

Reshaping English language Teachers' beliefs in the digital era

Reformando las creencias de los profesores de inglés en la era digital

Reformando as crenças dos professores de inglês na era digital

Gina Marcela Pérez³⁰

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Abstract

English language teachers' beliefs in the digital era is an area which requires to be explored thoroughly. On account of this, this qualitative study explored teachers' beliefs regarding EFL didactics, based on their experiences and knowledge within a hybrid learning environment. Six EFL teachers from a private school in Bogota participated in an eight-session course meant to prepare teachers for hybrid learning. Findings suggest that teachers' beliefs and roles were reshaped while attending the eight sessions' course. Although data collected showed a wide spectrum of answers from the teachers, they were connected in their desire to teach English in alternative manners to benefit students. As part of the conclusions, I found that although the use of technology is essential in effective learning (Littlejohn & Pegler, 2007), it continues to be a challenge for some teachers. Therefore, it is of vital importance to create spaces in which teachers can interact, share their experiences in the classroom, and create new knowledge and ideas in their teaching practices. By doing so, teachers can gradually face societal and technological

³⁰ Gina Marcela Pérez Romero es egresada de la Licenciatura en educación básica con énfasis en inglés y de la maestría en Lingüística aplicada a la enseñanza del inglés ambos programas de la universidad Distrital. Actualmente se desempeña como docente en el sector público. Sus intereses de investigación incluyen la formación y el desarrollo profesional docente.

challenges (Estudillo, 2001) and promote meaningful learning in digital natives (Littlejohn & Pegler, 2007) through language and technology.

Keywords

English language Teachers' beliefs, hybrid learning, EFL didactics, digital era

Resumen

Las creencias de los profesores de inglés sobre la era digital es un área que merece ser explorada a fondo. Por ende, este estudio cualitativo exploró las creencias de los profesores sobre la didáctica del inglés como lengua extranjera, a partir de sus experiencias y conocimientos dentro de un entorno de aprendizaje híbrido. Seis profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera de un colegio privado en Bogotá participaron en un curso de ocho sesiones destinado a preparar a los profesores para el aprendizaje híbrido. Los hallazgos sugieren que las creencias y los roles de los maestros se reformaron mientras asistían al curso de ocho sesiones. Aunque los datos recopilados mostraron un amplio espectro de respuestas las docentes estaban conectadas en su deseo de enseñar inglés de maneras alternativas para beneficiar el aprendizaje de los estudiantes. Como parte de las conclusiones, se evidencio que, aunque el uso de la tecnología es fundamental para un aprendizaje efectivo (Littlejohn & Pegler, 2007), Sigue siendo un desafío para algunos docentes. Por ello, es de vital importancia crear espacios en los que los docentes puedan interactuar, compartir sus experiencias en el aula y generar nuevos conocimientos e ideas para su práctica docente. De esta manera, los profesores pueden enfrentar gradualmente los desafíos sociales y tecnológicos (Estudillo, 2001) y promover el aprendizaje significativo en los nativos digitales (Littlejohn & Pegler, 2007) a través del lenguaje y la tecnología.

Palabras clave

creencias de los profesores de inglés, aprendizaje híbrido, didáctica de inglés como lengua extranjera, era digital

Resumo

As crenças dos professores de inglês sobre a era digital é uma área que merece ser explorada em profundidade. Portanto, este estudo qualitativo explorou as crenças dos professores sobre a didática do inglês como língua estrangeira, a partir de suas experiências e conhecimentos em um ambiente híbrido de aprendizagem. Seis professores de inglês como língua estrangeira de uma escola particular em Bogotá participaram de um curso de oito sessões destinado a preparar professores para a aprendizagem híbrida. Os resultados sugerem que as crenças e funções dos professores foram reformuladas durante o curso de oito sessões. Embora os dados coletados mostrassem um amplo espectro de respostas, os professores estavam conectados em seu desejo de ensinar inglês de maneiras alternativas para beneficiar o aprendizado dos alunos. Como parte das conclusões, descobri que, embora o uso da tecnologia seja essencial para uma aprendizagem eficaz (Littlejohn & Pegler, 2007), continua a ser um desafio para alguns professores. Por esse motivo, é de vital importância criar espaços nos quais os professores possam interagir, compartilhar suas experiências em sala de aula e gerar novos conhecimentos e ideias para sua prática docente. Dessa forma, os professores podem gradualmente enfrentar desafios sociais e tecnológicos (Estudillo, 2001) e promover uma aprendizagem significativa para nativos digitais (Littlejohn & Pegler, 2007) por meio da linguagem e da tecnologia.

Palavras-chave

crenças de professores de inglês, aprendizagem híbrida, didática do inglês como língua estrangeira, era digital

Introduction

In this article I report the results of a research carried out at Distrital University about English teachers' beliefs in the digital era when participating in a hybrid learning course. I started from the idea that digital convergence has generated new demands in the area of teaching foreign languages. According to the MEN (2014) the communicative competence should be strengthened using strategies such as including information and communication technologies (ICT) in the classroom. Additionally, Blake (2013) states that it is important to use technology in the classroom but not only in the instrumental manner but also in the critical and rhetorical way. It means that teachers have to go beyond teaching the functionality of ICTs, they have to understand how technology helps to construct meaningful learning and transform educational practices. As an English teacher I understand that technology is essential in effective learning but it seems to be a challenge for teachers.

In order to use technology in a critical and rhetorical way, teachers have to overcome first and second order barriers, the first ones defined as external limitations such as lack of training and the second ones refer to internal limitations for instance teachers' beliefs (Ertmer 1999, as cited in Fives & Gill, 2015, p. 407). Therefore, it is especially relevant to create spaces in which teachers have the possibility to interact, share their experiences, provide their opinions, propose solutions and create new knowledge in their teaching practices. Additionally, it is important that teachers have a significant experience and feel comfortable when they are reflecting upon their teaching practices. In this manner, teachers can progressively face societal and technological challenges (Estudillo, 2001), break the traditional mold and promote significant learning in digital natives (Littlejohn &

Pegler, 2007) through language and technology.

In the rest of the article the theory and methodology that backed up the intervention and data analysis is summarized by bringing diverse authors' points of view into discussion. I reflected upon teachers' beliefs, EFL didactics, technology in the English classroom, and Teacher professional development and the role of teachers' beliefs with the implementation of technology in the classroom. To understand English language teachers' beliefs in the digital era, a qualitative interpretative research was carried out. I was asking myself about the connection of English Language teachers' beliefs and the integration of technology in the classroom. This is essential in the academic field due to the fact that it provides new knowledge and support teachers in the form of reflecting upon their views in order to improve their practices in the digital era. Additionally, the context, participants, data collection techniques and sampling strategies are all discussed.

Lastly, findings and conclusions close this article. From the results emerged three categories. The first one is stated as Didactic miscegenation in EFL teachers' beliefs, the second one is a tendency to align constructivist views with technology use and the last one is teachers' voices in professional development. Further implications for educational settings and conclusions are shared at the end.

Research questions and objectives

I synthesized my research interest in the following question: What do English teachers' beliefs portray about EFL didactics when partaking in professional development sessions on hybrid learning?

To give an answer to this question, first I needed to analyze English language teachers' beliefs on EFL didactics when participating in professional development sessions on hybrid learning. Then I had to describe English language teachers'

didactic strategies discussed during professional development sessions on hybrid learning.

Problem Statement

In order to explore English language teachers' needs regarding digital technology and professional development I implemented a teacher needs analysis based on Nation and Macalister model (2010). I analyzed the results that emerged in the data analysis and I found a researchable issue. One of the goals of the principals of a private school was to provide a national bilingual education through the implementation of EFL (English as a Foreign Language). To support this goal, the principals of the school implemented blended learning as a methodology and didactic resource. However, teachers were not trained to develop this didactic. Blake (2013) recognizes the importance of technology in assisting students to learn EFL. Nevertheless, the implementation of technological tools should be guided not only by theory but also by experts in order that teachers pass from an instrumental to a critical technological-founded on didactics. Without this theoretical and practical knowledge, teachers might lack a critical stance on technology in the EFL class and teaching strategies applicable to the postindustrial era in L2 education (Estudillo Garcia, 2001; Litwin, 2005).

Additionally, the needs analysis displayed that blended learning appears as an *institutional necessity* (Nation & Macalister, 2010) in a digital era, due to the fact that teachers recognize that it is essential the integration of technology in the classroom but it is necessary to change their teaching practices. Blake (2013) declared that is important to take into account teachers and students' needs in order to have a significant learning. Moreover, the needs analysis revealed that teachers had adapted their practices to accomplish the institutional demands but they were

unsure about the real objective of blended learning. A research made by Mendieta (2012) revealed that when teachers use technology in the classroom without know the objective both conceptually and procedurally there are fewer possibilities to achieve the expected results in the learning and teaching process.

Therefore, there was an inconsistency in the manner teaching and learning took place at the school. Teachers were expected to use the technological tools without know their real objective and if they did not use they were sanctioned. In this view, teachers' practices are obscured, and they are seen as "clerks in the sense that they are expected to just follow the orders of a remote authority without questioning, resisting, or contributing." (Guerrero, 2010 p. 35). Additionally, teachers *want* (Nation and Macalister, 2010) constant training about methodologies and strategies to face students' needs (Excerpt 1). It is important that principals offer training to the teachers when a strategy or didactic resource is implemented otherwise a meaningful learning will not be achieved.

Excerpt 1

[First, I need to be at the forefront of the strategies that are implemented in the classroom and of my students. In this way, we can implement the most useful and those that adapt to the needs of students. Second, my constant preparation is of vital importance in order to be able to offer students new tools that meet their expectations in the classroom]

(Teacher 1, Interview)

As a Teacher and researcher, I found certain divergences such as teachers' beliefs are reshaped based on institutional demands, unsuccessfully teachers' needs and voices are not heard. By doing so, my role as an agent of change led me to confront this issue by open a space where teachers had the possibility to share their experiences and learned from others.

Theoretical perspectives

There are three key concepts in my study: First, teacher's belief construction in terms of EFL didactics. Next, ideas on the integration of digital technology in the classroom and its relationship to hybrid learning. Finally, a series of reflections on teachers' professional development and the role beliefs play in EFL didactics will be discussed.

Teachers' Beliefs

Teachers' beliefs play an important role in the learning process due to the fact that are totally connected with teachers' practices (Berhanu & Joy, 2018). According to Richards and Lockhart (2007), teachers' beliefs are based on the objectives, values and principles the teacher possesses related to teaching material, processes and their role in the work place. These convictions are part of the teachers' background, and they influence in one way or another teachers' actions and decisions. Other authors such as Northcote (2009), agrees with the idea that teachers' beliefs have an intrinsic connection with their practices also he states that teachers' practical experiences influence their actions, beliefs, and the quality of how students are taught.

As reported by Kindsvatter, Willen, and Ishler (1988), cited in Richards and Lockhart (2007, p. 30-31) teachers' beliefs emerge from various sources: Teachers own experience as language learners, the experience of what works best, established practice in regard to teaching styles that schools, institutions or a school district have adapted, personality factors, educational or research-based principles that teachers possess, understanding of approaches or teaching methods.

In addition, Richards, Gallo, and Renandya (2001) determined that teachers' beliefs are social interpretations based on experience, in this manner L2 teachers' beliefs are the result of their learning, didactics, pedagogy and language. In other

words, teachers' beliefs were adopted from their teachers' behaviors. Crookes (2003, as cited in Díaz and Bastías 2012, p. 245) expresses that the manner teachers were taught molds teachers' understanding of their own learning and teaching processes. Moreover, Díaz and Bastías (2012) point out that it is not an easy task to analyze teachers' beliefs due to the fact that they do not behave always in the same way for this reason it is important teachers do a self-reflection constantly.

EFL didactics and teachers' beliefs

Second language teaching' didactics are diverse for the reason that there are different contexts and also language goals. Didactics have been developed taking into account different perspectives related to how a second language should be learned. Initially languages were taught using translation and behavioral methods, then language didactics moved on to a structuralist approach in which students have to learn the use of grammar, then appear the communicative method in which the cultural context is an important factor in understanding how language functions (Baker, 2001, p. 120) and many other didactics have appeared such as presentation, practice and production, suggestopedia, total physical response, communicative language, task based learning among others. Nowadays, there is no a pure didactic strategy, but teachers have adopted and adapted different ideas of each didactic bearing in mind their beliefs about what works better in order to develop a favorable didactic that achieve the classroom' objectives.

So far, English language didactics have a close relation with teachers and students' beliefs. These beliefs play an important role due to they help to evaluate and generate the appropriate educational model for each context. Tudor (2001) points out that teachers' beliefs are essential in the classroom dynamics and also in

the negotiation of the classroom practices.

On the other hand, Beltran (2017) expresses that the didactics adapted by teachers also included objectives and task of communicative approaches. Thus, English language teachers' didactics using technological tools should be evaluated. This implies that teachers' beliefs should be redefined, turning from the traditional model into experience – based learning. (Dewey, 1938)

The modern school proposed by Dewey suggest that significant experiences play an essential role in the learning process and they are connected with cultural issues. At the present, the integration of technology in the classroom has contributed toward the idea of modern school Diaz and Janson, (2011, p.7) claimed that teachers and students' roles have changed, students have gone from being passive to being active and they are also a key point in order to achieve a meaningful learning. For example, students work as collaborators of their teachers, helping them with the use of technological tools.

Similarly, to integrate technological tools in the classroom it is crucial that teachers and students approve them but also that the principals of the school offer not only the physical resources but also training otherwise didactics will continue being implemented from a traditional perspective. In doing so, learning English as a second language can be achieved holistically and students obtain more benefits. Harmer (2007) states that students have great opportunities to study a second language by using computer language teaching programs in this way they have the possibility to reinforce and practice autonomously.

Integration of digital technology in English classroom (Hybrid learning)

Hybrid learning or blended learning is defined as the combination between technological tools and face- to face learning (Vale, 2010) and it is related with a

XXI century initiative where both the student and the teacher share the responsibility of learning in a balanced way. According to Ochoa and Roberto (2011) with the integration of this methodology and didactic resource in the English teaching process students are going to develop not only language skills but also they are provided with constant feedback. However, it implies a challenge for those teachers who do not have the training or practice traditional teaching model (Soler, 2008).

Ochoa and Roberto (2011) claims that Blended learning is a prevalent way to teach English as a Foreign language as a result of the number of materials and resources that students find due to the combination of technological and physical environment. Moreover it is important to offer constant training in order that teachers understand the new and varied ways of teaching L2 in the digital era (Litwin, 2005)

Other electronic tools used in hybrid learning are learning management systems, those interactive platforms allow the students to learn about semantic, phonology, grammar even socio – pragmatic aspects of the language. These platforms are designed according to the students' interests; this seems to facilitate students' learning as well as provide immediate feedback. Additionally, platforms allow students to improve their learning in a different scenery when they develop activities autonomously that support face to face learning.

Thus, when teachers receive the appropriate training to use hybrid learning, they implement and use the resources in the classroom in a critical and rhetorical manner (Blake, 2013) in this way, not only students but also teachers face the demands of this new digital era. Tosun (2015) mentioned that hybrid learning in foreign language teaching aids students with the improvement of English while they explore different scenarios.

Teacher professional development and the role of teachers' beliefs with the implementation of technology in the classroom

The new digital era possesses different challenges for the educational system. In order to face those challenges, it is important to recognize that we are living in a society of constant changes and education has also been transforming from a traditional – conventional pedagogy to alternative processes that include the use of technological tools in the classroom. These changes generate teachers' beliefs which must be taken into account by cause of play a key role in the success of teaching and learning English as a foreign language.

Thus, teachers' beliefs fulfill essential roles in education. Significant changes can occur on education due to teachers 'convictions and practices. In this sense, teachers adopt, adapt and implement materials, resources, strategies methodologies in the classroom according to their beliefs. However, the implementation of technological tools in the classroom has not been completely successful not only for teachers' beliefs but also because of the policies and limited resources for instance the lack of human factor, infrastructure, technological tools, and training. In that way, if the context is not optimal teachers' practices are not going to be as expected.

Verzub (2007) states that it is necessary to offer frequently training and update courses due to the fact that pedagogy has changed in the last decade but it is visible that a number of teachers have not studied or have not participated in training courses since they were at the university and they are teaching following educational beliefs that are considered obsolete.

The purpose of professional development is to improve teaching process. Verzub (2007) mentions that innovation in education have to do with teacher

training' quality. Glazier and Bean (2019) states that teachers' beliefs can be transformed in a positive way if they have good experiences in this way if teachers have meaningful training they are going to change their beliefs and apply what they have learnt in the classroom. Nelson, Voithofer and Cheng (2019) agrees with this idea, they claim that if teachers have significant training they are going to provide great contributions in the classroom and new ways of teaching are implemented.

Methodology

This project aligns with a qualitative study due to the fact that English teachers' beliefs were analyzed to have a better understanding of teachers' world construction and the meaning of their experiences (Merriam, 2002). Additionally, the participants of the study and the researcher have face-to-face interaction in a natural setting (Creswell, 2007).

Yin (2011) states five qualitative research characteristics that were taken into account: First teachers talked about their teaching experiences in a real setting. Secondly, I analyzed and interpreted the teachers' beliefs in regard to what they expressed. Third, I took into consideration participants 'social, institutional and environmental conditions. Fourth in order to offer new insights English teachers' beliefs were analyzed using existing theory, participants' voice and the researcher interpretation. Finally, interviews and discussions were used as sources of evidence.

Additionally, I used an inductive research strategy due to the fact that the objective of the study was not to test theory, but to analyze English teachers' beliefs to provide new insights in the field. Holloway (1997) stands that an inductive research approach is used to create theory, instead of verifying or disproving an idea. Therefore, this study is interpretative in the interest of "gain new insights about

a particular phenomenon and develop new concepts or theoretical background about the research issue” (Peshkin, 1993)

Setting

This project took place at a private school located in Bogota, the capital city of Colombia. The principals of this school wanted to provide students with a bilingual education. To offer a bilingual education schools have to accomplish certain requirements for instance 50% of the curriculum should be taught in a foreign language, most of the teacher should be Colombian and bilingual additionally students must take and pass international foreign test (MEN, 2004). In this sense students of this school are exposed to the use of language in English classes as well as other subjects, such as sciences, social studies, mathematics. Moreover, students take international test which measures the level of English proficiency and blended learning was implemented as a methodology and didactic resource in order to support students’ face- to face learning by doing so each classroom was equipped with technological tools and teachers and students have to use digital platforms.

Participants

In the present study six English language teachers participated. Purposeful sampling was applied to select the participants that met certain criteria (Patton, 1990). Characteristics of the teachers included: Being English language teachers, working on a blended learning scenario, being primary school teachers due to the fact that the bilingualism program implemented was focused in Elementary school.

Additionally, teachers expressed their desires to learn about the use of digital technology in the classroom and discuss about their teaching experiences. In consequence, I suggested them to create a space in order to teachers have the possibility to discuss, learn, and reflect upon their practices. Therefore, they

volunteered to be part of the group, where the materials, time, topics to be discussed were negotiated.

I took into account all the ethical considerations to protect participants' privacy. In that way, I created a consent form where the purpose, method and uses of the information were informed to the participants and they decided if they wanted to participate or not. Additionally, they changed their names and used nicknames in order to guarantee confidentiality.

Data collection instruments and procedures

In regards to data gathering strategies two instruments were used. The first was semi-structured interviews. To design this instrument, I bore in mind the research objectives of the study. Two interviews were implemented, the first interview was done before the space for the discussions and it was applied individually and the second was implemented after the eight discussions' sessions, it was a group interview. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005, p.267) declare that "Interviews enable participants—be they interviewers or interviewees—to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view." Although, the interviews were guided by certain questions participants felt comfortable sharing their views freely due to the fact that they were designed more like conversations and I had the possibility to change the questions or add more. The interviews were piloted with three teachers who had similar profiles as the ones interviewed in this study.

The second instrument was audio recorded discussions. During the eight discussions' sessions teachers shared their experiences and perspectives, their views about the topics proposed. Also they discussed about different issues that emerged in the classroom and how they solved them, therefore they had the

opportunity to reflect upon their practices and reconstruct their beliefs. Freeman (1998, p.204) defines discussions as “opportunities for students (and teachers) to engage in an exchange of ideas”.

The discussions were conducted face- to- face and were audio recorded. Freeman (1998, p.207) mentions that “An audio recording captures spoken interactions in the activity or lesson.” I set three tape recorder up in order to obtain parts of the conversations. The audio recordings allowed me to obtain reliable and complete information regarding teachers’ beliefs additionally the recordings help me to corroborate, contrast, compare and complement the information gained from the interviews.

Data analysis and results

I used the iterative approach proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), whose procedure consist of reducing data, displaying the data, drawing conclusions and verifying them. The first procedure implemented in order to collect data was an individual semi-structured interview. After conducting the interviews, I transcribed and saved them in a digital folder. Then I audio recorded the eight discussions’ sessions and I transcribed teachers’ interventions.

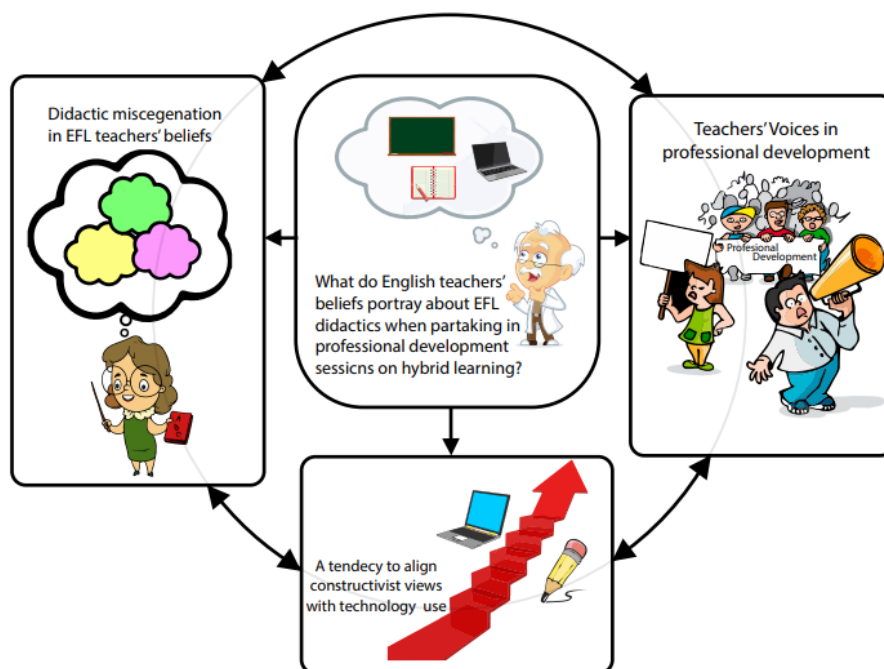
Bearing in mind the information obtained from the interviews and discussions I started to analyze it. By doing so, I organized the information and I did a preliminary report about English language teachers’ beliefs. Later, I used color coding data management technique (Stottok, Bergaus, Gorra, 2011), in order to visualize common themes and I wrote down common topics. After that, I designed a matrix to find relationships between the data and group them into categories. Once categories were created, I Interpreted the data from the articulation between experiential, theoretical referents and participants’ voice.

Two validation strategies were applied in order to evaluate the quality, credibility and accuracy of the data. The first was triangulation defined by Burns (1999, p. 163) as “the process of comparing different data and techniques to see whether they corroborate one another.” The second strategy was member checking where the researcher asks to the participants about their views of the findings (Creswell, 2007).

Findings

Figure 1 below illustrated the correlated categories and their connection with the research question.

Figure 1: Categories of the study



Category 1 Didactic miscegenation in EFL teachers' beliefs.

This category refers to the entanglement position that the participants of the study have when they are teaching due to the fact that they hold a mixture of conceptualizations on how teach English in the new digital era. Two characteristics of this category are discussed as subcategories.

The first one is *traditional didactics vs holistic didactics*. Teachers consider that it is important to bear in mind students' needs and interests when they are planning their classes (Excerpt1) in that way students feel motivated to learn new things. Nunan (1999) states that although it is not an easy task, it is important to take into considerations students' needs in the teaching and learning process.

Excerpt 1

[I consider that it is important to keep in mind what students' likes. For example, these generations, or at least the ones I work with, are generations in which technology is part of their daily lives... Thus, it is necessary to become involved in this part which is essential to this generation.]

(Teacher 1, Session 4,)

Teachers are aware of the importance to create activities that involve social interaction (Excerpt 2). When students share meaningful learning experiences with their peers and teachers, they internalize those experiences and reconstruct their knowledge. Lantolf (2000) states that when students are involved in social activities it is meaningful due to the fact that learning happens through constructive interaction with others. Wells (2000) remarks that interaction allow students to gather new knowledge and then it is transformed into actions.

Excerpt

[I believe that it is important that they work in groups and share because, let's say, that this gives them the ability to learn easier. This is because they have a lot to say, for example, in terms of technology, they know how to use tools better than us. That is why it is so important that they interact.]
(Teacher 1, Semi-structured interview)

Additionally, teachers consider that it is essential to develop students' critical thinking (Gutierrez, 2015) and autonomy skills (Posada, 2006). These skills are part of holistic didactics in which students learn through the connections they make with the community, natural world and humanitarian values (Ron, 1999). In excerpt 3, teacher 6 invited their students to go beyond of the concepts, she created activities which involved students to think critically and solve situations from the real life. Paul and Elder (2005, p. 1) states that critical thinking is “the art of analyzing and evaluating thinking with a view to improving it.” In this sense, students need to interpret, discover, recognize the implications and propose solutions for different problematic that emerge in their daily lives.

Excerpt 3

[I know that at times we, as teachers, have to do many things and we dedicate ourselves to finishing the book and curriculum, but I believe my students necessities go beyond that. And I, for example in classes, try to associate everything with their realities. Thus, for each topic that we see, I tell them to think beyond. For example, if we are seeing a topic on animals, I

don't just stay on perro is dog. I try to help them create consciousness, in this case, with mistreated animals or those who are endangered, Additionally, I tell them to explore what is around them and to share their lived experiences. Finally, we reflect, and they propose a solution.]
(Teacher 6, Session 2)

As evidenced previously, English language teachers held beliefs related to holistic didactics. For instance, they contemplate students' interests and needs when they are planning their sessions. Besides, teachers consider that is useful to develop critical thinking and autonomous learning in their students as well as help students to develop not only language but also social skills. Nevertheless, teachers held beliefs associated to traditional and instrumental didactics which were focused on transmitting knowledge and language skills as the ultimate objective.

For instance, Teacher 3 (excerpt 4) teach English through grammar rules, vocabulary, translate from L1 to L2 and vice versa, completing activities in their book. In the case of using grammar strategies and work book activities, the opportunity to use the L2 is limited. Teacher 4 (Excerpt 5) uses presentation, practice and production (PPP) didactics. Harmer (2007) states that antiquated PPP procedures are teacher-centered, and they break the language learning process into small pieces, rather than seeing language as a whole. It is important to use procedures where the students are the protagonist of their learning and they have the possibility to acquire knowledge that can apply in their lives and in future situations.

Excerpt 4

[In all of the areas, I try to teach vocabulary first so that they can better understand the topic that is going to be taught. I use notebooks so that they can write the concept or topic, its meaning, and at times, draw o complete the books with different activities. Then, I teach them the topic and verb tenses, or the topic I have to teach. We make sentences; they write them in Spanish and have to translate them to English.]

(Teacher 3, Semi-structured interview,)

Excerpt 5

[In terms of methodology, I like to motivate my students. I do different activities to motivate them, so I look at what their interests are, and I motivate them through music, art, technology. Then, I explain the topic and we do exercises so that the children can practice what they learned. Later, I look at what they learned and I advise them.]

(Teacher 4, Semi-structured interview)

To conclude this sub-category, there is a mixture of English language teachers' beliefs. On the one hand they are aware of the relevance of holistic didactics and the implementation of strategies that are part of the requirements of the new digital era. On the other hand, teachers replicate traditional didactics without considering that hybrid learning as methodology and didactic resource requires another type of adaptation

The second subcategory was called *Instrumentalizing technology and reflecting upon technology*. Due to the fact that although teachers possess a critical view of technology in certain cases they tend to replicate traditional didactics in technology.

In the digital era, the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) play an important role in the teaching of English as foreign language. However, it is not surprising that the integration of technology in the classroom is only in the instrumental way due to the lack of training. Blake (2013) claims that “The language profession must move beyond a simple computer functional competence (knowing how to use the tools) toward both a critical competence (realizing what the tools are good for) and then, finally, to a rhetorical competence (understanding how these tools will help transform the learning environment)” (p. 17). It is essential to create spaces in which teachers learn about the critical and rhetorical competence. In this sense, teachers can reshape their beliefs and transform their practices

responding to new educational needs.

For instance, teacher 1 (excerpt 6) uses technology in the classroom to support students' language learning. She mentioned that by using a digital platform students have the possibly to learn vocabulary, grammar, develop listening and play while they learn. Despite the fact that teacher has integrated technology in the classroom, she only presented the information in a different way, she stays in the instructional use of technology in this manner it is crucial to assist teachers to understand the real objective of technology integration.

Excerpt 6

[I think it is a very good platform because it makes them listen, it has games, they start with vocabulary and then games...I believe that they have a very good structure in terms of learning a new topic or specific unit]
(Teacher 1, Semi-structured interview)

On the other hand, teacher 6 (excerpt 7) believes that technology helps students to develop intercultural understanding. She puts those beliefs into practice using digital tools to generate a cultural exchange. In this sense she uses the technology not only in the functional way but also in the critical and rhetorical manner (Blake,2013) due to the fact that through those experiences she is transforming the learning environment. Richards and Lockhart (2007) states that teachers' beliefs guide teachers 'actions, in that way it is important to help teachers to transform their beliefs related to technology in order to create memorable experiences.

Excerpt 7

[I believe that the platforms are great and interactive, but I like something that brings them closer to reality. For example, this year with my students, we made a project in which they had to share important aspects of their culture with other people from other countries through a blog. Therefore, they published photographs, commented, provided their point of view, and discussed topics that concerned them. That was really great, and I didn't have to force the students, they did I because they liked it]
(Teacher 6, Session 2)

Additionally, teachers shared their desire to transform their teaching practices and incorporate technology in the classroom to support students' outcomes. For instance, teacher 2 (excerpt 8) contemplated that blended learning must go beyond institutional requirements. Moreover, teachers consider that teacher' training should be given as well as create spaces where teachers' voices can be heard. Blake (2013) states that "All language professionals need to become acquainted with the potential advantages of using technology in their programs. Without this knowledge, chairs, deans, and other decision-making bodies might fail to support new ways of teaching L2s with technology" (p. 4).

Excerpt 8

[The school needs to train its teachers on this type of use because its not just a matter of filling out a format on the platform to see if you did it. And if you didn't do it, it calls the teacher's attention. You have to ask the teacher if they feel 100% able to use the platform. I believe that things shouldn't be taken lightly because some say that they know what meaningful teaching is, but many times, the teacher doesn't know what meaningful teaching is or multiple intelligences or this new methodology which is being demanded of us.]

(Teacher 2, Semi-structured interview)

In short, teachers' beliefs play a crucial role in the effective incorporation of technology in the classroom. As a result of this, it is important to provide professional development programs that assist teachers to adopt new didactics and generate the understanding to cope with the new educational demands. Moreover, it is significant to create spaces where teachers have the opportunity to share their experiences and learn from others.

Category 2. A tendency to align constructivist views with technology use This category presents a gradual teachers' practices transformation from transmitting knowledge to forming social individuals who reflect and learn within a dynamic, educational environment (Tudor, 2001). Two characteristics that were

relevant in this category are treated as subcategories. The first is *teacher decentralization in the classroom*. For instance, in excerpt 9, it is evident that teacher's role has changed. Before the pedagogical intervention she focused on the contents and the results but not in the students' process. Then, she reflected upon her practices and students' roles started to change from passive to active.

Excerpt 9

[The session that we did made me think that my student's voices are the most important in order to achieve meaningful learning.]
(Teacher 3, Discussions)

Moreover, teacher 1 (excerpt 10) indicated that she has changed her role allowing her students to be protagonist of their learning, she negotiate the activities with them and she plans her classes based on her students' interests. When classes, activities, objectives are negotiated a circle of learning is created where students not only learn from their teachers but also from their peers. In this sense, students are the pillar in education due to the fact that they create and construct knowledge.

Excerpt 10

[I didn't used to negotiate with my students. I was the one who would impose the activities, and well, the truth is I rarely paid attention in what interested. I would tell to do certain activities, but I never noticed if they wanted to do them.]
(Teacher 4, Discussions)

The second subcategory is called *teachers' change through local and critical proposals*. The intervention was a space where teachers reflected upon their practices and they realized the importance to develop critical thinking as well as teachers reshaped their beliefs creating a transformation in the classroom. For instance, teacher 2 (excerpt 11) reflected upon their practices and she evidenced that she was doing repetitive practices without going beyond, now she plans their

classes bearing in mind how students are going to use the knowledge in their life. Additionally, teachers consider that it is important to create spaces where not only teachers but also students reflect and discuss about different issues and provide solutions in order to develop critical thinking and transform education.

Excerpt 11

[After analyzing a bit and seeing that it truthfully was not generating different results but were just repetitive practices and [...] I am planning my class and think what my students can do with what I am teaching them, and I begin to change my role from someone passive to someone more active.
(Teacher 2, Session 8)

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According to Aliakbari & Heidarzadi (2015), in order to achieve a meaningful learning, it is important to generate social interaction in the classroom, establish objectives, teachers should supervise the activities and offer constant feedback. In this sense, English language teachers have transformed teaching from establish objectives that pretend to improve the language skills to objectives that imply to put the knowledge acquired into practice through interaction and reflective-critical activities. By doing so, it is fundamental to establish objectives to achieve meaningful learning and no objectives that represent repetitive practices, where students just follow a traditional educational scheme. Teacher 3 (Excerpt 12) believed that the correct answers of their students when she was asking about certain topics was enough, but she was unconscious about the repetitive practices. Learning implies going beyond knowing patterns of answers or reiterative elements, but rather to use knowledge in a real spontaneous environment.

Excerpt 12

[I remember asking my students questions like, what is your name? Any they would respond, my name is Pepito. And I would feel very happy for that because they were responding correctly and after speaking here with all of you and sharing, I realize that there was only one transmission, I was not going further.

(Teacher 3, Session 7)

I realized that within the intervention teachers' role started to change in favor of a critical pedagogy and they are conscious that education should go beyond teaching content and transmitting knowledge. This idea is supported by teacher 4 (excerpt 13) whose voice pointed out that knowledge should be for the student's lives and not just to achieve certain classroom objectives, for instance pass a test.

Excerpt 13

[I believe that we should leave our students with knowledge forever, something that will help them all their life. Not just for the test. I do not think that the important thing should be to pass a test, or get a good score on the Tuesday test, or even on the ICFES. For me what is important is that the student is capable of applying what they learned in class in their own context.]

(Teacher 4, Interview 2)

Category 3 Teachers' voices in professional development. Two subcategories were developed from this category. The first is *Affective - comfortable setting in teacher professional development courses*. An enjoyable space was created where teachers not only acquired knowledge but also share their experiences with others and their voices were heard. In other words, the intervention combined knowledge, training and teachers' voices in an affective – comfortable setting. Teachers expressed that they felt comfortable in the sessions due to the fact that their interests and opinions were taken into account as well as they have the possibility to negotiate what to learn, the activities, the time, the objectives among others.

During the intervention, teachers reshaped their beliefs as well as their practices focused on students' needs and interests. They started to change their roles according to the experience that they had in the intervention. They unconsciously carried out strategies they learnt during the sessions that were based

on hybrid learning. For example, teacher 3 (excerpt 14) recognized that the way they learnt directly intervenes with their ways of teaching and designing EFL didactics. In this sense, it is important to create spaces and courses where teachers felt comfortable to learn and their interests are considered. If the updated courses are meaningful for teachers, they are going to replicate significant practices in the classroom.

Excerpt 14

[I would like to learn in a non-traditional way. Well, only books and photocopies, I understand they are important, but let it not stay that way. It should be more applicable to the context, which makes us reflect and think about issues and how to resolve them]

(Teacher 3, Interview 2)

Additionally, teachers considered that is relevant to create spaces where they have the possibility to reflect, for instance during the sessions they reflected upon the learning 'transformation using technology. At that point certain beliefs remain, others were reshaped or new beliefs emerged. One way or another, teachers' beliefs are essential in education. According to Pajares (1992) beliefs can benefit learning and the roles' transformation. Teachers recognized that technology use in the classroom increase students' motivation and autonomy. Teacher 1 (Excerpt 15) claimed that the implementation of hybrid learning provided a mediation between the teachers, student, and the technology without leaving aside social interaction. Moreover, teachers recognized that the appropriate implementation of technology, in addition to being a useful tool in the classroom, provides an environment where teachers modify their traditional role to an active role.

Excerpt 15

[I really liked learning about the mediation that can be done with technology and as a teacher. From blended learning, I like that one can generate 50% of

knowledge through the use of these tools, and well, without leaving interaction behind.]

(Teacher 1, Discussion, Session 7)

The second subcategory is called *Professional development in didactics more critical- reflexive less instrumental*. Teachers expressed that the sessions were an excellent opportunity to talk about their reality and learn through interaction more than learn concepts that will be forgotten. During the intervention teacher pass from being passive subject to be active teachers who focused on reflection and self-evaluation. Vezub (2007) mentions that innovations in the pedagogical field are close related to the quality of teacher training. In this sense, it is necessary to invest in quality' teacher professional development programs and courses. Teacher 1 (Excerpt 16) claimed that when the training is boring she does not pay attention but when they feel complacent and they have the possibility to interact with their peers, new didactics are generated and knowledge construction is meaningful.

Excerpt 16

[In the workshops, the people are really serious, like, at times we feel scared to participate, or we don't pay attention when workshops are done. Like the one you did, where we felt comfortable in talking, sharing, laughing, one can learn. I see that the same happens with my students.]

(Teacher 1, Discussion, Session 8.)

The current updating courses allowed the teachers to reflect upon another way of conceiving and creating their classes. They compare their experiences with their students and they evidenced that just like they, students internalize the information and construct knowledge through pleasant and enjoyable mechanisms, which motivated and encouraged them to learn. Teacher 4 (Excerpt 17) considered motivation as something fundamental as well as teachers' interests otherwise if those aspects are not taking into account they associate training as knowledge transmission. In this manner, creating a course based on reflection as opposed to

systematic and traditional learning seems to achieve more significant changes in teaching.

Excerpt 17

[I would like that the workshops be more motivating and that they catch our attention because at times, they are boring and based on concepts. And they don't take into account what we, as teachers, want and like. It's like it doesn't motivate us, and they end up turning into everything we criticize about transmitting knowledge.

(Teacher 4, Discussion, Session 8)

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Conclusions

The creation of a space where teachers had the possibility to discuss about their teaching experiences and learn about new didactics through interaction is a meaningful strategy to improve teaching English as a foreign language. Within the intervention teachers recognized the necessity to transform their beliefs and modify their practices in order to face the challenges of the new digital era. Moreover, they expressed that they should not focus as much on traditional methods due to the fact that students have new necessities and they need to develop not only language skills but also social skills that allow them to put into practice the knowledge. Unfortunately, this is contradictory by reason of lack of training and updating courses. Teachers are using some strategies that they learnt during the sessions but they still have fortified beliefs that need to be transformed with useful and constant training.

Additionally, on account of teachers' beliefs related to the integration of technology, at the beginning some teachers were reluctant to use technology in the classroom they only used technological tools because it was a school demand, but at the end, those teachers were the most interested to use technology in the classroom due to the fact that during the sessions they had the opportunity to learn

in a comfortable way. During the sessions they did not learn everything about technology but the most important thing is that they have the desire to learn more and implemented those strategies in the classroom not because they have to obey their principals' orders but because they realized that English language classroom can be transformed through the use of technological tools.

An additional point to consider is the fact that, educational beliefs have been transformed through the intervention process, teacher have started to change their roles and their ways of teaching including activities in the classroom that allow the students to think critically. Also participants started to negotiate with their students and they started to plan the classes bearing in mind students' interests and needs as well as creating activities that allow the students to learn for life. In this manner not only teachers but also students started to pass from a passive role to an active one.

Finally, it is important to take into account teachers' motivation and interests as well as a comfortable environment when an updating course is offered due to the fact that as was seen in this study teachers' beliefs are close related to the way they learnt and most of the teachers replicate the things that seems to be useful. In this sense, if meaningful training is offered they are going to create significant activities in the classroom. I hope this inspires a change in the future in the way teachers' training is designed and implemented.

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