitive strategy as repetition became a technique to get used to structures and vocabulary. Cognitive strategies involve practicing the language through various activities, such as repeating, imitating, and taking notes, in order to develop students' comprehension (Oxford, 1990). In this case, the following examples further corroborate the role of imitation as a cognitive strategy. Upon examining the worksheets completed by several students, it was obvious that they carried out the task using identical expressions, such as "My favorite place in the school is volleyball yard" and "My favorite place in the school is schoolyard because I can play."

The fact that students replicated the same structures and vocabulary throughout their responses indicated the extent to which they relied on imitating one another and rehearsing

linguistic patterns to complete the task. The similarity of the students' responses may seem like a superficial act of copying; however, the evidence suggested that the students were attempting to remain engaged and to use interactions with their peers to reinforce clear and precise language use. Furthermore, by imitating others' responses, students not only participated in the activity but also gave themselves the opportunity to practice linguistic patterns they could use to understand and produce language in the future.

Table 12. *Artifacts of Cycle #3 Recognizing my Environment: Recognizing my School*

(Artifacts of Cycle #3 Recognizing my School from groups 1 & 9)

Overall, learners took different approaches to negotiate their participation in the classroom with regard to these strategies: asking for clarification from teachers; using tools to translate; and writing out the same answer as teammates in a collaborative activity. According to Oxford's (1990) taxonomy, these three strategies represent social, compensatory, and cognitive

strategy use, respectively. While the depth and effectiveness of the strategies used by students varied; they illustrate that students participated actively. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge these strategies because they provided evidence of the relationship between teaching practices and student autonomy and served as a basis for examining the roles that students' identities and motivation played in their participation in classroom activities.

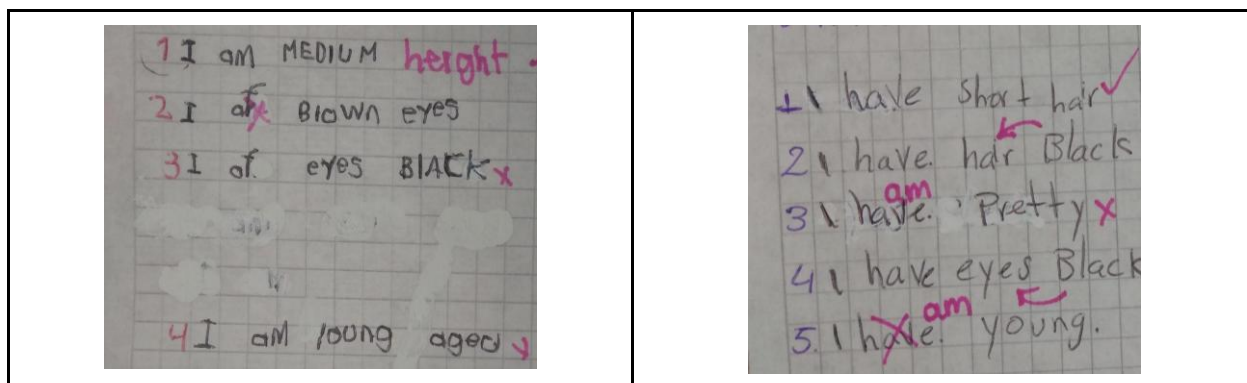
Third Category: Language Dimensions in the EFL Classroom

This category describes how students were using writing, language mediation in two languages, and vocabulary as part of their EFL Classroom experiences. The analysis shows that language learning involved more than learning grammatically correct language structures; it also involved forming a sense of identity, working out how to understand both Spanish and English, and connecting these individual words through to a meaningful context at the school.

Subcategory 1: Expression and Development through Writing

This subcategory examines how writing activities provided students with opportunities to articulate ideas, reflect on personal experiences, and practice linguistic structures in meaningful ways. By using journals, worksheets, guided prompts, and the development of an autobiography as tools to help facilitate writing, students were engaged in writing as a cognitive activity and as a means of self-expression. The writing assignments also provided some evidence of gradual improvement by students in their ability to create complete sentences since the beginning of implementation due to demonstrating incomplete sentences and many mistakes in their writing.

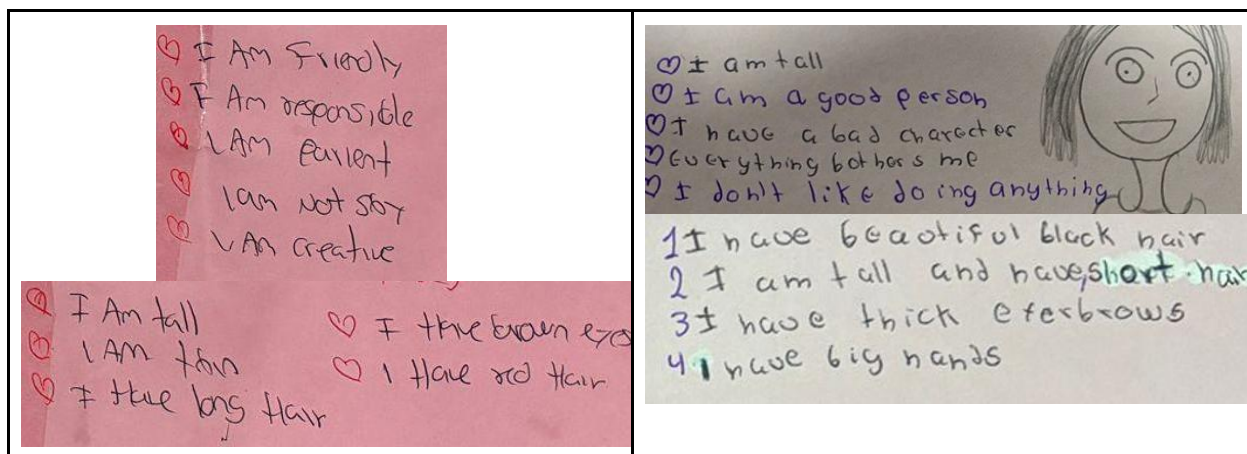
Table 13. *Artifacts of Cycle #1 Who am I?*



(Artifacts of Cycle #1 Who am I? From students 22 & 10)

Confusion between "I am" and "I have," as well as the proper sequence of the adjectives "I have black hair" or "I have brown eyes," were frequent mistakes in this instance. Their early difficulty creating coherent sentences was reflected in these erroneous constructions. However, learners showed an improvement in sentence building as they worked through worksheets, guided prompts, and most importantly, creating the autobiography. They were able to produce more complex and coherent statements like "I have long hair," "I am responsible," and "I am friendly."

Table 14. *Artifacts of Final Version of my Project*



(Cycle #3. Artifacts of the Final Version of the Project from students 28 & 30)

The autobiographical task, in particular, became a milestone where students were able to produce sentences that combined vocabulary, grammar, and personal reflection as was

evidenced in the previous artifacts. The developmental progression from incomplete or error-ridden sentences to more complete and reflective statements illustrated the way writing was both cognitively developed and expressed as a reflection of self. The evidence supports theoretical perspectives (Oxford, 1990; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Hyland, 2003) highlighting the concept of writing as process, reflection, and consolidation, while individuals develop gradually greater levels of linguistic accuracy.

9. ¿Cree que escribir sobre sí mismos (sus experiencias, gustos o recuerdos) ayudó a que los estudiantes se sintieran más cómodos escribiendo en inglés?

Definitivamente sí. Al escribir sobre temas personales, los estudiantes se sintieron más seguros y motivados, ya que no se trataba solo de traducir, sino de expresarse. Esto fortaleció su confianza en la escritura y les permitió usar el vocabulario aprendido de forma más natural.

10. ¿Observó mejoras en aspectos como la estructura, el uso del vocabulario o la coherencia en los textos?

Sí, se evidenciaron mejoras progresivas en el uso del vocabulario y la coherencia. Los estudiantes ampliaron su repertorio léxico y comenzaron a construir frases más comprensibles. Aunque aún hay debilidades gramaticales, se notó un avance en la organización de ideas y en la apropiación de palabras relacionadas con sus emociones, familia y entorno.

(Extracts of Teacher's questionnaire. November 4th 2025)

Moreover, teacher's responses strongly reinforced the students' improvement in writing. It was revealed that by writing about themselves, students felt more at ease and motivated. There was genuine self-expression in addition to the linguistic form. This notion is also discussed by Hyland (2003), where he states that writing within an EFL context uses the process of writing to integrate linguistic forms with personal meaning. This assisted the development of their confidence and engagement in writing.

In the same line, the teacher observed that students improved in their vocabulary, sentence structure and progression, which indicated that students learned a larger vocabulary and began to produce more meaningful phrases. Although there were still some grammatical

mistakes made by some of the students, the overall progress provided evidence that the writing tasks served as a scaffolding opportunity for the students to consolidate their language knowledge, as well as to express their identity.

Subcategory 2: Bilingual Practices for Comprehension

This subcategory explores how Spanish and English interacted in the classroom as complementary resources that supported communication and learning. Spanish was used when students needed to understand words without delay, while English was used when completing written tasks. The interaction of both languages as they co-existed worked as a mediator for student participation, lowered their anxiety levels, and helped them build a stronger base in the English language over time. Thus, bilingual mediation demonstrated how the use of both languages created a pedagogical resource, increasing access and encouraging students to progress toward independence in the target language.

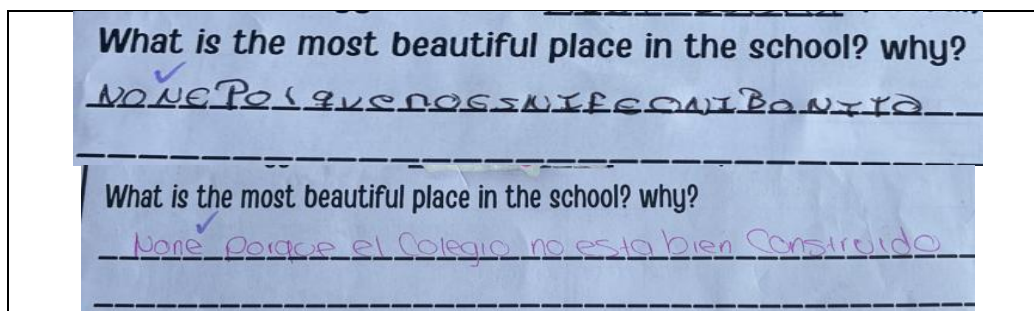
The fact that students relied on Spanish to ask questions, clarify instructions, and express uncertainty highlighted the need for immediate access to meanings whenever there was insufficient vocabulary or structural resources available in English during oral communication.

<i>“Profe, no entiendo esa pregunta”</i> <i>“Profe, ¿qué debo hacer?”</i> <i>“Profe cómo respondo a la pregunta?”</i> <i>It is possible to say that students ask questions in Spanish because they don’t have the enough vocabulary and structure in English to use it.</i> <i>(Field Note: Implementation October 3rd, 2025)</i>
--

In contrast, English was more consistently used in written tasks, where learners could draw on provided vocabulary and models to construct sentences with greater confidence. This was because all the materials and activities were written. However, there was an activity in

which students responded to a written question in Spanish. This task corresponded to cycle #3 *Recognizing my School*. Students were asked to answer a question about their favorite place in school as it is shown in the following artifacts.

Table 15. *Artifacts of Cycle #3 Recognizing my Environment: Recognizing my School*



(Artifacts of Cycle #3 Recognizing my School from groups 3 & 7)

This illustrates the compensatory use of their first language when gaps in vocabulary or grammatical structures in English limited their ability to express meaning. Oxford (1990) identifies compensatory strategies as those that allow learners to overcome deficiencies in the target language by relying on alternative resources, such as use of the mother tongue. This way, Spanish served as a mediating tool in this instance, allowing students to engage and share ideas instead of remaining mute or uninterested.

From a sociocultural standpoint, Vygotsky (1978) highlights that language functions as a psychological instrument for interaction and thought, as a result, learning can be scaffolded by using one's native tongue because it offers instant access to meaning. This data demonstrated that while English progressively solidified as the language of writing output, bilingual mediation was a resource that promoted comprehension and participation rather than a barrier.

In conclusion, students were able to actively participate and understand meaning throughout the learning process thanks to the dynamic form of mediation provided by the

coexistence of Spanish and English in the classroom. English gradually became the language of expression, particularly in written tasks, while Spanish offered prompt assistance when linguistic challenges emerged. This interplay between the two languages highlighted the educational significance of bilingual practices as a support system that improved comprehension, decreased anxiety, and encouraged the development of autonomy in the target language, rather than as a constraint.

Subcategory 3: Contextualizing Language in EFL classroom

This subcategory explores how vocabulary learning was approached through contextualized practices that connected language to meaningful situations. Learners engaged with vocabulary they could relate to or felt close to, and in this way, they learned more words, use them with greater authenticity, and strengthen their ability to express identity and agency in English.

During the observations, it was noticed that the headteacher was using a textbook for grammar-related dictations. As such books included examples that were not contextualized as they were framed within English-speaking cultures and did not resonate with students' realities.

<i>I decided to change the teacher's examples, modifying names and countries because I consider it is a good way to familiarize students with the language with something known to them as the names are.</i>
--

(Field Note: Observation February 27th, 2025)

Thus, in order to foster greater engagement and comprehension, it was decided to adapt the materials by introducing vocabulary directly connected to students' own environment and experiences. Even though contextualized vocabulary was used in all implementation activities, there were two activities and materials that perfectly illustrate the core of this subcategory.

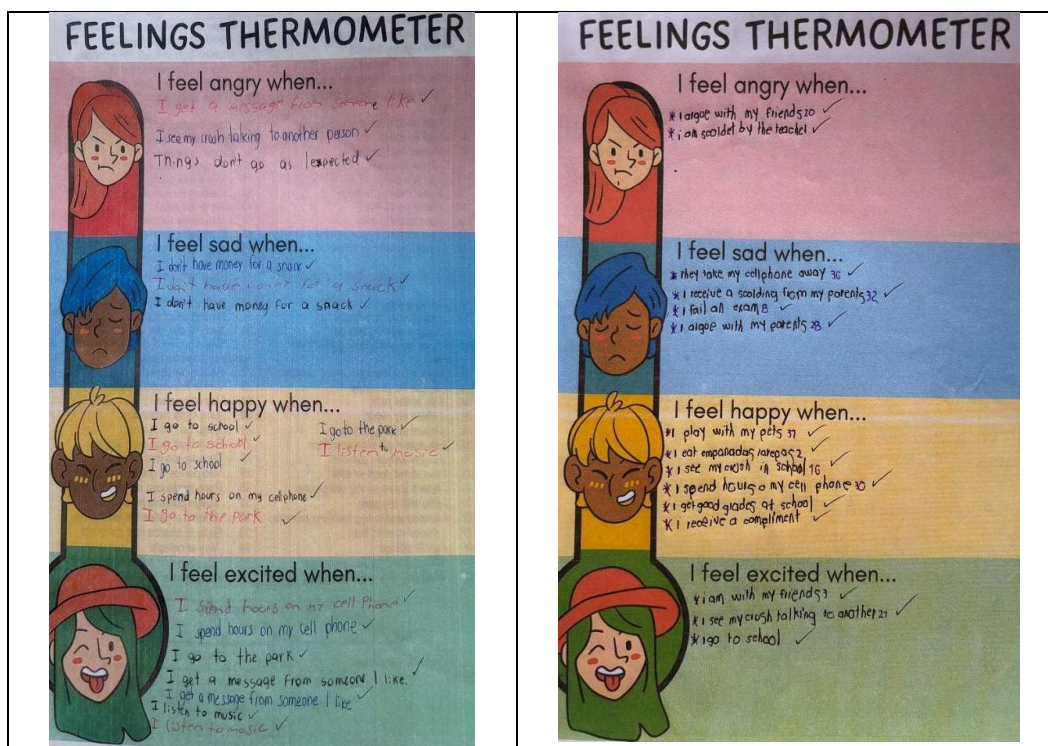
The Feelings Thermometer activity was the first one. This consisted of rolling dice with everyday situations and classifying them according to the emotions they generated. There were eight groups and each one had one dice. Thus, the dynamic consisted of rolling it so that each group could check all the situations. Field notes show that while some groups waited for their turn, others adapted the task:

There are two groups working on the activity with full concentration. However, since the other groups are taking a while to roll the dice, I notice that the first group has started looking at the list of activities among themselves and sorting them into the table. They ask each other how they feel in those situations and write them down. I hear them say: “¿cómo te sientes cuando esto pasa?” “Hmm, yo me siento feliz...” and on the other hand, the other group looks at the list of situations and classifies the ones that catch their attention.

(Field Note: Implementation September 4th, 2025)

One group reviewed the list of situations and collaboratively asked each other how they felt in those cases, writing down their answers, while another group selected the situations that caught their attention and classified them directly. This fact evidenced that students looked for other ways to be engaged with vocabulary, creating a space of negotiation and reflection.

Table 16. *Artifacts of Cycle #1: Getting to know myself: How do I feel when...?*



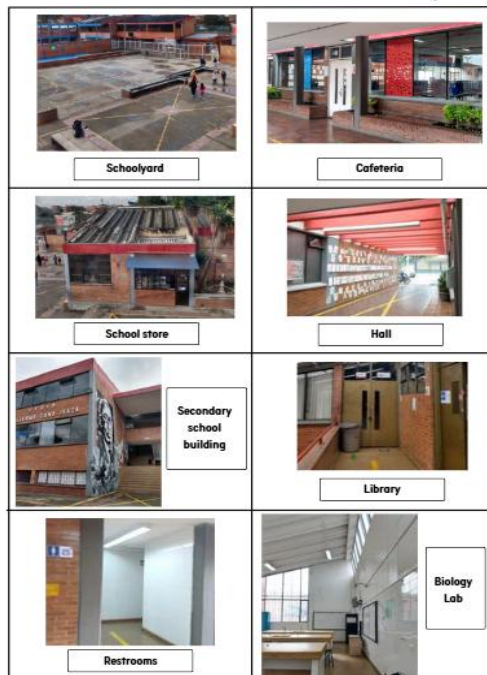
(Artifacts of Cycle #1: How do I feel when...? From groups 5 & 8)

Learning vocabulary is more successful when words are repeated in a variety of settings and anchored in meaningful contexts (Nation, 2001). In this instance, practicing the emotional lexicon was connected to peer interaction and personal experiences rather than being done in isolation, which improved retention and encouraged real-world language use.

Similarly, the vocabulary worksheet with photographs of school spaces was the second one. It gave pupils vocabulary related to their local surroundings. This way, learners saw terms like "schoolyard," "library," and "cafeteria" portrayed with actual photos of their own school rather than abstract or culturally foreign examples.

Names: _____

School Places Vocabulary



(Teaching Material of Cycle #3 Recognizing my School)

In this regard, field notes highlight that this material generated familiarity and recognition, as students could easily relate the vocabulary to spaces they visited daily.

A group asks about a place that isn't listed in the provided vocabulary—it refers to the volleyball yard—and I write the English term on the board.

(Field Note: Implementation October 3rd, 2025)

I notice that when the students see the guide, they're surprised and start reading the places listed there. One student excitedly says, “¡ayyyy la cancha, la cancha donde juagamos está ahí!”

(Field Note: Implementation October 3rd, 2025)

The fact that students inquired about locations—like the volleyball yard—that were not mentioned in the vocabulary worksheet indicated that they actively contributed to broadening the vocabulary beyond what was taught. Students' efforts to use language that represented their own lived environments were an example of agency. Their delight in identifying familiar locations

highlighter the emotive and engagement aspects of contextualized vocabulary, demonstrating how language learning becomes more genuine when it connects with students' identities. Thus, vocabulary learning works best when words are used in communicative contexts (Nation, 2001). Likewise, the students' desire to add more terms in this instance demonstrated how contextualization not only helped with retention but also engaged students to interact with the resources in their own learning process.

In summary, this contextualization transformed vocabulary learning into a meaningful practice by enabling students to apply new words to real-world experiences, closing the gap between language and reality and promoting both comprehension and retention. Students not only memorized facts but also placed them in their real-world context, which encouraged authentic use and strengthened their sense of agency.

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents the study's conclusions in light of the research question, objectives, and data analysis from the previous chapter. It also examines the implications of the findings for the educational context, the educational institution where the project was conducted, the students involved, and English language teaching. Finally, it addresses the study's limitations and offers suggestions for future research.

Conclusions

The aim of this study was to describe the processes that guide the development of recognition of personal identity and engagement among seventh-grade students in an EFL classroom at Guillermo Cano Isaza School. The analysis revealed that identity-focused practices played a key role in helping students recognize themselves, express emotions, and connect language learning to their own lives. In this sense, the autobiography became a central resource for identity construction. Learners expressed who they were in different ways using texts, drawings, and photographs through creative formats, demonstrating that autobiographical text improved both linguistic development and identity expression.

In addition, the connection between teaching materials and student engagement was evident in the use of contextualized resources such as the Feelings Thermometer and the school places worksheet, which facilitated the learning process of meaningful vocabulary and emotional engagement. These resources encouraged active participation, the negotiation of meanings, and the promotion of agency in the co-construction of knowledge, as students recognized their environment and the emotions associated with it.

The analysis also showed that students used three learning strategies to overcome challenges and maintain their participation. First, as a compensatory strategy, they used

translation tools; second, as cognitive strategies, they used repetition and imitation; and third, as a social strategy, they collaborated with one another. These practices complemented identity-based activities and reinforced autonomy, comprehension, and group interaction.

Another significant aspect that emerged from the analysis was the interpersonal dimension of classroom communication. The use of students' names, the organization of group work, and the teacher's personalized interaction promoted trust, respect, and a comfortable environment. This relational approach not only facilitated classroom management but also strengthened students' sense of recognition and belonging. As a result, students felt more at ease and motivated to participate, demonstrating that identity formation and engagement are closely linked to social interaction and mutual recognition in the classroom.

Moreover, the writing activities revealed a gradual improvement in sentence construction. Although the primary focus of the intervention was not specifically to improve writing skills, the fact that most of the activities and materials required written production promoted progress in this area. Students were constantly exposed to activities that involved writing sentences, completing worksheets, and reflecting, which reinforced their ability to organize ideas coherently. The autobiographical writing project became a resource where students combined language practice with personal reflection, demonstrating that writing was both a cognitive exercise and a means of expressing identity. Thus, writing practice, even when it was not the central objective, played a decisive role in consolidating vocabulary and grammar, while fostering self-recognition.

In general terms, the study stressed the importance of emotional investment in language learning. Students changed their attitude toward the activities, moving from focusing only on grades to active participation; they found enjoyment in the activities and felt recognized through

their narratives. The variety of formats in the autobiographies and the reflection in the personal journals reinforced their autonomy and emotional investment in learning. This affective dimension promoted motivation, confidence, and authenticity in the classroom environment.

Finally, the results showed that identity-centered teaching practices, teaching materials—especially those that were contextualized—interpersonal communication, student learning strategies, and emotionally engaging activities worked together to enhance student learning in the English as a Foreign Language classroom. It was demonstrated that these elements not only improved language learning but also fostered students' agency, autonomy, and personal growth. The results also revealed that meaningful learning could be promoted by integrating cognitive, emotional, relational, and identity-based dimensions to create spaces where students learnt English while simultaneously constructing meaning about themselves and the world. In conclusion, the research demonstrated that practices centered on identity, contextualized vocabulary, and positive interpersonal relationships in the classroom not only reinforced language learning but also encouraged students toward self-recognition, meaningful participation, and the construction of authentic knowledge.

Implications

First, this study demonstrates significant contributions to the educational context. For example, in case there are insufficient resources, the use of identity based and contextualized instructional strategies can help counter low engagement and purpose regarding the learning of English by connecting language to the lives, experiences and identity of students. Even though there are contexts in which English is not considered important, it is possible to provide students with authentic opportunities to engage with English by providing them with instructional activities that connect to their everyday experiences.

Additionally, this research has implications for the institution. At the Guillermo Cano Isaza School, where the Institutional Educational Project focuses on self-acknowledgment and life preparation, the findings provide additional support for the importance of incorporating identity-based activities in the curriculum. Consequently, English can play a dual role; not only can help students develop linguistically but also plays a part in the greater objective of encouraging students to think about who they are and what they want to do—thereby establishing English as a meaningful instrument that fosters personal development rather than just another subject in the area of humanities.

Furthermore, this study has implications for the seventh-grade students. Through implementation, they were able to see ways to express themselves and build confidence. The activities promoted autonomy, creativity, and emotional investment, and indicated that when students believe in themselves, they are more willing to engage and invest in their learning. Therefore, the importance of designing educational practices that address both the social and emotional development is essential.

Finally, these findings have implications for English language teaching. Instruction should go beyond a grammar- or vocabulary-based approach to incorporate identity, emotions, and social interaction. Written and reflective tasks proved effective in improving linguistic accuracy, while contextualized materials and relational communication strategies created a motivating environment. All in all, these findings suggest that English language instruction in similar contexts can benefit from integrating cognitive, emotional, identity-related, and relational dimensions, making language learning more meaningful and relevant to students' personal and institutional realities.

Limitations

The implementation of this action research was limited by a number of circumstances during its development. First, the initial observations were affected because of the time the researcher was assigned to the school. Specifically, this was at the end of the year, and at that time, the English classes were only focused on rehearsing dances for the English Day. As a result, it was impossible to observe any English real classes until the following year, in which it was noticed that most of the students did not have the basis in English Language.

Second, there were multiple class cancellations for various reasons—related to school extracurricular activities—and there was even a week when the school flooded, and students did not have class. This resulted in the fact that the research could only carry out one class during that first part of the year. On the other hand, considering that class time was from 2:15 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., there were several days when this was students' first class, so part of that time was used for lunch. This posed a problem, as there were days when that time stretched to more than half an hour between the students took to eat and their subsequent cleanup.

Finally, as the headteacher also had to conduct their own classes and activities, this pedagogical implementation was reduced in terms of time at several moments throughout the year, to the point that the final cycle of the implementation could not be carried out.

Further Research

According to the findings of the study, future research could explore how the creation of autobiographical texts and self-recognition activities might contribute to the development of other skills, such as speaking, reading, and listening. This could provide a wider perspective on the positive impact these resources and activities have on student engagement in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Furthermore, it would also be worthwhile to examine

whether this type of material and identity-related activities have the same positive influence in other grade levels.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1. Field Notes

Field notes Observer: me	Place: Colegio Guillermo Cano Isaza	Dates: 19-09-24/26-09-24/03-10-24
• The students were in their groups, playing and talking. Noise began to fill the classroom. Before leaving, the teacher assigned two students to write down on the board the names of the students who got up from their seats. The student who was writing down the names started yelling at those who were standing up or changing places. A group of three students yell at her and start arguing. Then, the student who was writing went over to some classmates, and while that was happening, the aforementioned students erased their names from the board, laughing. The student returned and began writing down last names again. • At 1:00 p.m., the lunches arrived. The teacher asked the girls to line up first to pick them up. The teacher was in charge of handing them out. Then it would be the boys' turn. Only three students did not receive lunch because they had already eaten at home. I also received a lunch. Lunch came on a sealed tray, along with a small bottle of water and a tangerine. At first, the students ate lunch at their desks; they were divided into 5 small groups. Then, the teacher left the classroom, and while some of the students were finishing, six of them started playing by throwing the mandarin seeds. They threw them at each other. Meanwhile, two students started playing with a water bottle on the floor as if it were a ball. And one girl accidentally dropped her lunch on the floor, so she went to get a broom and dustpan. • Then, they began to work on the exercises, which focused on Christmas-related vocabulary. At first, they were confused, and more than half of them seemed frustrated because they did not understand many of the words. This was because, on the one hand, they stated that they did not know English and, on the other hand, the vocabulary used included words closely related to the context of a trusting environment where students feel comfortable asking questions. I noticed that, although most of the students were attentive and had the attitude of answering the questionnaire conscientiously, there were others who were not interested in this activity, so their goal was to answer as quickly as possible without asking questions or reflecting. This may be due to motivation issues; perhaps those students considered the exercise irrelevant and therefore did not take it as seriously.		
• The students get along well in the sense that there are no conflicts in the classroom. The description mentioned an argument, but not a fight. They were not observed causing a disturbance or insulting one another. The only recurring issue is the noise level, as it is a constant. • Lunch appears to be a time that most students look forward to, as they get organized quite quickly to receive it. Therefore, their motivation to follow instructions—in this case, to form a line of boys and girls—increases when it involves something that interests them. On the other hand, it is again evident that when they are left without the teacher's supervision, they start teasing and playing with one another, in this case by throwing food scraps at each other. • I believe that a significant part of learning and establishing connections between the images they see and the vocabulary has a lot to do with the content. When vocabulary involves objects or practices specific to a culture that is not our own, this connection becomes more difficult, as it is distant from our reality.		

Annex 2. Students Questionnaire



CEDID GUILLERMO CANO ISAZA
CUESTIONARIO DE CARACTERIZACIÓN

Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

PERSONAL FIELD

- 1 ¿En dónde naciste? (ciudad, pueblo o municipio)

- 2 ¿En dónde vives actualmente? (Barrio, localidad)

- 3 ¿Cuántos años tienes?

- 4 ¿Cuál es tu género?
a) Femenino
b) Masculino
c) No binario
d) No quiero responder
e) Otro: _____
- 5 ¿Cuál es tu estrato socioeconómico?
a) 1 d) 4
b) 2 e) 5
c) 3 f) 6
- 6 ¿Por cuál medio de transporte llegas al colegio?
a) Ruta escolar
b) Sitp o Transmilenio
c) A pie
d) Carro
e) Moto
f) Taxi
g) Otro: _____
- 7 ¿Con quién vives?

- 8 ¿Te sientes apoyado por tu familia en tu proceso académico?
a) Sí b) No
- 9 ¿Cuáles de las siguientes equipos utilizas en tu casa para hacer tareas? Puedes marcar más de una opción.
a) Televisor
b) Computador de mesa o portátil
c) Tablet
d) Celular
e) No tengo ninguno
f) Otro: _____
- 10 ¿Tienes acceso a internet en tu casa?
a) Sí b) No
- 11 Menciona las tres actividades que más te gusta hacer en tus tiempos libres.



CEDID GUILLERMO CANO ISAZA
CUESTIONARIO DE CARACTERIZACIÓN

ACADEMIC FIELD

- 1 ¿Cuál es tu motivación para ir al colegio?

- 2 ¿Cuál o cuales son tus materias favoritas?

- 3 ¿Te llevas bien con tus compañeros de curso?
a) Sí c) Con la mayoría
b) No d) Con algunos
- 4 ¿Te gusta aprender inglés?
a) Sí b) No
- 5 ¿Te gusta la clase de inglés?
a) Sí b) No
- 6 ¿Consideras que el inglés será importante para tu vida en el futuro?
a) Sí b) No
- 7 ¿Estudias inglés por fuera del colegio?
a) Sí b) No
- 8 ¿Te gusta trabajar en grupo en la clase de inglés?
a) Sí b) No
- 9 ¿Cuáles de los siguientes contenidos consumes en inglés? Puedes marcar más de una opción.
a) Videos
b) Música
c) Series de TV o plataformas digitales como Netflix, HBO, etc.
d) Podcast
e) No consumo ningún contenido en inglés
f) Otro(s): _____
- 10 ¿En cuáles de las siguientes habilidades consideras que tienes dificultad en inglés? Marca del 1 (mayor dificultad) al 6 (Menor dificultad)

Hablar (speaking)	
Leer (reading)	
Escribir (writing)	
Escuchar (listening)	
Gramática (grammar)	
Vocabulario (vocabulary)	
- 11 ¿Cuáles de las siguientes actividades te gusta hacer para aprender inglés? Marca del 1 (Me gusta mucho) al 7 (No me gusta tanto)

Juegos de competencia	
Lecturas en grupo	
Ejercicios escritos	
Conversaciones en grupo	
Actividades con canciones	
Ver imágenes	
Ver videos	

Otro(s): _____

Annex 3. Diagnostic Test

NAME:

DATE:

- 1 Listen to the audio attentively and fill the gaps. (Escucha atentamente el audio y completa los espacios en blanco).

I like Halloween because it is a fun time for many reasons. First, I can dress up in costumes. I can be a superhero or a _____. Second, and my favorite part, I go trick-or-treating. I usually go out with my brother and we say "Trick or treat!" to get _____. Also, Halloween has spooky decorations like skeletons, witches and ghosts. In _____, my friends and I always decorate the _____ with these things. Finally, Halloween is an opportunity to have fun with my friends and family. All these things make Halloween a _____ and exciting day for me!



- 2 Based on the previous text, answer the following questions. (Con base en el texto anterior, responde las siguientes preguntas)

a. Who does she usually go trick-or-treating with?

b. What things does she use to decorate the classroom?

Mark with an X the correct answer. (Marca con una X la respuesta correcta).

c. The text is about:

Different ways to have fun on Halloween. ☐
How the author prepares for Halloween. ☐
The reasons why the author likes Halloween. ☐
The importance of decorations in Halloween. ☐

d. A synonym of the word "Spooky" is

Comfortable ☐
Terrifying ☐
Beautiful ☐
Common ☐

- 3 Write 5 sentences describing Sara. You can write about her appearance (apariencia física), her costume (su disfraz) and the place where she is (el lugar donde está). For example: Sara has big eyes/ Sara is in the park.

1 _____
2 _____
3 _____
4 _____
5 _____

GLOSARY (GLOSARIO)

• COSTUMES



• TRICK-OR-TREATING



• SKELETONS



• WITCHES



• GHOSTS



• TO HAVE FUN



• EXCITING



• SPIDER



• BATS



• PUMPKINS



Camilo/Sara

Annex 4. Semi-structured Interview to the Classroom Teacher

Recognizing Myself in EFL Classroom

Semi-structured Interview

Classroom Teacher:

Sixth Grade

Date: September 25th 2024

1. En relación con el festival de la canción, ¿quién eligió la canción para el curso? ¿por qué eligieron The Eye of The Tiger?
2. ¿Qué pasa con los estudiantes que no participan? ¿Por qué cree que no lo hicieron?
3. ¿Cómo percibe el recibimiento de este tipo de actividades por parte de los estudiantes de 6-2?
4. ¿Cuáles cree usted que son las dificultades y fortalezas del grupo en términos del área de inglés, pero también de su dinámica como grupo?
5. Listo profe, para aclarar esa parte que está unido español e inglés, podría explicarlo mejor.
6. ¿Cómo se divide el horario en la materia?
7. ¿Considera que tienen problemas no relacionados con el área de inglés que influyen en su proceso de aprendizaje?
8. ¿De qué manera afecta el almuerzo?
9. ¿Y eso pasa solo en las clases de inglés o en todas las clases que empiezan a las 12?
10. ¿Cuál es su percepción sobre la actitud de los estudiantes frente a la clase de inglés?
11. El colegio es uno de tipo técnico. En este caso con tres enfoques en comercio, comida e industrial. ¿Existe algún proyecto o vínculo que se relacione con estos enfoques desde el área de inglés para sexto?
12. ¿Y usted cree que se podría lograr algún proyecto transversal para sexto o séptimo?
13. ¿Cuál es la posición del colegio frente al uso de las tecnologías en el salón de clases? ¿Eso incluye si el salón tiene televisor o si usted o si el colegio permite el uso o qué posición tiene frente al uso del celular?
14. ¿Cómo cree que podría mejorarse esa cultura del cuidado y el buen uso del celular?
15. El colegio tiene un laboratorio bilingüe. ¿En sus clases hace uso de él? ¿por qué?
16. ¿Hace uso del televisor?
17. ¿Usted cree que se puede llegar a usar el celular con fines pedagógicos?
18. ¿Considera que se podría hacer un tipo de training desde sexto para prepararlos?
19. ¿Qué materiales emplea en la clase de inglés?
20. ¿Qué estrategias usa para enseñarles inglés?
21. ¿Cuáles de sus estrategias considera que han sido efectivas y cuáles no?

Annex 5. Informed Consent

 UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA NACIONAL INSTITUTO VICEPRESIDENCIAL DE INVESTIGACIÓN Y DESARROLLO	FORMATO		
	CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO PARA PROYECTOS DE INVESTIGACIÓN		
Código: FOR028INV	Fecha de Aprobación: 28-08-2019	Versión: 02	Página 1 de 3

Vicerrectoría de Gestión Universitaria
Subdirección de Gestión de Proyectos – Centro de Investigaciones CIUP
Comité de Ética en la Investigación

En el marco de la Constitución Política Nacional de Colombia, la Ley Estatutaria 1581 de 2012 "Por la cual se dictan disposiciones generales para la protección de datos personales" y la Resolución 1642 del 18 de diciembre de 2018 "Por la cual se derogan las Resoluciones N°0546 de 2015 y N° 1804 de 2016, y se reglamenta el Comité de Ética en Investigación de la Universidad Pedagógica Nacional y demás normatividad aplicable vigente, se ha definido el siguiente formato de consentimiento informado para proyectos de investigación realizados por miembros de la comunidad académica considerando el principio de autonomía de las comunidades y de las personas que participan en los estudios adelantados por miembros de la comunidad académica.

Lo invitamos a que lea detenidamente el Consentimiento informado, y si está de acuerdo con su contenido exprese su aprobación firmando el siguiente documento:

PARTE UNO: INFORMACIÓN GENERAL DEL PROYECTO

Título del proyecto de investigación	Estrategias de regulación socio afectiva para contribuir al aprendizaje y comunicación de vocabulario en inglés de estudiantes de primer grado.
Resumen de la investigación	El proyecto de investigación comprende la observación de clases de inglés y la aplicación de instrumentos de recolección de datos como encuestas, cuestionarios y actividades diagnósticas; para eventualmente realizar intervenciones pedagógicas que permitan aplicar de manera efectiva elementos de regulación socio afectiva al proceso de aprendizaje de inglés de los estudiantes de grado primero del colegio Gonzalo Arango.
Descriptor clave del proyecto de investigación	regulación socioafectiva, vocabulario en inglés, comunicación
Descripción de los posibles beneficios de participar en el estudio	La participación en esta investigación contribuirá al proceso de aprendizaje de inglés de su hijo/a, específicamente en la comprensión y comunicación de vocabulario en inglés por medio de elementos de regulación socio afectivos.
Mencione la forma en que se socializarán los resultados de la investigación	Los resultados obtenidos de esta investigación se publicarán en el año 2024 en el repositorio institucional de la UPN link: http://repositorio.pedagogica.edu.co/
Explícite la forma en que mantendrá la reserva de la información	La información obtenida por medio de cuestionarios, entrevistas, actividades diagnósticas etc. será de uso y conocimiento solamente por parte de la investigadora con el fin único de aportar a la presente investigación. NO se tomarán fotos, videos, ni otro tipo de formato que comprometa la identidad de los estudiantes o los padres de familia.

 UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA NACIONAL INSTITUTO VICEPRESIDENCIAL DE INVESTIGACIÓN Y DESARROLLO	FORMATO		
	CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO PARA PROYECTOS DE INVESTIGACIÓN		
Código: FOR028INV	Fecha de Aprobación: 28-08-2019	Versión: 02	Página 2 de 3

Datos generales del investigador principal	Para referirse a la participación y desempeño de los estudiantes la investigadora usará sustantivos comunes distintivos, por ejemplo estudiante 1, participante edad 7 años.		
	Nombre(s) y Apellido(s) :		
	N° de Identificación:	Teléfono	
	Correo electrónico		
	Dirección:		

PARTE DOS: CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

Yo : _____

Identificado con Cédula de Ciudadanía _____, en representación de _____ con número de identificación _____.

Declaro que:

1. He sido invitado a participar en la investigación y de manera voluntaria he decidido hacer parte de este estudio.
2. He sido informado sobre los temas en que se desarrollará el estudio, han sido resueltas todas mis inquietudes y entiendo que puedo dejar de participar en cualquier momento si así lo deseo.
3. Sobre esta investigación me asisten los derechos de acceso, rectificación y oposición que podré ejercer mediante solicitud ante el investigador responsable, en la dirección de contacto que figura en este documento.
4. Conozco el mecanismo mediante el cual los investigadores garantizan la custodia y confidencialidad de mis datos.
5. La información obtenida de mi participación será parte del estudio y mi anonimato se garantizará. Sin embargo, si así lo deseo, autorizaré de manera escrita que la información personal o institucional se mencione en el estudio.
6. Autorizo a los investigadores para que divulguen la información y las grabaciones de audio, video o imágenes que se generen en el marco del proyecto y que no comprometan lo enunciado en el punto 4D.

En constancia, manifiesto que he leído y entendido el presente documento.

Annex 6. Classroom Teacher's Questionnaire

1. ¿Cómo describiría el curso en términos de motivación y participación en la clase de inglés?

El curso mostró una motivación moderada, especialmente cuando las actividades fueron dinámicas, visuales y relacionadas con su vida cotidiana. Aunque suelen distraerse con facilidad, participaron activamente en las clases donde podían escribir, dibujar o expresar sus emociones. Las estrategias de la practicante ayudaron a captar su interés y mantenerlos enfocados por más tiempo de lo habitual.

2. ¿Qué desafíos suelen presentarse al enseñar inglés en este curso?

Los principales desafíos son la falta de atención sostenida, los escasos hábitos de estudio y el bajo nivel de autonomía. Además, muchos estudiantes no cuentan con acompañamiento familiar, lo que dificulta la práctica constante del idioma. También se evidencian limitaciones en la comprensión auditiva y expresión oral, ya que no se trabajaron las habilidades de speaking ni listening durante el proceso.

3. Desde su experiencia, ¿qué factores influyen más en la motivación de los estudiantes hacia el inglés?

Los factores que más influyen son las actividades que conectan con su vida personal y su entorno, el uso de recursos visuales y guías traducidas, y la posibilidad de expresarse a través del dibujo y la escritura. Cuando las clases incluyen temas cercanos a sus intereses y experiencias, los estudiantes se sienten más seguros y participan con entusiasmo.

4. ¿Ha notado diferencias en la actitud o motivación de los estudiantes cuando trabajan con temas personales?

Sí, se notó una diferencia significativa. Cuando las actividades estaban relacionadas con sus emociones, familia o gustos personales, los estudiantes mostraron mayor compromiso, alegría y disposición para escribir en inglés. Se sentían más identificados y valorados, lo que mejoró su actitud frente a la clase.

5. ¿Cómo percibe el compromiso de los estudiantes cuando las clases incluyen temas relacionados con su vida o su entorno?

El compromiso fue notoriamente mayor. Al relacionar los contenidos con su entorno, los estudiantes participaron más, compartieron sus experiencias y completaron las actividades con entusiasmo. Estos temas les resultan familiares y les permiten aplicar el inglés de manera práctica y significativa.

6. ¿Considera que las actividades favorecieron la participación o el interés de los estudiantes por el inglés? ¿Por qué?

Sí, las actividades fueron muy efectivas para fomentar la participación. Los ejercicios sobre emociones, los diarios personales y las guías con vocabulario ilustrado despertaron el interés del grupo. Al sentirse comprendidos y ver el inglés aplicado a su realidad, los estudiantes participaron más y disfrutaron las clases.

7. ¿Hubo alguna actividad o momento en particular en el que notara más compromiso o conexión personal por parte de los estudiantes?

Sí, durante la actividad de los diarios personales y la de las emociones, los estudiantes mostraron una conexión profunda. Les gustó escribir sobre sí mismos, su familia y su entorno. Se evidenció mayor entusiasmo y orgullo al compartir sus producciones escritas y dibujos con la practicante y sus compañeros.

8. ¿Cómo valora el tipo de material que utilizó (guías, diarios, etc.) en relación con el nivel y contexto del grupo?

El material fue muy apropiado y pertinente. Las guías con traducción al español, los diarios y las actividades visuales se ajustaron perfectamente al nivel y contexto del grupo. Favorecieron la comprensión y permitieron que los estudiantes trabajaran de manera más autónoma. Fueron tan efectivas que como docente titular conservo algunas muestras para replicarlas en futuras clases.

9. ¿Cree que escribir sobre sí mismos (sus experiencias, gustos o recuerdos) ayudó a que los estudiantes se sintieran más cómodos escribiendo en inglés?

Definitivamente sí. Al escribir sobre temas personales, los estudiantes se sintieron más seguros y motivados, ya que no se trataba solo de traducir, sino de expresarse. Esto fortaleció su confianza en la escritura y les permitió usar el vocabulario aprendido de forma más natural.

10. ¿Observó mejoras en aspectos como la estructura, el uso del vocabulario o la coherencia en los textos?

Sí, se evidenciaron mejoras progresivas en el uso del vocabulario y la coherencia. Los estudiantes ampliaron su repertorio léxico y comenzaron a construir frases más comprensibles. Aunque aún hay debilidades gramaticales, se notó un avance en la organización de ideas y en la apropiación de palabras relacionadas con sus emociones.

Annex 7. Worksheet School Places

Names: _____

School Places Vocabulary

	
Schoolyard	Cafeteria
	
School store	Hall
	
Secondary school building	Library
	
Restrooms	Biology Lab

Workshop: Comparatives and Superlatives

Complete the sentence. (comparatives):

1. The cafeteria is _____ (noisy) than the library.
2. The secondary school building is _____ (tall) than the Biology lab.
3. The school store is _____ (small) than the cafeteria.

Complete the sentences. (superlatives):

1. The schoolyard is the _____ (big) place in the school.
2. The restrooms are the _____ (cold) place in the school.
3. The biology lab is the _____ (useful) place in the school.

What is the most beautiful place in the school? why?

What is your favorite place in the school? Why?

Annex 8. Lesson Plan Sample

1st Cycle: Getting to know myself	
Lesson Plan No.	4
Topic:	Likes and dislikes
Lesson title:	What do I like/ not like?
Intended course level	A1-702
Duration of the class:	1 hour
Learning Objectives	
- To use simple expressions to talk about likes and dislikes (I like / I don't like). - To expand vocabulary related to hobbies, interests, and objects close to students lives.	
Project Objectives	
- To identify the activities and things that I enjoy or reject. - To recognize how my interests reflect who I am.	
Class Procedure and Methodology	
Timing	Activities
5 min	- Presentation of the topic: On the board, the teacher writes the key structures: - I like... - I don't like... - My favorite ___ is... Teacher gives 2-3 personal examples: - I like football. I don't like swimming. My favorite color is blue.
15 min	- Guided Practice Teacher gives students a worksheet of hobbies/activities and students check ✓ or X depending on what they like/don't like.
30 min	-Production Part

10 min	Based on the model paragraph that is in the worksheet and the following structure written on the board: Model: Hello! My name is _____. I am _____ years old. I like _____. My favorite _____ is _____. I also like _____. I don't like _____. In my free time, I _____. My favorite _____ is _____. That is what I like and don't like! Students write their own short paragraph following the model (5-6 sentences).
	Closure Quick recap: Teacher asks students randomly: <i>Tell me one thing you like and one you don't like, and then the teacher highlights correct use of the structure.</i>

Materials and Resources	
- Whiteboard and markers - Worksheet https://docs.google.com/document/d/1AuQs6bZwnOj1wsxDwtXbsNRn_xO36o9JBvc2k40YvH8/edit?usp=sharing	
References	
Home tasks (Independent Work)	
Assessment/Self-assessment	
Rubric to evaluate the product of the class. https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bq98FnLXkMwAwxnls98fiMXXTGGQ4JRY_oqXiD8rocE/edit?usp=sharing	