Enhancing English Learning in the EFL Population by the Use of Interactive Tasks

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Abstract

The main purpose of this qualitative research is focused on enhancing and improving students' English skills using interactive tasks. To achieve this goal, a series of interactive tasks were implemented through the design of virtual posters using the educational web tool Glogster EDU. During the implementation stage, a group of twenty-nine seventh graders from a public school in Colombia were chosen. These students designed three virtual posters where they evidenced their motivation and engagement with the target language. The data collection instruments used in this research study were: questionnaires, artifacts, and students' journals; additionally, the method chosen to analyze the data was based on the grounded theory. The results of this study revealed that interactive tasks work as a mechanism to engage and motivate learners; thus, this tool fosters their cognitive and creative skills and drives students into successful language learning. What is more, the use of interactive tasks enhances students' participation in class since they are meaningfully engaged in discovering new academic elements through an innovative strategy. This allows the creation of virtual posters in which the students are the co-producers of their learning process.

Key words: FEL; Interactive tasks; language learners' engagement; personalized learning.

Resumen

El principal propósito de esta investigación cualitativa está enfocado en incrementar y mejorar las habilidades de los estudiantes para el aprendizaje del inglés a través del uso de trabajos interactivos. Para llevar a cabo este propósito, se implementó una serie de tareas interactivas en las que se utilizó la herramienta educativa web Glogster EDU para la creación de afiches virtuales. Durante el proceso de implementación se seleccionó un grupo de 29 estudiantes de grado séptimo de un colegio público en Colombia. Estos estudiantes crearon tres afiches virtuales con los que evidenciaron su motivación y compromiso con el aprendizaje del inglés. Los instrumentos utilizados para la recolección de los datos en este proyecto fueron: cuestionarios, trabajos hechos por los estudiantes y diarios de campo. Además, el método a seguir para analizar los datos se basó en el muestreo teórico. Los resultados de la investigación revelaron que los trabajos interactivos funcionan como mecanismo para involucrar y motivar al estudiante puesto que esta herramienta fortalece sus habilidades cognitivas y creativas y lo guía hacia un exitoso aprendizaje del idioma. Además, los trabajos interactivos incrementan la participación de los estudiantes puesto que ellos se sienten significativamente comprometidos con el descubrimiento de cosas nuevas a través de la implementación de una estrategia innovadora que permite la creación de afiches virtuales en los cuales los estudiantes son co-productores de su proceso de aprendizaje.

Palabras claves: EFL; trabajos interactivos; compromiso con el aprendizaje de una lengua;, aprendizaje personalizado.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1   Introduction to the study

The use of web tools (2.0) in language learning has become an innovative idea that has recently started to modify the traditional learning strategies used in the English teaching setting, especially in public schools in Bogota (Colombia – South America.) It is known that for the last four years, the National Ministry of Education (MEN) has been promoting a project called *Bogota Bilingüe* and this has been the starting point in all schools in Colombia to improve their teaching practices. To help these future generations enhance their English language learning, the main goal of this project is focused on implementing new and novel learning methodologies in the public education system to take students to a successful process of acquiring a foreign language; especially in writing. Two of the main components of the *Bogota Bilingüe* project are: the teachers and students' training to reach a higher language proficiency level, and the creation of appropriate language teaching centers for schools (Teran & Rincon, 2016)

It is important to add that the teaching qualification process has been carried out through the design of specific language standards; and with the use of the international frameworks, it was possible to guide the consolidation of language curricula in the schools. Adopting these new proposals has been challenging, especially for public schools that have faced different impediments related to the difference between private and public schools, such as students' language background, reduced number of English teaching hours per week, the lack of teaching resources and under-qualified English teachers in elementary school.

In the course of this research, it was found that different public schools wanted to take part in the *Bogota Bilingue* project. Brasilia school, for instance, was one of the most interesting institutions willing to participate in the project. This institution was also very interested in developing classroom settings of Spanish and English instruction. Therefore, Brasilia school was chosen to carry out this study since this educational setting was an advocate of implementing teaching strategies that facilitated the interaction between the students and the language itself. The use of web tools and more interactive elements helped students improve their levels of proficiency.

 To reach the above-mentioned goals, this institution started by adapting, reinforcing, and adjusting the language learning process in the school curriculum, and took into account the English standards stated by the National Ministry of Education. Furthermore, the school was equipped with computers so they could create a language resource center where more significant learning experiences could take place. These adaptations were made to provide students with the necessary tools to fulfill their academic, social, and personal needs as English Language Learners. Thus, this school was a suitable fit for this action research due to its willingness to take students to the next level of English dynamically and engagingly.

1.2   Rationale of the study

There is research that shows that engaging methods, such as computers and web 2.0 tools, used with learners do not result to be effective in some cases due to the affective filter. Krashen (2007) explained, in his fifth theory of second language acquisition, about the importance of lowering the affective filter. He claimed that when students feel demotivated, with low self-esteem and anxiety their affective filter is high; therefore, this

prevents students from effective learning and creates a mental block that does not allow them to receive comprehensible input and succeed in the second language acquisition process. In other words, when the learner is engaged and motivated towards his learning process (filter down) his language acquisition flows smoothly (Krashen, 2007).

Taking into account Krashen's ideas, it is important to mention that the implementation of new technological tools, in this case, the web tool 2.0, in the English classroom would be beneficial to reduce feelings of anxiety and discomfort; considering this will lead learners to get involved in new and innovative learning experiences which will surely engage and motivate them to improve their learning process.

To conclude, it needs to be said that taking into account the learners' needs already mentioned, this research is mainly focused on guiding and leading students to the use of a web tool called Glogster EDU. The main idea was to create posters in which language learners were able to write about their personal information, abilities, hobbies, likes, and dislikes; among others, using the target language of instruction. Glogster EDU was the collaborative online learning platform the researcher implemented with the pupils, which was designed to foster students' creativity, autonomy, authenticity, socialization and sharing abilities while they were being engaged in improving the use of the language.

1.2.1 *Need analysis and problem statement*
Particularly, the idea of this research came up since there was a sharp lack of interaction among seventh-graders from a public school in Usme Brasilia – Usme School. Furthermore, this group was not properly using the target language in the classroom since they were not provided with the necessary resources and clear instructions by teachers. The majority of the students were below grade level and the purpose was not only to motivate

them in the use and learning of a language but also to help them reach higher levels of

understanding. During the observations previously made for this research, it can be inferred

that the English instructors of this institution did not use sufficient methodologies and

classroom techniques that motivated their students. Additionally, these English teachers did

not use the target language to teach the class, and it is important to point out that successful

English learners need to be immersed in the target language if they want to succeed in the

acquisition of a language (Herrera & Murray, 2010).   It is important to note, that due to the

technological advances teachers have access to many web tools that can be used to promote

the use of the language in the educational setting or even in non-educational contexts;

however, besides the modern and accessible tools, this class was not positively guided to

reach their language objective dynamically and engagingly. In other words, these English

teachers did not take advantage of the different technological resources the school provided

and tended to use the traditional method of instruction.

To conduct well-developed research, it was necessary to implement an observation

process. This process was a two-week observation plan where the investigator observed the

English classes taught at the school and drew relevant conclusions related to the way

English was being taught. During the above-mentioned process, it was perceived that the

use of traditional strategies for creating products at the end of each didactic unit was not

very motivating for learners. Educators in this institution did not use the appropriate

methodological tools to encourage students to reach higher levels of understanding and

production. Thus, the quality of the final products students provided did not show

outstanding performance taking into account the students' level. Additionally, a high

percentage of students did not even develop the assignment since they considered that the

activities were not as challenging or interesting as they expected. The previous issues evidenced the necessity to provide learners with alternative strategies and educational tools to motivate and engage them towards the strengthening of the target language.

To fulfill the above-mentioned objectives, the idea was to implement the use of technology and databases as part of the language instructions; however, it was found that students of this institution certainly had a lack of learning backgrounds on the use of technology for academic purposes. In the future, they may not even have many opportunities to get engaged again in new learning technological experiences because of their limited academic opportunities. Diana and James Oblinger (2006) stated that "The consequences of this disengagement are often much more serious for young people from disadvantageous backgrounds because they do not usually get a second chance; students with more privileged backgrounds frequently do."

For the particular purpose of this research, it seems that learning opportunities of the students at Brasilia public school are affecting their motivation in learning a foreign language; thus, the idea of implementing interactive tasks to tackle this situation is found to be useful. However, it is important to say that many of the academic experiences students encounter during their high school or the university will require them to compete with other students with higher academic standards from privileged learning backgrounds; this will probably determine the difference between being successful students or unsuccessful ones.

1.2.2 *Justification of the problem's significance*

According to Quesada (2005), web-based learning provides a guided learning model; in other words, learners become more active participants of their learning process thanks to authentic opportunities of interaction. A similar thought is shared by Cuesta

(2012) about the use of interaction in online learning environments. She claimed that when teachers decide to adopt one on one learning environments to virtual ones, tutors need to use strategies that focus on fulfilling their learners' needs, ensuring their engagement motivation and positive response. The above-mentioned ideas increase the chance of having learners more engaged, motivated, and willing to use technology as well as being responsible for their learning.

The partnership for 21st Century Skills web site (2011) claimed that:

> People in the 21st century live in a technology and media-suffused environment, marked by various characteristics, including 1) access to an abundance of information; 2) rapid changes in technology tools and 3) the ability to collaborate and make individual contributions on an unprecedented scale. To be effective in the 21st century, citizens and workers must be able to exhibit a range of functional and critical thinking skills related to information, media, and technology. (Information, media section, para. 1)

This population has not had the real chance of having direct contact with technological tools. The reason is due to their underprivileged condition, life difficulties, school background situation; among others. To fulfill the stated objectives, the Glogster Edu platform was introduced as a tool of instruction. The main points of using this platform were to promote student interaction, virtual environment contact, language engagement, individual contributions to their learning, access, and use of different tools

that increased their levels of awareness and engagement towards their language acquisition

process.

1.2.3   Strategy proposed to address the problem

When the learner's needs were detected, the idea was to tackle students' weaknesses

by the design of three data collection instruments. One of these tools was a questionnaire in

which the students were asked if they had used tools from the internet, and the way and the

frequency they had to improve their language learning. The second one was related to their

interest in using a web tool to create posters in English; twenty-eight students considered it

as something new and interesting; in contrast, five students were not as interested as the rest

of the group. The last instrument was random interviews to analyze students' motivation

towards the English class and the way they perceived their instructions and learning. The

answers to the questionnaire they filled out during the pre-stage of the project revealed a

clear interest to be part of a new proposal by using technological tools in their current

classroom context. Students expressed the necessity of a change in the way their classes

were being taught and were willing to explore new methodologies. Thus, the design and

implementation of interactive language tasks assisted by the use of the Glogster EDU web

tool were applied to foster and enhance language learning engagement.

1.3   Research question and objective

Taking into account the students´ English level, their motivation, their willingness

to learn and the suitable learning styles they displayed, it was relevant to start working on

the following research question: *What is the effect of using interactive language tasks to*

promote English Language learning and motivate an A1-level group of seventh-graders

from a public school in Usme?

1.3.1   Main Objective

To analyze the effect of using interactive language tasks as a mechanism to improve language learners' English proficiency.

1.3.2   Specific objective

Examine the learners' perceptions towards the implementation of interactive tasks to improve the language process as well as their motivation towards English language learning.

1.4   Conclusion

This chapter was written to immerse readers in the importance of evaluating the traditional processes when it comes to teaching and learning a second language. The rationale which addressed the needs analysis stage and statement of the problem was presented and briefly explained. Consequently, the justification and the strategy proposed to identify the problem were sated. At this point, and after stating the background of this study, the researcher presented the question and objectives of this research. The following chapter contains the theoretical framework that supported this study.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

2.1   Introduction

The theoretical framework behind this project is framed into three main constructs which constitute the main components of the research question: *Interactive media, language learners' improvement, motivation, and interaction.*

2.2   Definitions

2.2.1   *Interactive media*

Before addressing the definition of "interactive media", it is necessary to first refer to the terms *interaction and interactivity* which were mentioned by Wagner in 1997 in her article *Interactivity: From Agents to Outcomes.* She defined interaction as reciprocal events requiring two objects and two actions; she stated

> Interaction is suggested to occur when objects and events mutually influence one another. On the other hand, interactivity appears to emerge from descriptions of technological capability for establishing connections from point to point (or from point to multiple points) in real-time." (Su, Bonk, Magjuka, Liu, Lee, 2005)

Therefore, taking into account the above-mentioned definitions; in this research, both terms are useful and appropriate for this study.

An unsettling concern within the current educational field addresses related to the role that interactivity plays within web-based environments. Brady (2004) stated in her research study, *The Role of Interactivity in Web-Based educational Material,* that several investigations indicate that interactivity positively influences learning and satisfaction. In the same way, the workshop for the NAGT program (2010) claimed that interactive activities should be both engaging and enlightening; thus, these practices encourage students to use their prior knowledge to address the new practical activities. Taking into account the former information, the need of integrating web-based learning tasks into the English instructions and curricula is necessary; The aim is to tackle the lack of interest students have and the time of learning acquisition development and progress.

For this study and considering the ages of the students their likes and needs, it is essential to foster learning strategies through the use of media resources to involve them as active participants of their language learning. England and Finney (2011) stated that "interactive media is the integration of digital media including combinations of electronic text, graphics, moving images, and sound into a structured digital computerized environment that allows people to interact with the data for appropriate purposes" (par. 6). Media sources are commonly attractive and well-accepted learning alternatives in current young digital generations. Additionally, the implementation of these tasks creates a thought-provoking and innovative environment to contribute to their second language acquisition (SLA) process. Within the context of this research, interactive media emerges as a motivating tool that not only stimulates students' learning but also drives them into improving and enhancing their English performance.

Considering the previous ideas, this study aims to explain the benefits of implementing interactive media tasks in seventh grade English lessons. Cairncross and Manion (2001) asserted that interactivity in multimedia-assisted learning applications provides learners with multiple alternatives with just "pointing and clicking at various menus items and buttons" (p. 161). Thus, if a teacher is willing to promote meaningful lessons, the educator should actively engage his/her students by using interactive task-based activities which include contents with the new knowledge or target abilities they will acquire. In any interactive learning experience which encourages learners purposely to learn and construct knowledge, the interaction must be intentionally promoted (Liaw and Huang, 2000). Teachers should also take into consideration the learning goals, learning

domains, type of learning outcomes, the purpose of the interaction, the use of interaction agents, delivery mode, and delivery tools (Liaw and Huang, 2000).

The use of interactive tasks designed by Glogster EDU becomes the vehicle to lead learners into significant accomplishments which will facilitate their engagement to strengthen their target language abilities. It is important to mention that the role of the teacher, when designing a class activity using Glogster EDU, emerges as a key component in this study since, as it was previously mentioned, the idea is to promote students' motivation, interaction and language learning; therefore, the activities designed by the teacher should fit the students` needs. The previously discussed statement is supported by different studies that show the importance of motivating English learners to promote learning and improve their learning performance. Learning well-developed approaches, strategies, and techniques that are suitable for use in the right context for students can be useful for helping them to develop a better understanding of any topic and learn it in a meaningful way (Muñoz & Garcia, 2015).

2.2.2   Language learners' motivation

As teachers, it is our job to provide approaches and teaching practices that help students to practice the language, putting the shame and fear aside, and making the classroom the perfect place to share their ideas, give opinions, or discuss any topic. Therefore, the use of interactive tasks in the classroom, and in non-academic contexts, can enhance the different English abilities of adolescent learners, making communication an essential part of the language learning process. It is important to show that if English is a goal, communication and interaction are essential (Lionto, 2015)

Unfortunately, language educators do not promote interest in the classroom; what is more, teachers do not foster students` critical thinking skills and do not promote active learning (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Snow, 2014). Dewey (1933) claimed that activities that truly motivate, engage and awake students' curiosity are full of interaction, are resourceful and energetic. The lack of engagement limits remarkably the flow of the students' learning process; thereby, it is crucial to define the role of the teacher in the classroom as a facilitator who increases the levels of motivation making students proficient learners.

To support the presented argument, Vygotsky (1978) launched the theory called "The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)." In this theory, he claimed that when teachers structure learning opportunities at the appropriate level and with the right support, students become engaged in learning. Additionally, the use of cooperative learning and the ZPD theory not only motivates and engages students but also this practice helps students in building social relationships and increases their self-esteem (Dewey, 1938).

Pine and Gilmore (1999) suggested that to create learning experiences that become attractive and engaging for learners, teachers should include elements from four fields. The first two are passive components: *esthetic and entertainment*; which refer to certain activities and features that make learning interesting, entertaining, and appealing. If these components are taken into account, users will enjoy the activity while they are building up new information. The other two components are: *educational and escapist* which are related to the exploration of knowledge or skills while participants feel they are being challenged to reach higher goals through meaningful learning activities. The NAGT program (2010) stated that online learning tools must be active rather than passive. This is due to the fact that the interaction along with competitive tasks is the key element to had

students motivated in class, so then learning can take place (Herrera & Murry, 2010). Online learning can become difficult for learners who do not feel skillful or do not have enough technology abilities; however, with the appropriate selection and use of web tool educators can obtain positive learning outcomes.

When gathering all of these elements in the creation of enticing environments, the students tend to have the initiative to select tasks that expand their abilities and exert substantial efforts in accomplishing educational goals (Skinner and Belmont, 1993). Likewise, these previous principles also endorse Bandura's concept (1993) regarding self-efficacy which influences the way people think, feel, get motivated, and behave. Efficacy effects include cognitive, affective, motivational, and selected processes that persuade people to have control over their functioning and over the events that affect their lives.

Thus, personal challenges and evaluative reaction to one's attainments provides a main cognitive mechanism of motivation (Bandura, 1993). Learners' behavior, according to Bandura, can be motivated and guided by recognized goals which he defines as the goals learners can achieve in the present rather than unrealized plans. In light of this research, the recognized goals are represented by the use of attainable tasks. Along this line of thought, Margolis and McCabe (2006) suggested that the use of incentives for learners to persist in their efforts until they achieve their goals is strengthened by self- satisfaction in matching their personal and academic efforts. Learners might be able to change their behavior and find when fulfilling their goals, incentives to intensify their attempts and achieve higher purposes.

When students can personalize their learning, their decision-making abilities can significantly increase so that the concept of *engagement* starts taking a relevant place while acquiring new knowledge. The willingness to actively participate in the learning process motivates them enough to persist despite obstacles and challenges (Miller, 2011). In the same way, Svalberg (2009) stated that:

The context of language learning and use, "engagement" is a cognitive, and/or affective, and/ or social state of mind or process in which the learner is the agent and the language is the object or vehicle. Affectively, an engaged individual assumes a positive, purposeful, willing and autonomous disposition towards the language or what it represents." (p. 244).

Students who are engaged tend to demonstrate persistent involvement as well as a positive emotional tone towards the acquisition of the target language. The benefits of this process within the context of this research might allow learners to foster their cognitive and creative skills to get into a more significant, motivating, and effective experience. It might also strengthen their critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills by leading the learners to become more confident and aware of their weaknesses and needs. Once students are aware of the capacity they possess to become active participants in their learning instances, their outcomes can smoothly arise because they are the creators.

2.2.3   Personalized learning
Personalized learning refers to a variety of educational programs, instructional approaches, learning experiences, and academic-support strategies that are designed to address the different learning needs, interests, aspirations, or cultural backgrounds of individual students (Education Reform, 2014). Learners might face difficulties such as the

poor or wrong selection/ implementation of learning strategies to acquire knowledge. The teacher plays a crucial role here since s/he is responsible for guiding the learners in these choices so that they can start being aware of the importance of internalizing and personalizing knowledge to improve and/or strengthen their language acquisition process.

Van (1996) suggested that teachers must modify their teaching styles to help students find learning easier; including some techniques that support students' learning styles (like using different visual materials such as cartoons, pictures, movies, making activities that ensure repetition, letting students think about what they learn, and making sure that students learn) can enhance students language process. Van also offered techniques that he used in class: (a) to give concrete information; (b) to do activities that could enhance problem-solving; (c), to use visual aids with verbal contents; (d) to use other activities besides reading and writing; (e) to talk about students' learning styles; (f) to encourage students to do autonomous work; (g) to motivate. This is done to to promote students` motivation and acquisition of the target language.

Moore (1989) stated that the type of interaction *learner-instructor* is highly desirable for young learners because the teacher can assist learners in the use of new knowledge. He also mentioned that any self- directed interactive process that the learner starts without any previous instruction might prevent students from real and authentic learning and this situation could be prejudicial when advancing further. Unfortunately, the learners of this research study had had limited experience in using interactive tasks assisted by web tools in language learning. However, these tools are user friendly and students do not need excellent skills to work on this platform. It is important to add that through the implementation of learner-instructor interaction, the instructor could seek to stimulate the

students' interest in what is being taught, motivate students to learn, enhance and keep the learners' engagement, including self-direction and self-motivation (Moore, 1989). Since current digital generations feel extraordinarily attracted to the use of technology in their daily life, it is necessary to train them in using technological tools to avoid frustration while attaining their expected outcomes.

To illustrate the importance of the relation between the teacher and the students about personalized learning, it is relevant to mention that the students` motivation plays an important role here. Skinner and Belmont (1993). They concluded from their studies about "the teacher's behavior and the student's engagement", that emotional engagement is directly related to teacher involvement. In other words, they noted that students who feel a good rapport with their teachers become more confident, affectionate, and are more likely to be persistent and determined. In addition to this, effective teachers need to set clear expectations, give support and provide appropriate guidance so this practice could be perceived by the students as positive teacher's involvement with the class; therefore, students might be able to produce effective outcomes.

Personalized learning fosters learners' engagement as the teacher can establish links between students' interests, likes, talents, and the target academic purpose. Di Martino and Clarke (2008) and Childress and Benson (2014) claimed that personalized learning aims to engage learners to increase their knowledge by connecting their personal goals and interests to their academic experiences. In light of this project, learners need to be encouraged to express their creativity and produce new insights while acquiring the target language efficiently. Thus, the design of virtual posters with Glogster EDU might respond to these needs and might also increase not only their motivation but also their language abilities.

In 2010, a European project named LEADLAB (Leading Elderly and Adult Development- LAB) defined the term personalization through four dimensions. One of them considers the learner as a co-producer and actor in his learning process. The role of the teacher is not only transmitting concepts and focusing on contents, but supporting the learner in the control of his/her learning. A more recent contribution by Laudillard (2010) pointed out the use of ICTs as a positive and effective breaker of traditional education. Additionally, she stated that extending learning to those groups that were traditionally in-active opens a wide range of opportunities that lead students to motivation, engagement, and improvement of the target language. This research study seeks to encourage learners to experiment with a memorable virtual experience finding in the use of the web- tool the possibility to interact directly with the language itself. Besides, learners assume an active role in their learning process in two relevant areas: in the academic field because they can work on their difficulties; and in the personal field since they could feel that their teacher has considered their needs and likes as learners.

2.3   State of the art

To link the main objective of this study to the following ideas, it is important to mention that the use of technological tools in the classroom has been an important subject of research during recent years. Additionally, it is relevant to add that one of the main goals to use technology in the classroom is to promote students' motivation, interaction, and successful and meaningful English language learning.

During 2009 and 2010 Lizarazo designed a project for his classes in a district school located in the southeast area of Bogota. Lizarazo (2012) stated that the use of technological tools in English lessons can benefit teachers who have difficulties when students are not

engaged enough with their learning. Given that the current study was also implemented in a district school with similar learners and context needs, it is appropriate to conclude that common weaknesses occur in district schools and that some of them are related with the lack of reinforcement of language skills or with the appropriate selection of engagement strategies.

Gloria Rojas, an English teacher, conducted a research study in 2009- 2010 in a public school called "Castilla" located in Bogotá. She implemented her study with ninth-graders focusing on the innovation of English communication through the improvement of writing skills in blogs. In the pedagogical implication section, she suggested two effective ideas, which were also considered within this research: the first one was the possibility of allowing the students to choose their team-members by themselves because this factor promotes collaboration and sustained engagement (2011). The second one, as it was also stated in this study, addressed the possibility to link the use of online tools with other projects that enhance the acquisition of a second language.

Another project carried out at El Libertador School, a district institution located in Bogotá Colombia, revealed that web activities increase learners' motivation and interest in language learning. It was proven that this kind of activity generates an innovative learning atmosphere in which learners are involved in a non-traditional way to learn. Rátiva, Pedreros, and Nuñez (2012) demonstrated with this project that the use of Web-tool based activities had good results since this kind of activities took into account students' interests, and revealed that they are more involved and committed in the development of the activities, even, during their free time.

The following three studies were included in this section because they can contribute to the development of this study. In the first one, Camacho (2014) decided to increase oral communication skills through the use of web-based self- access materials. She asserted that English teachers should be able to take advantage of technological tools such as videoconferencing that contributes to the easy connection with native speakers; also the use of podcasts or video/audio files is important because most of the time it is free and helpful for the listening and speaking skills development (Larazaton, 2014). For instance, adolescents can also learn by having fun and watching YouTube videos from native speakers, taking into account that these people usually record what they do in a regular day, or if there is a specific interest in video games, pranks, cooking recipes, makeup lifestyle, etc.

In the second study, the researchers claimed that learners do not value the language they are learning because they consider it useless in their context; thus, this belief affects their attitude. Additionally, this study also talks about the importance of engagement and motivation to enhance English language learning. It is important to note that working with the 7th-grade target group (adolescents) in the ESL and EFL context is not an easy job. This is because the adolescent brain is constantly maturing and according to neuroscience studies, behaviour, body changes, and cognitive changes may interfere in their lifestyle and learning. Therefore, they presented a series of activities that could help teachers to teach adolescents knowing that teen learners have special needs, taking into account their physical and emotional state. Teachers need to find a meaningful learning environment, using learner-centered approaches, social interaction, and the most important one, the use of technology in any kind of learning. This particular group of students enjoy their classes

more when they are using technology, interacting, and working with their peers (Celce,

Murcia, Brinton, & Snow, 2014).

In the third study, Bernal, Moreno, and Sanchez (2014) observed that the number of

students in a classroom affects many of the dynamics or activities that the teacher plans for

the class. Herrera and Murry (2011) asserted that large classes limit the effective input

learners receive and learning takes place is a very slow way. For this reason, the

implementation of different online and offline tools facilitates learning and at the same

time, it provides teachers with strategies, ideas, and techniques to create more dynamic,

creative, and innovative classes. Additionally, Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Snow (2014)

asserted that when students receive clear instructions, are familiar with the requested

activities, and are highly motivated, they respond positively when it comes to learning.

Researchers from a university in Taiwan reported the results of a study carried out

to know whether ICT could create engaged, relevant, and personalized learning

experiences. This study followed the principles of analysis, design, and evaluation to

develop an e-book learning system for elementary school students. Based on previous

studies related to the non-use of printed books, it was perceived that the implementation of

the interactive e-book learning system had a positive impact learning. In other words, the

use of this kind of personalized learning tool demonstrated that students incremented their

language knowledge and eagerness to learn the language (Huang et al., 2012).

As educators, we need to bear in mind that when learners are exposed to the use of

authentic materials; they effectively improve their attitude towards learning about a foreign

culture. However, Hobbs and Liu (2012) proclaimed that exposure to those materials can

increase learners' anxiety and frustration due to their lack of self-confidence and tech knowledge. The researchers carried out a study to demonstrate that the use of online technologies provides access to authentic materials that may be engaging, appropriate, and affordable (Hobbs & Liu, 2012). Additionally, exposing learners to authentic online material not only impacts the classroom environment and increases students' engagement in a positive way, but also, promotes students' participation and awareness of their learning style.

Based on the above-mentioned insights, it is important to have in mind the importance of learning styles and strategies; although there is a big debate about the way learning styles are linked to learning, it is relevant to show its effectiveness at the time of teaching a foreign language. Keefe (as cited in Zhou, 2011) defined learning styles as characteristics that individuals use to measure their learning. Also, the learning styles indicate how students learn, what they like about learning, and in which cognitive, affective, and psychological behaviors they interact in their learning process. The learning styles can be classified according to environmental elements (light, temperature), emotional elements (motivation), physical elements (time, perception), sociological elements (teams, groups), and psychological elements (global/analytical) (Oxford, 2003). Due to the mentioned details, the importance of describing the appropriate use of the learning styles is added to this study.

White and Alexander (2014) decided to focus their research on studying the levels of engagement with the use of web tools; they asserted that "many teachers are more likely to incorporate new technologies into existing practices rather than exploit their affordances in new pedagogical directions." Furthermore, they said that teachers also present resistance

to the implementation of new teaching approaches. In this way, integrating technology into teaching represents a double challenge for language teachers (White & Alexander (2014). Therefore, one of the main objectives of this study is to train teachers with pedagogical strategies and tools and provide them with guidance and support about the implementation of the above-mentioned approaches. What is more, teachers need to be encouraged, animated, and stimulated to the use of the new teaching practices; since it is evident that response from the students is more positive.

2.4   Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher analyzed the theory that further supports the different stages of this study. Three constructs addressed this research: Interactive media, language learners' engagement, and personalized learning. The state of the art evidenced that every day a higher number of district schools are considering the implementation of virtual environments in their current teaching practices; however, the resistance educators display should be corrected and avoided. As was cited, the use of technology approaches effectively contributes to reinforcing learners' language abilities, their independent participation, activates their learning styles and it also increases their engagement and motivation towards learning. In the following chapter, this project seeks to explain the methodological aspects of this study including participants, educational context, and the procedures used to collect information during the implementation stage.

Chapter 3: Research Design

3.1   Introduction

The following chapter shows a general description of this research project, including the type of study, researcher role, context, participants, data collection

instruments, and data collection procedures. The idea was based on considering the students' needs and ways to address their necessities.

This research illustrates the relevance of the role that the researcher assumes as an observer of the students' needs and progresses. However, it is also important to take into account the teachers' reflections about the teaching practices because they allow building interpretations and establishing educational, institutional, and theoretical considerations. These considerations also ease the selection and implementation of pertinent data collection instruments and procedures in this action research project.

3.2   Type of study

This is a qualitative action research study that is framed upon the action research approach. According to Sagor (2000), action research allows teachers to develop two important matters that are closely related to the purpose of this project. The first one, makes Public schools present many difficulties regarding language learning; however, these schools are willing to improve their teaching resources to make learning a rewarding experience. (Sagor 2000)

During this investigation, it could be found that many schools are being equipped with modern and useful educational and technological tools designed to promote different learning environments which also facilitate language learning. In the specific case of Brasilia school, the principal of the institution is leading the use of technological tools as a way to improve the quality of education. Particularly, the selected action research approach allows the analysis of the effectiveness of using technology as a way to engage learners in learning a language. Regarding the second issue, this action research is beneficial to the

field of education since it contributes to new ideas to help and enrich language instructions. As this idea comes from a school project, multiple perspectives that can be examined will produce wiser professional ideas (Sagor 2000, pag. 9).

Attempting to interpret the multiple perspectives that can emerge from this study, this qualitative research involved the use of questionnaires and journals, the participants' perceptions were collected through these instruments and the data was analyzed to interpret the multiple meanings that emerged from the implementation stage; finally, a descriptive answer to the research question was provided. As Denzin (1994) stated, qualitative research locates the observer (teacher) in the world and provides him with materials to visualize and understand things in their natural setting. This will lead to building interpretations from people's perceptions about them.

3.3   Context

Brasilia is a public school located in the South area of Bogota, Colombia. Its population ranges between 900 to 1000 students from pre-school to eleventh grade. Its Institutional educational Project (PEI, its Spanish acronym) is entitled "Brasilia –Usme-educating children and young people with quality and excellence" and its vision and mission are mainly focused on creating integral learners to express their ideas coherently in a critical way; improving their social and natural context through the development of scientific, technological and labor competences.

Brasilia Usme is not a bilingual school since language learning objectives are stated in grammatical terms and the English language is taught in isolation. In other words, the English program follows a grammar-based syllabus. The school English level is assessed

through the ICFES examination that students complete at the end of secondary school.

Students have been traditionally passive actors in the learning process; they have been more

receptive than productive learners.

3.3.1   Participants

Seventh grade is integrated by 33 students, both male and female. Their ages range

between 11 and 14 years old and attend English classes two days a week. Based on a

placement test, it was noticed that their English level was below A1 according to the

patterns of the Common European Framework. They were also resistant to English since

they were always complaining about the tedious and monotonous classes they were

receiving. Additionally, it could be noticed that the instructional methodology used by the

teachers of this institution was grammar-based and students were not producing language as

it should have been. What is more, they struggled when using classroom language and

following instructions. Thus, this evidence led the researchers to create a teaching plan to

take students to a better level of language.

To fulfill the main objective of this project, the researcher actively participated as

an instructor of this class. During the experience as a teacher with these seventh graders, it

was evident that they were able to understand some everyday expressions. They just needed

to be stimulated through images and other visual aids to establish context cues and generate

meaningful learning. It is important to say that physical, creative, and practical activities

allow them to interact with other classmates using and reinforcing the information they

grasp during the lessons.

3.3.2   Role of the researcher

The role of a researcher implies to be in charge of several duties. Being the researcher the primary consumer of the findings (Sagor, 2001), one of the tasks is to closely observe the process to find any situation that could be related to any type of outcomes, behavior, attitudes, etc. Additionally, the researcher should be involved not only in a permanent practice of reflection but should also start looking for data that will serve to support and establish findings. What is more, the researcher needs to use the collected data and use it as a point of reference for the intended purpose of the study.

The role of the teacher as a researcher allows the enhancement of their research skills as a natural extension of their teaching practice (Burns, 1999). Furthermore, action research also provides a wide range of opportunities to go beyond the practice as such, to start transforming and establishing broader educational, institutional, and theoretical considerations.

3.4   Data collection instruments

During pre, while, and post stages the instruments chosen for gathering data were: questionnaires, journals, and artifacts.

3.4.1   Description
3.4.1.1 Questionnaires

According to Sagor (2001) questionnaires can be used to gather data concerning affective, cognitive, or attitudinal issues. During the pre, while, and post- stages of the research, these instruments were used to gather data about students' perceptions towards the implementation of interactive tasks assisted by the web tool Glogster EDU as a strategy to promote interaction between the learner and the language and generate language engagement. The questionnaire consisted of ten open and close-ended questions and was

implemented in Spanish due to the students' low English level (see appendix B). According to Burns (1999), some of the most important aspects to take into account when building a questionnaire should be the language level of the students and the number and clarity of questions because these considerations can determine both whether the students feel comfortable in answering the questionnaires and whether the researcher gathered the information needed.

3.4.1.2 Journals

As a data collection tool, journals provide the researcher with great possibilities to identify and reflect on the variables that are important to individual teachers and learners (Wallace, 1998). Therefore, journals provide a first- hand account of teaching and learning experiences, and can also provide access to hidden affective variables about teaching and learning experiences. As a way to promote reflective teaching, the use of journals was implemented as well as the organization of data through the use of the students' notebooks; there, students wrote the developed actions and their perceptions after the practical session when they used Glogster EDU to create their posters.

3.4.1.3 Artifacts

The artifacts students created to reflect the final result of their learning process. Each poster joined two issues: a grammar topic they studied during the course unit and personal information evidenced in their products. Then, students commented on their classmates' posters and finally, some of the best posters were published on the school bulletin board. Fourteen computers were needed, as well as the access to the internet and the students' registration on Glogster EDU.

3.4.2   *Validation and piloting*

The design and validation of the instruments and procedures selected to collect the data of this research study were ensured through piloting procedures. Taking into account that the seventh level in Brasilia school is made of three groups with similar characteristics and considering that the research study was implemented only with the third group, the researcher decided to pilot the data collection instruments with the other two groups to verify the validity and applicability of the instruments. The researcher also shared materials, strategies, and ideas with a colleague who teaches similar groups to know her opinions and recommendations towards the design and implementation of the data collection instruments.

3.5   Conclusion

In this chapter, the instruments used in this research to collect data are mentioned. Also, it is of high importance to add that the data collection process is crucial for the successful development of an action research project. That being said, it can be concluded that with the help of the data, interviews, journals, questionnaires, among others, the role of the teacher and the procedures followed could be established and set. This section of the research project was necessary to understand the target group, their needs, their lack of knowledge, and how to proceed in finding a solution to the problem.

Chapter 4: Pedagogical Intervention and Implementation

4.1   Introduction

This chapter describes the principles taken into account by the researcher at the moment of designing the didactic units implemented in this study. Furthermore, there is a detailed description of each research stage. At the end of the chapter, the pedagogical approach chosen to frame the pedagogical intervention and implementation is described.

4.2   Instructional design

The main principles considered for the design of the didactic units presented in this report are:

- Aims: language and content goals determine the pathway to be followed through the rest of the unit: previous knowledge, lesson context, activities, and scaffolding opportunities (See Appendix A).
- Learners' needs and learning opportunities: Didactic units need to tackle students' needs to include and provide the best and most suitable opportunities for learners to achieve their goals (See Appendix A).

The implementation of this project was planned for eighteen sessions divided into (a) students' practice and (b) reflective sessions (See Appendix A). Two main principles suggested by the National Capital Language Resource Center (2007) to promote language learning through engagement were taken into consideration. These are:

a. Encouraging the students to use the language to communicate ideas, feelings, and opinions (carried out during the students' practice sessions).

b. Asking the students to evaluate their progress in terms of the development of their

functional proficiency (carried out during the reflective sessions in the students'

journals).

During the students' practice sessions on Thursdays from 8:10 to 10:00 a.m.,

students attended the computer lab to create their virtual posters using the tools provided by

the educational website Glogster EDU. During the reflective sessions, carried out on

Tuesdays, students worked in the classroom on completing the assignments previously

assigned. After that, they wrote in their journals (carried out in their notebooks) their

reflections about each session.

During the pre-stage (first session) students answered the first questionnaire in

which they were asked about the use of web tools for academic purposes, their interests in

using web tools for carrying out language tasks, the possibility to improve their

performance and the use of alternative strategies to the ones they have been traditionally

using in their language lessons (See Appendix B).

According to Moore (1989), to involve a learner in any self- directed interactive

process the first time, learner- instructor interaction; it is required to avoid any possible

difficulties that the students could face; especially when they have not had any previous

experience in doing it. Moore (1989) Throughout the second and third intervention, it was

decided to introduce the learners to the management of Glogster EDU through the use of

tutorials and teacher's assistance. First, I showed them a sample of the posters they were

going to create. Second, while I was creating a new product, I presented the tools to them

and the variety of possibilities the web tool provides and how to use them to design virtual

posters. Third, I created their accounts and provided them with the passwords to log in. Finally, they have introduced the advantages of using Glogster EDU, and about the procedures and stages to carry out during the lessons for the benefits of the project.

During the while stage, students were devoted to making their posters using their criteria, creativity, and originality. They could choose the template and the way of organizing the information in their posters; taking into account one language parameter stated for all the students: the use of the verb *to be,* some frequency adverbs and the modal verb *can/can't* (personal information, daily activities and abilities) (See Appendix A). They had plenty of autonomy regarding the design and the information they wanted to include in them. It is relevant to mention that in the previous session (reflective) the learners studied the language structure (use of adverbs) in the classroom and then, they worked independently in their houses to plan how to build their posters.

The language topic of the first task was present simple and the context of the activity was personal information. The decision to choose this topic for the first task was made considering two principles. Number one, connecting personal aims or interest to academic experiences increases the language learners' engagement (Di Martino & Clarke, 2008) and number two, stating cognized goals represented by the use of attainable tasks which creates incentives to the learners to persist in their efforts until they achieve their academic goals (Bandura, 1993).
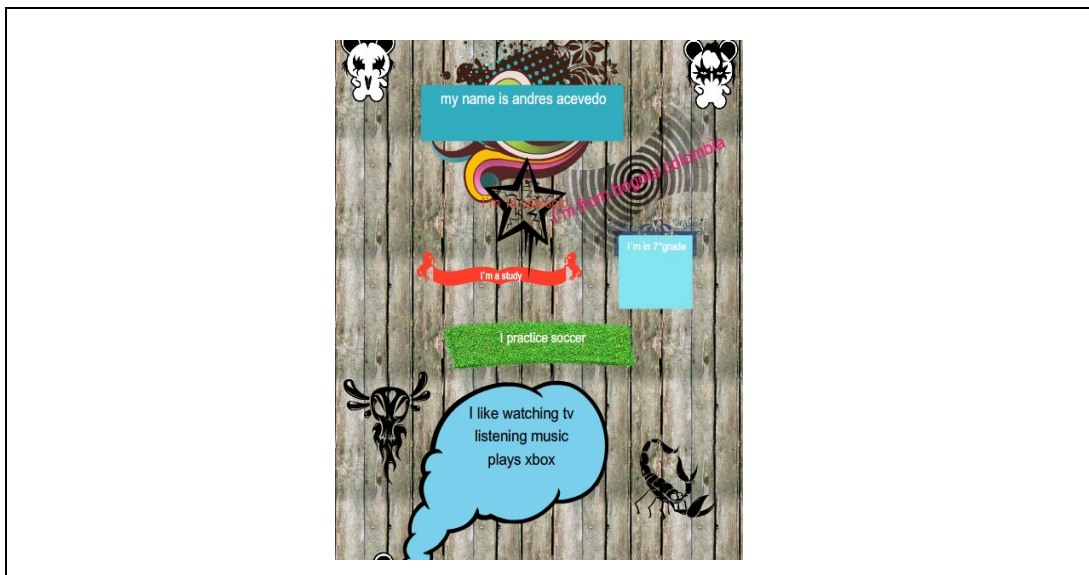
Fig. 1. Students' artifact #1. Sample of the first artifact participants created. Topic: present simple

The language topic for task number two and three were adverbs of frequency and modal verbs *can/ can't*. Following the above-mentioned principles, the contexts of the activities were also related to topics with a strong connection to the learners' interests: likes, daily activities, and abilities. My aim was always to provide students with centered lessons where learners could feel comfortable developing the activities (See Appendix A). Also, the idea was to provide them with the possibility of learning how to join the use of a technological tool along with the possibility to foster their language learning process. Finally, the design of the student tasks was created taking into account students' levels and abilities; therefore, the material was carefully chosen with appropriate level tasks and manageable language contexts for them to give expression to their ideas through the posters (Bandura, 1993).
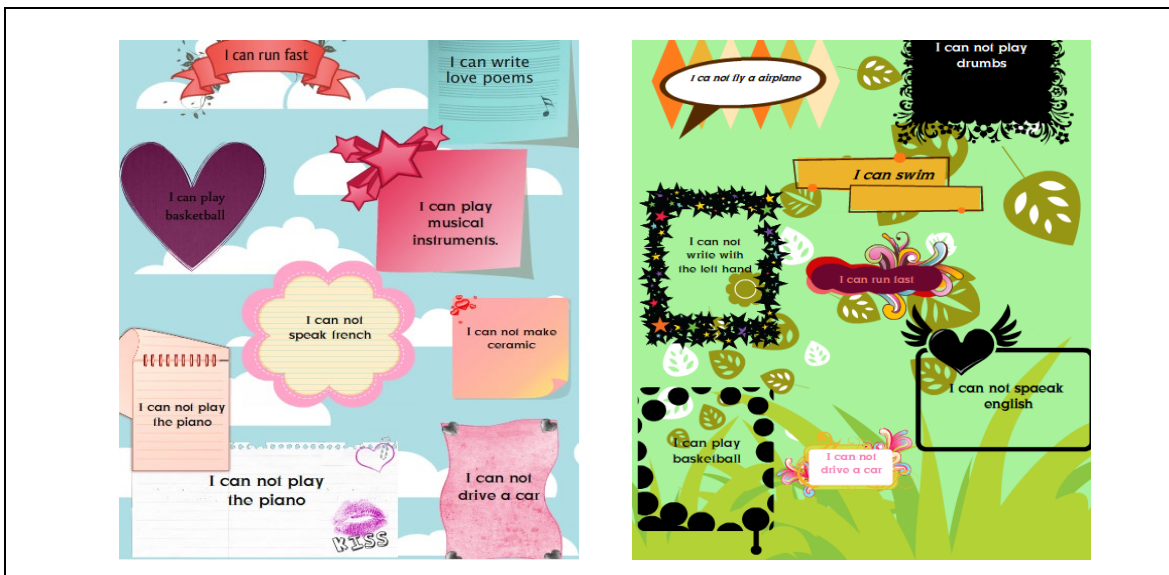
Fig. 2.Students' artifact #3. Sample of the third artifact participants created. Topic: Can- can't express personal information.

The creation of online multimedia posters joined entertainment and learning; two key elements for making any learning experience memorable (Pine and Gilmore, 1999). Furthermore, they were able to share their products with other classmates to observe them, providing, and receiving comments about their tasks. According to Pine and Gilmore (1999), an interactive activity should include elements from four fields: entertainment, educational, esthetic, and escapist. During the while stage of this project, learners created three posters with different language topics and contexts but with a similar learning goal "fostering language learners' English language learning"; this activity promotes among learners a sense of learning, entertainment, creativity, and active participation because they had the opportunity to practice the language while interacting with the web tool. Therefore, the students became active participants of their learning process since they were encouraged to develop their written production and at the same time, students fostered their creative thinking, imagination, problem-solving, and decision-making competences.

The continuous feedback and assistance from the teacher were relevant in the task development. Furthermore, the cooperative environment facilitated the teachers to keep track of the objectives and the suggested activities. Students worked in groups to assist other classmates who presented difficulties to complete the assignment.

The following table illustrates the times and activities developed during the pre, while and post stages of the pedagogical intervention of this research project:

Table 1
Timeline of the pedagogical intervention

Stage	Month	Week (Dates)	Activity	Data Collection Instrument(s)
Pre-stage	September	23 30	1) To gather baseline data about students' perceptions towards Gloster EDU. 2) To pilot a workshop to familiarize students with the use of Gloster.EDU.	First questionnaire with students. Journal.
While-stage	October November	14- 31 1-30 12- 31 1-18	1) To monitor students' performance. 2) To create posters using Gloster EDU according to the topic studied in current lessons	Journals Artifacts.
Post-stage	November November	25 25	1) To publish the final products in the school virtual news. 2) To determine changes in opinions and awareness.	Artifacts. Final questionnaire with students.

4.3   Pedagogical approach

Interactive media provides good opportunities to involve learners in a knowledge community since they provide a different learning environment where they need to join both, interaction and cooperation. Social constructivism claims that in a learning community the emphasis is mainly on the learning processes rather than just the completion of projects (Oxford, 1997). In the context of this study, the participants had weaknesses in the use of web 2.0 tools and needed to be guided by the teacher on how to use the software. Additionally, they needed to learn about how to obtain benefits from the use of this technology device. Finally, the most important issue, how to be an active and respectful member of the learning community they were being part of. Interaction, according to Oxford (1997), is referred to as personal communication; and it should be facilitated by the understanding of four elements: language tasks, style differences, group dynamics, and willingness to communicate.

Additionally, to help learners achieve both learning and technological goals, teachers should provide multiple assistance opportunities to them. This support should be removed little by little as the learner becomes more proficient in language and learning. According to Moore (1989) learner- instructor interaction is highly desirable for learners because having the teacher as an instructor is especially valuable in responding to the learners' application of new knowledge. My role as a teacher in this process became relevant because during the first stages I supported my students on how to assume this new experience. I also guided them on working cooperatively with their classmates, and I allowed them to be independent and discover themselves about how to face the challenges that new learning environments offered them.

4.4   Conclusions

      During the eighteen sessions of the implementation stage, the researcher took into account the students' learning and language needs to make decisions about how to design the didactic units that guided this stage of the research. Encouraging students to use the language and asking them to evaluate their achievements were the strategies adopted by the development of the practical and reflective sessions of the pedagogical intervention. The pedagogical approach that was implemented is focused on social constructivism since it makes more emphasis on the students' learning process instead of the completion of tasks.

Chapter 5: Results and Data Analysis

5.1   Introduction

The comparative method proposed by Corbin and Strauss (2008) was the one

selected to work on the data analysis stage through the implementation of open, axial, and

selective coding procedures. On the other hand, triangulation was used to ensure the

validity of this research during the process of data analysis. A description of these

procedures is presented along with a description of the data analysis methodology. Finally,

the results and findings that emerged from this study are enlightened through the narrative

of the categories that arose from the open, axial, and selective coding process.

5.2   Data management procedures

According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), as theory emerges from the analyzed data,

the analysis process should be systematically developed during all the stages of the research

study. From the moment the data is collected to the last step of the process, where a core

category emerges, the constant comparison method allows the researcher to refine, contrast

and cross-reference the categories that emerge from the coding processes. The purpose is to

describe and explain the data in a more detailed way and finally to develop a theory that

can respond to the research question and explain the reciprocal relation between the data

collection and theory.

5.2.1   *Data reduction*

During the data collection stage, information was given printed (questionnaires) and

virtual mechanisms (students' artifacts). When this stage finished, the data was put together

in a matrix (one for each instrument) to facilitate the process of managing and contrasting

the results. Then, the opinions expressed by the students through the journals were copied

from the students' notebooks and listed according to the date when they were collected.

Commonalities among the opinions were identified to reduce the amount of information.

5.2.2 *Validation*

The procedures used to ensure the validity of the findings came out in this study

with triangulation (Burns, 1999) and the constant comparative method (Corbin and Strauss,

2008). In triangulation, Burns (1999) claimed that if different methods of investigation

produce the same results, the data is likely to be valid. In this project, data was collected

from two different sources: questionnaires and journals. The analysis of these instruments

revealed common patterns that were constantly compared as Corbin and Strauss (2008) put

forward into their Grounded theory.

5.2.3 *Data analysis methodology*

The development of this stage was accomplished through the implementation of the

open, axial, and selective coding procedures. Each one of them was intrinsically connected

with the other two and from this reciprocal relation, a core category emerged. The

storyline which generated this core category in this research study is further described.

5.2.3.1 *Open coding*

Questionnaires and journals were initially gathered to start the opening code

procedures through the determination of common patterns. The answers to each question,

of both pre and post-stage questionnaires, were scrutinized and recorded within a chart, as

well as the evidence from the students' and teachers` journals. Once the information was

classified, the color-coding strategy was implemented to start the identification of common

patterns in both instruments. The patterns that emerged were cross-referenced to know if

the expectations stated by the students before the implementation stage of the research were

accomplished. Comparing the patterns of questionnaires and journals made it possible to

analyze the common trends to facilitate the consolidation of the final concepts.

5.2.3.2 Axial coding

After identifying some concepts through open coding, the axial coding stage took

place. For the initiation of this stage, it is necessary to examine each of the concepts more

deeply. The conditions which determined the definition of the analysis trends, such as the

research context, the conditions under the emerged category, the strategies used to define

the category and its correlation and the applicability to the research study, should be solid

arguments to support the building of the categories of analysis. At this stage, axial coding

facilitates the recognition of the relation between each category and the research question.

The initial concepts and possible categories of analysis which merged at this point

are presented in the following chart:

Table 2		
Open and Axial coding processes		
Research Question	Concepts	Preliminary Findings towards the Discovery of Categories
What is the effect of using interactive language tasks to promote English language learning and motivate an A1-	Interaction Innovation Interest in using web tools Active participation Usefulness Attainability Motivation Participation	- Interactive tasks are interesting. - It promotes creativity. - The implementation of IT is innovative for this specific context. This fact improves the language learner's engagement. - Students enjoy doing IT and they learn while creating their tasks. - The use of the tool is easy for learners. It promotes confidence and improves engagement. - GBlogster EDU allows students to become part of a community but they can work independently. - Students use previous and new information to accomplish learning outcomes. - Students become active learners. They become more aware of their abilities.

| level group of seventh-graders from Brasilia Usme School? | Creativity Expectations Interest Language learning Engagement | - The relevance of their participation. More students completed their tasks and achieved their goals.
- Inclusion.
- They learn more when doing new things.
- Interactive tasks are achievable.
- Interactive tasks are enjoyable.
- They could express themselves in their posters.
- Promotes creativity and imagination.
- Sense of cooperation.
- Interactive tasks accomplished their expectations.
- The level of language wasn't an impediment to carry out their tasks.
- All the students were able to use the tool.
- Students worked independently on the creation of their posters.
- Students are interested in continuing to work with the tool.
- GBlogster EDU offers a variety of alternatives to personalize their tasks. |

5.2.3.3 Selective coding

The last step of the data analysis process was carried out through *selective coding.*

After defining and refining the categories of this study through the processes of *open and axial coding*, the formulation of a core category became the central task of the data analysis process. The reason for this is because it validates the connections between the categories and the core category by describing and explaining in a more detailed manner the main phenomenon of this study. The conceptualization of the core category was supported by the reciprocal relation between data analysis and theory. Figure number 3 illustrates how they were dropped into a core category that will be discussed in the section below.

5.3   Categories

5.3.1   Introduction

In the previous section, the procedures used to obtain the categories of analysis that emerged from this research study were thoroughly described. Open, axial and selective coding procedures concluded with the definition of the following categories: (a) *Interactive*

tasks enhance learners' cognitive and creative skills and (b) *the use of interactive tasks*

promotes among learners a sense of self- efficacy.

5.3.1.1 Category mapping

After the procedures of data management and analysis were implemented, the

researcher finally obtained a set of categories that allowed her to put together the results

and findings that emerged from this research study. The following map illustrates the

relationship between the research question and the categories of analysis. A deeper

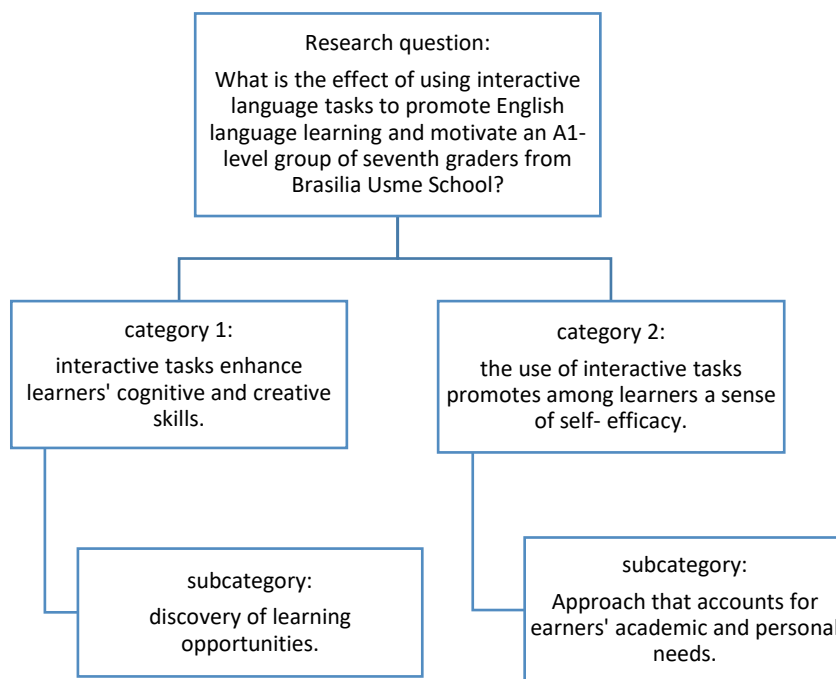description of them is presented further.

Fig.3. Category mapping. Information compiled by the author

5.3.1.2 Identification of the core category

The implementation of interactive tasks drew the participants of this research closer

to the improvement of the English language by promoting more significant learning

experiences. According to Tapscott (2008), students who learn in a more dynamic;

interactive, and collaborative context are more exposed to use creative, critical, and collaborative thinking. Therefore, they respond with agility, critical points of view, speed, and innovation; learners are usually expecting the classes to be connected with their interests (Tapscott, 2008). With this idea in mind, the researcher realized that using interactive tasks could provide them with opportunities to experiment with remarkable learning experiences and learners would become engaged with the language.

5.3.2   *Analysis of categories*

Findings and results that resulted from this research were organized into two categories: *Interactive tasks enhance learners' cognitive and creative skills* and *the use of interactive tasks promotes engagement and motivation.* From them, two subcategories were also identified: *Discovery of learning opportunities* and *Approach that accounts for learners' academic and personal needs.* The evidence that supports the analysis of these categories is further explained in this section.

5.3.2.1 *Interactive tasks enhance learners' cognitive and creative skills*

The implementation of the interactive tasks assisted by the tool Glogster EDU resulted to be an attractive and enjoyable learning experience. Its variety of images, backgrounds, and colors inspired learners' creativity and stimulated learners' curiosity towards the task, as evidenced in the excerpt below.

> - Me gusta mucho porque hay muchas imágenes y fondos además es interesante aprender cosas nuevas.
> - I like it some much because there are a lot of images and backgrounds therefore it is interesting to learn new things.

Excerpt from learners' journals. Participant # 5. Translated into English by the researcher.

This learning experience included elements from the four fields (Pine and Gilmore, 1999): entertainment, educational, esthetic, and escapist. These elements were identified during the implementation stage and the data analysis process, as described in the following section:

- Entertainment: As shown in the excerpt below, participants considered that the interactive tasks created with the Glogster EDU online tool had been designed with one of the most enjoyable web sites to work on since it provides a colorful and dynamic interface for the users. The colors, fonts, backgrounds, and interactive tools of this site caught significantly their attention.

> - Nunca habíamos hecho clases así tan divertidas en las cuales aprendemos más.
> - *We had never done classes as fun as these ones. We are learning more.*

Excerpt from questionnaires. Participant #14. Translated into English by the researcher.

- Educational: The use of interactive tasks to create virtual posters, engaged learners to explore knowledge and skills since the students could link their cognitive and creative abilities to foster language abilities. The creation of online posters asked the learners to connect prior knowledge to their current environment; additionally, this also helped students to develop new models and learn how to apply and adapt the new information to unfamiliar situations.

The excerpt below is a sample of the students' opinions about their experience creating virtual posters. There, it can be perceived that the use of Glogster EDU is a great educational tool that promotes the use of technology for educational purposes.

Additionally, learners were not only using technology because it was attractive or

enjoyable for them, but they were also aware of their acquisition of new knowledge.

Pine and Gilmore (1999) claimed that the educational component of any learning

experience should include information or activities which help students get engaged,

motivated, and led to the exploration of new abilities and knowledge.

- Question#6: *what do you think about using Glogster EDU in the English lessons?*
- Pregunta #6: ¿cómo le ha parecido la idea de utilizar Glogster EDU en las clases de inglés?
- Answer: *I am learning English through technology and the lessons become more interesting.*
- Respuesta: estoy aprendiendo inglés con la tecnología y pues las clases así son más interesantes

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Excerpt from the questionnaire. Participant # 10. Translated into English by the researcher.

- Esthetic: The environment of this learning experience was comfortable, attractive, and

  interesting for learners. It enhanced students' creativity through web resources which

  allowed them to express their likes and preferences when using basic language structures.

  The tool and its gadgets were visually appealing since they were associated with topics

  of their preferences, such as music, pets, sports, and so on.

  When their first products were compared to the last ones, the learners' language skills

  had improved considerably. They became more familiar with the web tool and their

  posters showed improvements in design and language usage. Additionally, this group of

  students was orally using the language to explain their products. Therefore, it can be

  concluded that this experience became rewarding due to the implementation of

  technology, innovative strategies, learning styles, and the use of creative teaching.

- Escapist: As learners knew how to use the tool, they started working independently on the creation of their posters. Students immersed in digital technology are frequently trying to discover and learn new things (Tapscott, 2008); they are always expecting to be taught within meaningful learning environments which allows them to find out new knowledge. The main component of interactive tasks, and particularly the use of Glogster EDU, is focused on the promotion of environments where learners can experiment by themselves the learning experience. They were able to process and analyze previous knowledge to use it and adapt it as new information creating a final product that reflected the enhancement of their cognitive and creative skills.

Thus, Pine and Gilmore (1999) defined active participation as experiences where individuals are actively involved in an event or environment through the reception of messages or information through various senses. The creation of virtual posters promoted among learners a high sense of participation as these tasks motivated them to create simple language products in which they expressed their interests and opinions. They also increased the sense of self-confidence and this allowed them to share their ideas with other classmates to compare and contrast their outcomes.

The learning experience became enjoyable for this group of students because having added web tool elements instead of using traditional classwork materials such as notebooks or photocopies, suggested a change within the typical classroom learning environment. It was beneficial to students as it improved how students assumed their language learning process. According to Muñoz and Garcia (2015), motivation inside the classroom is crucial to having successful teaching and learning experience; what is more, students feel engaged and motivated when they feel they are breaking the traditional teaching and learning

barriers. This idea of teaching helps students developed a better understanding of any topic and learn it in a meaningful way (Muñoz and Garcia, 2015)

When the participants were asked about the effects that the interactive tasks had on the English lessons, 25 students out of 29 considered they changed positively. Among the reasons why they considered the English lessons had changed, nine learners answered that the lessons were more interesting; eight participants said that while they were learning, the activities became more appealing, and four students considered they were able to learn easier and more effectively than before when they only used to use a notebook. The purpose of promoting the development of interactive tasks through Glogster EDU, was focused on driving learners towards enhancing the ability to reinforce information they attained in previous lessons. This goal was achieved through the creation of virtual posters since it allowed them -according to Cairncross and Mannion (2001)- to discover and apply new knowledge. It could be seen throughout the process they were exposed to.

Additionally, the data analysis revealed another fact which further supports the students' perceptions towards the implementation of interactive tasks in the language lessons. These learning experiences improved language learners' engagement because the technology was conceived as support and interactive agent that according to Wagner (1997) "enabled active learner participation in the instructional/ training/ performance improvement process." (p. 21). The observations made before and after the research implementation allowed the researcher to notice that the students were not aware of effective strategies to foster their cognitive skills or how to take control of their learning process. I also realized they needed intrinsic stimulus which drove them to be more aware of their abilities and contributed to reinforce their confidence in the goals they were able to

achieve. This encouraged students to improve their language abilities so that students could plan, develop, and evaluate systematically their language production based on the standards given by the instructor.

5.3.2.1.1 Discovery of learning opportunities

Engaging learners through the use of interactive tasks became relevant to this project since the implementation of new strategies and tools in the classroom turned the language tasks and assignments into a more eye-catching, stimulating and memorable instance for learners. They found in the use of web tools the possibility to interact directly with the language through the creation of their posters. In agreement with Di Martino and Clarke (2008), the design of classroom projects gradually expands the interests, talents, and aspirations of the individuals. Thus, the levels of engagement will also increase if learners consider that the creation of virtual posters increases their interests and expand their talents and aspirations.

The following fragment illustrates the perception of a student on how the use of these tasks meaningfully promoted opportunities for him. Also, this paragraph shows the positive learning impact this activity had on him, as well as the importance of the use of technology as a tool to increase his levels of motivation and engagement towards the acquisition of English as a foreign language. It was also a way to improve his performance during English lessons:

> La última vez yo hice otro glog donde conté todo lo que hago frecuentemente y me pareció fácil y aprendí muchas cosas y me divertí mucho.
>
> Last time I made another "glog" where I told everything about wh at I do frequently and it seemed very easy to use and I learnt many things and I had lots of fun.

Excerpt from learners' journals. Participant # 23. Translated into English by the researcher.

Laudillard (2010) claimed that the possibility to extend learning to those groups that were traditionally inactive in the use of web tools, turn the current language tasks and assignments more attractive, interesting, and memorable for learners. Moreover, this different way of teaching helps learners to improve their language needs in a more personalized way since it promotes autonomous learning and engaging activities.

Personalized learning fosters the language learners' engagement through the connection between their interests, likes, talents to the academic purpose of each activity. Personalized teaching also engages learners in increasing their knowledge by connecting their aims or interests to their academic experiences (Di Martino and Clarke, 2008). The following excerpt – taken from a journal – supports the former ideas:

Pregunta # 5: Si pudiera invitar a un amigo de otro grado a utilizar Glogster EDU para hacer trabajos de Ingles, usted que le diría de esta herramienta?

Question # 5: *if you could invite another friend to use Glogster EDU to make English tasks, what would you say him about this tool?*

Respuesta: que, puede escoger y poner un fondo y escribir lo que quiera sobre uno. Y le diría que es muy divertido para aprender inglés.

Answer: *so, you can choose and put a wall and write all about yourself. And I would say him that it is so fun for learning English.*

Excerpt from the questionnaire. Participant # 13. Translated into English by the researcher.

5.3.2.2 The use of interactive tasks promotes among learners a sense of self-efficacy

As it was mentioned before, the sense of confidence they developed in their abilities influenced their confidence in achieving their personal and academic goals. Before starting this research study, the researcher observed that many of the participants did not achieve all the language goals stated for seventh grade. One of the reasons for this situation was the lack of trust students had in their language skills. They assumed the process of acquiring a

second language as a very difficult goal to reach and this is why they were not interested in making a hard effort to study it or even complete their assignments.

According to Bandura (1993), creative and challenging tasks create incentives for learners to intensify their efforts on reaching better outcomes to reinforce the learners' beliefs about their capabilities which produce in them a sense of agency of their functioning. Thus, self- efficacy can be fostered through the design of cognized goals, goals that learners can achieve in the present rather than unrealized plans, (Bandura, 1993). In this study, the planned interactive tasks embodied the characteristics of an attainable task because they were designed based on cognized goals which later promoted among learners a sense of self- efficacy. After observing the seventh graders working on their virtual posters, it was evidenced through their behavior that their attention was focused on creating meaningful and linguistically accurate products. Also, the use of the language, which at the beginning of the study was an impediment, was smoothly scaffolded and produced. Having attained such a factor revealing students' confidence in their abilities was also boosted.

In their journals, students expressed how the use of interactive activities, Glogster EDU, helped them join two aspects that are relevant for them: learning a language and creating attractive tasks. Therefore, the participants mentioned other important aspects that complemented the positive perception they had about the strategy implemented: interactive tasks guided students through clear and easy pathways and offered them interesting content and user-friendly tools to complete their tasks. Additionally, permanent guidance, group work, and positive feedback also contributed to the reinforcement of the learners' confidence in their cognitive skills.

5.3.2.2.1 Approach that accounts for learners' academic and personal needs.

Another relevant aspect to discuss is the students' level of participation and inclusion in this new learning experience. According to Laudillard (2010) part of the challenge to engage learners through personalized learning is the creation of *an approach that accounts for learners' academic and personal needs*. During the pre-stage of this study, when learners were asked about their interest in learning how to use a web tool to improve their performance in the English lessons, they expressed their total agreement to be part of this project and their expectations revealed their initial motivation and engagement. The decision to implement interactive tasks as the strategy to engage the students towards their learning process was focused on connecting the academic experiences that learners live daily in the school with their interests, likes, abilities, and the necessity to increase the language students' engagement. Thus, the interactive tasks assisted by a web tool enhanced the inclusion and participation of all students, since they were meaningfully engaged in experimenting and discovering new things through an innovative strategy that allowed the creation of virtual posters in which the students were the co-producers of their learning process.

Another important aspect which increased the levels of inclusion and participation was the improvement in learners' writing skills and the opportunity to learn new vocabulary. The data analysis process evidenced that the tasks fostered learners' sense of self- efficacy, and confidence. This was due to the opportunity they had to explore alternative strategies that were beneficial to improve their weaknesses in language, especially in writing.

Fig.4. Learners' Artifacts. Samples of three artifacts created by the participants. Topics #1: frequency adverbs; # 2: verb to be: # 3: can- can't.

These samples represented students' language improvement since the beginning of

the implementation stage. Artifact number three revealed that students were engaged with

the task. In this final poster, learners used more aesthetic sources to make their posters look

better than the ones used in the first and second posters. With this, it can be said that the

participants were able to use the web tool properly and they had fewer difficulties or impediments to achieve both, language and technological goals. Furthermore, it was also remarkable to observe how learners were able to overcome weaknesses such as their confidence in writing in English. These learners could not write complete sentences at the beginning of the project but while they received the teacher support, many of those difficulties were overcome and they started to demonstrate more confidence when writing.

Before starting this research study, the learners' expectations and interests were focused on activities that did not represent great rewards because they were not aware of their personal goals and academic needs. After the implementation stage, the students made efforts to achieve the learning goals received at the end a great incentive, the rewards were not only good grades, they enhanced their confidence on their capabilities and their motivation levels increased. In agreement with Miller (2001) and Cuesta (2010) when learners are engaged in academic experiences, they tend to demonstrate positive attitudes and the connection with their learning is higher. Cuesta (2010) claimed that in virtual learning environments, students become more active, they increase their levels of motivation, lower their affective filter, and start using technology in a more significant way; in summary, they become more engaged with their learning process. Therefore, it can be said that the use of the web tool plus the methodology used by the researcher made students feel more motivated and engaged.

5.4   Conclusions

In this chapter, the procedures and methodologies used to manage and analyze the data are presented. Here, a description of the validation process and procedures to ensure validity are included as well. Then, it deals with the mapping and identification of the core

category and finally, the researcher presents a description of the categories of analysis

supported on theory and excerpts taken from the students' journals and artifacts. The

conclusions of this research are stated through a comparison with previous studies, the

significance of the results, limitations of the present study, and further research.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and pedagogical implications

6.1   Introduction

Before starting this research study, it was noticed that students had a poor

background on English language learning as well as engagement ad motivation. The reason

why this situation was happening was due to the lack of appropriate teaching strategies,

techniques, and tools teachers used to take students to reach successful learning. The

implementation of interactive tasks promoted among learners a sense of learning and

entertainment since students were having fun and at the same time acquiring English.

Therefore, it can be said that interactive tasks not only improved students' language

learning but also it fostered their creativity, imagination and encouraged them to be more

aware of their abilities without considering their language level as an impediment to

achieving their learning goals.

After carrying out observations during fifteen weeks of implementation followed by

the data analysis process, the subsequent thoughts are presented as conclusions of this

research.

6.2   Comparison of results with previous studies

Some studies that were developed in Colombia and around the world claimed the

importance of including new technologies in the language teaching classroom. Addressing

students' learning needs about their engagement and stating particular strategies to promote

appropriate paces to work is also a focus on those papers.   This chapter introduces

significant comparisons with previous studies that deal with the same research problem to

enrich the conclusions of this project. Additionally, the following categories emerged from

this research work and strengthen the organization of the information; these are students'

needs, engagement strategies, learners' motivation, and significant, creative and innovative learning strategies.

This research study was implemented in a public school in Colombia. In comparison to similar schools, their students require common strategies due to their needs, demands, and lack of language knowledge. Lizarazo (2012) found a critical problem the lack of students' engagement with their learning; thus, this difficulty became the starting point of this research project since the students from Brasilia Usme School were not aware of the benefits that learning English could bring to their lives. Moreover, students at this institution were not motivated enough to improve their language skills. The research study just mentioned and in this current study state the way to addresses this weakness is the appropriate selection of engagement strategies that any teacher could implement or design to reduce the gap between the students and the language.

It is possible that the context of this public school can be a little different from the context of Brasilia Usme school because those schools are located in different socioeconomic stratums; however, the lack of motivation towards the learning and the reduced number of innovative strategies put in similar conditions the students of both district schools. Rojas (2011) used online tools to enhance her students' writing skills; her innovative strategies encouraged the students to communicate in a second language and engaged them with their learning.

This previous study reveals similarities with the present one since both of them are focused on reducing the lack of learning engagement through the implementation of web tools; this idea is carried out to improve the traditional teaching strategies. The previous

and this recent project revealed that learners can become more engaged with their learning

if there are appealing activities that encourage them to do creative products.

Other researchers also used a technological tool for educational purposes. Camacho

(2014) found in watching YouTube videos from native speakers the tool to incorporate fun

and significance to the lessons. Rativa, Pedreros, and Nuñez (2012) obtained evidence

about the way as Web-based activities involve students in the development of activities

during and after school times. Bernal, Moreno, and Sanchez (2014) identified in large

classes an impediment to reaching the students to dynamic and appealing learning. Online

and offline tools provide teachers with strategies to create a more interactive, appealing,

and engaging learning environment where learners can feel more comfortable and

encouraged to learn. All the works cited before focusing their attention on implementing

approaches that improve the language learning environment and encourage the students to

reinforce their skills.

6.3   Significance of the results

Current generations demand from teachers alternative strategies that take into

account students' interests, likes, dislikes, and necessities. Thus, learning will become a

meaningful learning experience regarding the acquisition of English as a second language.

The present study provides to other researchers different ideas about how to use educational

technology in the classroom. Therefore, teachers can innovate in the use of modern

alternatives of teaching which surely will drive students into a better acquisition of the

English language. Teachers are mediators that help students to improve their knowledge

and discourse; through interaction, students become more active in social contexts

(including the classroom), thereby helping them to re-construct their learning (Canese, 2008).

Use of interactive tasks as a mechanism to engage learners to the language: The interactive tasks allowed learners to improve their cognitive and creative skills that covered the four fields Pine and Gilmore (1999) considered necessary to make of any learning experience a successful, attractive and engaging one. These were: esthetic, entertainment, educational, and escapist. Therefore, the use of the interactive tasks attracted and engaged learners in a way where they felt focused and motivated. Besides, it facilitated the improvement of the learners' writing skills and allowed them to learn new vocabulary.

Students' enhancement of self-confidence: The interactive tasks contributed the learners to overcome some language weaknesses and to strengthen their confidence regarding the process of acquisition of a second language. Attainable tasks provided an intrinsic stimulus to the learners and the opportunity to deal with their learning processes, encouraging them to work towards the achievement of their personal and academic goals.

Learning and entertainment: Encouraging learners to create virtual posters where they were able to foster their cognitive and creative skills evidenced what Di Martino and Clarke (2008) claimed about the design of classroom projects; they join and increase students' likes, aptitudes, and goals of the individuals. These significant findings revealed learners' involvement with the selected web tool that opened access to new classroom dynamics which were not necessarily held in the face- to- face settings.

Personalized learning: The use of interactive tasks allows teachers to innovate traditional classroom techniques because it is a mechanism that facilitates joining the

learners' academic experiences with their likes, interests, and abilities. Furthermore, interactive tasks increase language learners' engagement since the use of a web tool to create virtual posters encourages the students to become co-producers of their learning process.

6.4   Limitations of the present study

During the implementation stage, the most common and recurrent limitation I faced as a researcher was related to technological issues. First, the number of laptops available at the school did not fit the number of students; therefore, I decided to ask students to work in pairs using only one. In every session, we had to take the laptops with us to the classroom because there was not a special computer room available; this difficulty reduced time significantly for the students to finish their work on time. Fortunately, nowadays there are language laboratories that avoid time constraints to be present.

Second, the internet connection did not allow the appropriate development of the activities. The equipment and the internet connection were provided by the Secretaría de Educación Distrital and it was not possible to improve the wireless network; this situation negatively affected students' work due to the limited time to complete the activities.

The third limitation was related to timing. Three out of eighteen sessions were missed due to school events, such as school assemblies, class meetings with the homeroom teacher, honor to the flag activities, etc. These limitations were not anticipated before starting the research implementation because the school did not schedule a specific date for this sort of event. For further research implementations, it is necessary to inform the

principal about the planning of the project and the substitution agenda, to avoid
interruptions in the development of the research process.

6.5   Further research

To start, it is necessary to highlight that the idea of this research project was born
from particular conditions observed in the specific context of public schools in Colombia. It
is important to mention that it may not apply for contexts with different conditions.
However, many public and private schools are in the way to find new strategies,
techniques, and tools to improve the language level of their students in a simplistic but
effective way. Reflecting upon the former ideas, this research project proposes the idea to
implement new strategies to improve learners' English proficiency. Thus, the use of
interactive media tasks encouraged students to take control of their learning processes
fostering their cognitive and creative skills.

Taking into account the above-mentioned ideas, it can be said that there is a strong
need of finding better teaching alternatives to drive students into successful language
learning experiences. It is my recommendation for future researchers to find different
solutions for the different educational problems English learners are facing. This is due to
the lack of motivation and creativity English teachers have at the time of instructing
students. Therefore, future researchers should perform different action research studies
related to engaging, motivating, and enjoyable ways of teaching and learning English in the
EFL educational setting.

6.6   Conclusion

The present study shows a compilation of fifty-two documents based on the benefits
in the use of technological techniques that could enhance the EFL context in adolescents of

a public school in Colombia. Those documents were based on different ideas that expressed the success of incorporating the use of technology in the English classroom. From my personal experience, in Colombia to teach English as a foreign language could be challenging; however, successful teachers will always find a way to make this wonderful experience the best one for students.

As teachers, it is important to know the way the human brain works and understand the process that undergoes when it is acquiring new knowledge. Thus, the use of different alternatives for teaching English, such as the use of technology, searches for a way to understand a foreign language's mental representation, attention, and information process. Appropriate approaches and strategies should be used according to students' needs. It is important to mention that this study looked for investigations not older than ten years, meaning that teaching and learning are changing, and approaches like grammar-translation or very traditional approaches are not appealing and not used in the upcoming generations.

From my personal experience, Colombian educators need to do more research about new approaches that enhance the EFL context, since in public schools traditional approaches are being used over and over again through the years. Many teachers are focused on accuracy and not on fluency; therefore, many Colombian learners study English for about eleven years and they barely know how to use the verb to be.

Finally, I want to mention that every teacher should find the most appropriate approach to instruct depending on students' context and needs. Therefore, it is important to make sure that students have a good classroom environment and good learning development. Yang (2009) stated that classes must be interactive and every student must

have the opportunity to practice their English. Also, he asserted that the best approach for teaching EFL is to have students engaged and to practice language skills regularly whether the students are practicing individually, in pairs, or groups; it's important to work in all these different ways.

The different statements and insights written throughout this document are pertinent to this project because the main components of the research emerged from my teaching experience in a school. Observing and reflecting on my students' needs and abilities allowed me to consider new options to engage them in learning by using action research as a strategy to consolidate a solid approach that will be able to fit the students' and the school's needs. The decisions made in the first phase of the research determined the positive impact of the implementation stage and the quality of the data that the researcher obtained in this work.

Finally, I want to add that Students come to school to develop their potential as human beings and in turn to be productive members of society. For this reason, the educational system as well as teachers must provide the best conditions so all learners have an equal chance to accomplish their goals. Teachers, as the direct providers of educational services, are a vital component, and they have a huge responsibility. However, there are cases where effective teachers face different challenges and situations that make them question their role as educators. For that reason, the main focus of this paper was to provide teachers with ideas, tools, and strategies to enrich their best practices so they can transmit positive and meaningful learning to their classes.

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Appendix A: Lessons planned and developed

Date	Objective	Outline
September 21, 2010. 10:30- 11:30 a.m.	To implement the first written survey to know the learners' opinions about the project.	• To present the project to the students. • To know their opinions about the use of a new tool for complementing the activities developed in the classroom.

Date	Objective	Outline
September 23, 2010. 8:00- 10:00 a.m.	To guide and direct learners on using Glogster. To check students language skills in general.	Through a tutorial about how to use Glogster, students will know the website and the variety of possibilities they have to create their own posters.

Date	Objective	Outline
September 28th, 2010 10:30- 11:30 a.m.	To know and complement learners' opinions about the tool. To check students` engagement in reference to the use of the tool with learning purposes.	• Students worked on completing the information they would include in the first glog. Topic: personal information • Students received their account and password.

Date	Objective	Outline
September 30th, 2010 8:00- 10:00 a.m.	To drive students into writing ideas for developing their first glog draft. To check students` writing skills.	• Students started to create their first glog. Topic: personal information

Date	Objective	Outline

| October 5th, 2010 10:30- 11:30 a.m. | To know learners' opinions about the first implementation session. | • Creation of students' diary. |

Date	Objective	Outline
October 7th, 2010 8:00- 10:00 a.m.	To enhance students` writing skills by working on writing tasks	• Students continue working on their first glogs.

Date	Objective	Outline
October 19th, 2010 10:30- 11:30 a.m.	To know and complement learners' perceptions.	• Register learners' opinions and perceptions in the diaries about the last session.

Date	Objective	Outline
October 21th, 2010 8:00- 10:00 a.m.	To create a Glog for presenting the learners' acknowledgment using frequency adverbs.	• Creation of the 2nd. Product. Topic: daily routines.

Date	Objective	Outline
October 26th, 2010 10:30- 11:30 a.m.	To know and complement learners' perceptions.	• To register learners' perceptions in their diaries about the difficulties they faced during the last session.

Date	Objective	Outline
November 04th, 2010 8:30- 10:30 a.m.	To create a Glog for presenting the learners' acknowledgment using adverbs of frequency.	• Creation of the second Glog. Topic: frequency adverbs.

Date	Objective	Outline
November 09th,2010 10:30- 11:30 a.m.	To implement the mid-term survey to know the learners' opinions about the use of Glogster EDU.	• Students completed the mid-term survey.

Date	Objective	Outline
November 11th, 2010 8:30- 10:30 a.m.	To create a Glog for presenting the learners' acknowledgment using frequency adverbs.	• Students worked on completing their second glog. Topic: frequency adverbs.

Planned sessions

Date	Objective	Outline
November 16th,2010 10:30- 11:30 a.m.	To know learners' perceptions about the last implementation session.	• Register learners' opinions and perceptions in their diaries about the last session.

Date	Objective	Outline
November 18th, 2010 8:30- 10:30 a.m.	Students will be able to use the form –CAN/ CAN'T- to express abilities in an authentic context such as talking about activities and hobbies they usually practice.	• Students will work on their third glog. Topic: activities and hobbies.

Date	Objective	Outline
November 23th,2010 10:30- 11:30 a.m.	To know learners' perceptions about the last implementation session.	• Register learners' opinions and perceptions in their diaries about the last session.

Date	Objective	Outline
November 25th, 2010 8:30- 10:30 a.m.	Students will be able to use the form –*CAN/ CAN'T*- to express abilities in an authentic context such as talking about activities and hobbies they usually practice.	• Students will finished their their glog. Topic: abilities and hobbies.

Date	Objective	Outline
November 30th,2010 10:30- 11:30 a.m.	To implement the final survey to know the learners' opinions about the use of Glogster EDU.	• Students will complete the final survey.

Appendix B: Data Collection Tool: questionnaire (pre- stage).

Estudiantes de grado 7º:

El siguiente cuestionario busca conocer su opinión sobre el proceso de implementación de la herramienta tecnológica Gloster EDU como estrategia para promover la interacción de los estudiantes con el idioma extranjero Inglés. La información que usted de en este cuestionario será conocida solo por la docente y no será tenida en cuenta como nota de la asignatura. Les pido muy amablemente, responder cuidadosamente y con toda sinceridad a cada una de las preguntas formuladas a continuación.

Gracias por su colaboración.

1- Durante cuanto tiempo utilizas el internet?
        1 – 2 horas diarias _____
        3 – 5 horas diarias _____
        Más de 5 horas   _____
        No ingreso a internet diariamente _____

2- Cuantas veces a la semana entras a internet?
        1 – 2 veces a la semana _____
        3 – 5 veces a la semana _____
        Todos los días   _____
        No ingreso a internet frecuentemente _____

3- Tienes computador y acceso a internet en tu casa?
        Computador: Si _____   No _____

        Acceso a internet: Si _____   No _____

4- Ha utilizado alguna herramienta de internet para mejorar su aprendizaje del Ingles?

        Si____   No____

Que tipo de herramienta y para que la ha utilizado?

_____

_____

_____

5- Que herramientas utiliza (en el colegio y fuera de el) normalmente para el aprendizaje del ingles?

_____

_____

_____

6- Le interesaría utilizar herramientas de la web para hacer trabajos relacionados con la clase de Ingles?

        Si____   No _____

Por que?

_____

_____

_____

7- Cree usted que estas herramientas le puedan ayudar a mejorar su desempeño en el aprendizaje del ingles?

8- Si lo invitaran a participar de un proyecto en el que va aprender a manejar una herramienta de internet para hacer afiches en Ingles, a usted esta actividad le parecería?

Muy interesante _____   Poco interesante _____

Algo interesante _____   Nada interesante _____

POR QUE?

_____

_____

_____

Appendix C: Data Collection Tool: questionnaire (post- stage).

Estudiantes de grado 7º:

El siguiente cuestionario busca conocer su opinión sobre el proceso de implementación de la herramienta tecnológica Gloster EDU como estrategia para promover la interacción de los estudiantes con el idioma extranjero Inglés. La información que usted de en este cuestionario será conocida solo por la docente y no será tenida en cuenta como nota de la asignatura. Les pido muy amablemente, responder cuidadosamente y con toda sinceridad a cada una de las preguntas formuladas a continuación.

1. Desde el momento que empezamos a usar Glogster EDU como herramienta de trabajo en la asignatura de Ingles. A usted las clases le han parecido:

   Poco interesantes _____
   Igual que antes   _____
   Más interesantes _____

2. Le gustaría seguir utilizando Glogster EDU como herramienta de trabajo para las clases de Ingles:

   SI____   NO____

   Por qué: _____

   _____

3. Como cree usted que el uso de Glogster EDU cambió la clase de Ingles:

   De manera positiva _____
   De manera negativa _____
   No la cambió _____

   Por qué: _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

4. ¿Cuáles fueron las mayores dificultades que encontró usted cuando estaba utilizando Glogster EDU?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Otras: _____

5. Si tuviera que invitar a un amigo de otro grado a utilizar Glogster EDU para hacer trabajos de Ingles, usted que le diría de esta herramienta:

_____

_____

_____

6. Como le ha parecido la idea de utilizar Glogster EDU en las clases de Ingles:

Muy interesante ___   Nada interesante ___
Algo interesante ___
Poco interesante ___

Por qué: _____

_____

_____

Appendix D: ICELT LESSON PLAN FORM Electronic Version

Name of teacher: Zulma Gyzeth Rubio Loaiza	Candidate Number:

Institution: BRASILIA USME –IED-		
Date of Observation: DAY MONTH YEAR September 2009	Time of observation	Length of class
Class/grade: 7th	Room: H 5	
Number of students: 30	Average age of Students: 11	
Number of years of English study: 1	Level of students Basic	
Lesson Number: 3	Observer:	

Aims:
By the end of the lesson, students will be able to use the form –*CAN/ CAN'T*- to create a poster using Glogster EDU to express abilities in an authentic context such as talking about activities and hobbies that they usually practice.

Personal aims:
- I will focus on making the instructions as clear as possible.
- I will focus on engaging learners with the activities proposed.
- I will focus on allowing learners to choose the content and design of their posters freely.
- I will focus on supporting learners during the creation of their posters with advices and solving their doubts about the use of the tool.
- I will focus on guiding the students' learning process.

Assumed knowledge:

Appropriate use of *verb to-be* to describe personal information and daily activities.

Description of language item / skill

How to express ability: To express that someone has the power or skill to do something, *can* and *be able* are used.

Examples:

- I can't help you.I am busy.
- I'm unable to help you.
- When I was young I was able to earn my living pretty well; I could work hard. Now I can't. I'm too old.
- I can stand on my head for five minutes.
- Can you speak Arabic?
- Yes, I can.

Expressing ability

In the present: Express ability in the present as follows:

- I can speak good English.
- I can't stand the noise.

In the future: Express ability in the future as follows

- I will be able to buy a house when I get a good job.
- The teacher can assist you after class if you have any questions.

Things to remember:
- *Can* is always followed by an infinitive without "to."
  Examples:
  I can ride my bike and I can drive a car, but I can't drive a lorry

Taken from: http://www.myenglishpages.com/site_php_files/communication-lesson-ability.php

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Materials :
(please include source and attach all materials)

Pictures of people doing activities
Pictures of people doing activities. Designed by: Zulma Rubio.
Handouts. Designed by: Zulma Rubio.
Markers
Board
Chart. Designed by: Zulma Rubio

Rationale

Learners' profile:
- describe ages and language level

7th grade students from Brasilia school are teenagers between 11 and 13 years old. Their language level is lower than A1 according to the Common European framework. They understand familiar everyday expressions such as: good morning, hello, how are you? but they do not use them. They can introduce themselves expressing or answering questions about personal information. They have learned basic grammar structures and can use them to solve written exercises guided by the teacher. They are able to read texts and answer questions only about specific information. They can also write short sentences following the structure S+V+C. They recognize basic vocabulary about colors, animals, numbers, fruits, verbs, nouns and adjectives.

- outline linguistic and affective needs

There is a notorious lack of interaction among learners and the language itself. There is documentation about the existence of many web tools to promote the use of the language. However, learners do not use these tools because they do not know about their existence or they have not been guided in using them. The use of traditional strategies for creating the final products of each didactic unit was not motivating enough for learners because it did not challenge them to create new things and incorporate digital aids. When learners presented the final products of their traditional activities, their quality was not outstanding. Also, a high percentage of students did not participate in those activities because they considered the activities were not really challenging for them.

- explain how learners' needs relate to aims of the lesson

The previous issues evidenced the necessity to provide learners with a tool which engage them to use the language they are learning.

Anticipated problems	Planned solutions
• use of infinitives with *to* after can- can't • Students may confuse the use of can- can't to express abilities with the use of *can- can't* to ask permissions.	• The samples provided to the students should be enough clear. • The use of pictures will help learners to understand the situations where *can- can't* can be used.

Stage	Aim	Procedure Teacher and student activity	Time and interaction
• Create context	• Sts will have a clear context for the use of the –*CAN/ CAN'T*- for abilities.	• I will ask students to do some activities such as: play "coca", guitar, jumping rope, etc, and I will describe their performance using expressions like: he is able to play "coca"; she is not able to play guitar; they are able to jump a rope; "I am not able to play guitar". The outcomes will be written in a grill which has the name of the student, the activity and a box to put a tick if they can do the activity.	10 minutes T – Sts Sts - Sts
• Elicit structure	• Sts will understand the concept.	• I will explain to Sts about how and when to use the form –*CAN/ CAN'T*- using samples with information from the grill. Sts will write in their notebooks some of these samples.	15 minutes T - Sts
• Deal with pronunciatio n.	• Help Sts with pronunciation.	• I will teach them how to pronounce the form –*CAN/ CAN'T*- and they will practice it repeating some sentences by choiring.	5 minutes T – Sts St - St
• Written controlled practice.	• Sts will develop confidence and accuracy with the structure in a written form.	• Sts. Will complete some sentences choosing between CAN OR CAN'T and between 2 activities according to the pictures that will be exposed on the board.	15 minutes Sts
• Check concept. • Speaking controlled practice.	• Sts will have a clear understanding of the concept of the structure. • Sts will develop confidence and accuracy in a spoken form.	• I will use the same pictures used in the fourth stage to ask Sts what the person of the picture is able to do. Randomly I will choose some Sts to answer the question. • Game: guess who. Sts will divide in two groups and each one will choose a member to represent them. I will give them three pictures of a person who is doing an activity. I will say: "this person can fly a kite". The group should	5 minutes T – Sts Sts - T 20 minutes T – Sts Sts – Sts.

• Practical session		look their pictures and identify if the person practices or not this sport. Next, the leader of the group should play a bell that is in the center of the classroom and answer in the following way: "Annie can fly a kite" or "Annie can't fly a kite". The winner will be the group which says more right sentences.	
	• Sts. will demonstrate their accuracy using the grammar structure can-can't.		2 hours Sts-technological tool.
		• Using the computers available in the school, students will create a poster in Glogster EDU with information about the activities they can or can't do. As they used before Glogster EDU they may not need a tutorial about how to use this tool. However, my role as a teacher will be always as a guide and facilitator. I will be constantly helping them with the assistance they require.	