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Teachers' Perceptions Regarding the Implementation of the National English Program (PRONI) in EFL Classes in Mexico

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Abstract

This paper examines the thoughts and beliefs of three English language teachers regarding the National English Program's implementation in their individual teaching settings. The study was achieved in public schools in the Mexican state of Guanajuato's region of Irapuato. A qualitative approach was utilized, and questionnaires served as the primary data collection tool. Results thus far indicate that all teachers generally have poor perceptions about the implementation of the National English Program. In order to improve the English language program, it was concluded that the government and school authorities need to act forthwith.

Keywords: National English Program (PRONI), EFL classes, teachers' perceptions.

1. Introduction

This study's objective was set to investigate the actualities of EFL instruction in Guanajuato state's public schools and to provide information on the National English Program in Mexico's current state. This research asks teachers their opinions about the National English program (Programa Nacional de inglés), designed by The Secretariat of Public Education in Mexico (Secretaría de Educación Pública en México, SEP in Spanish). This with the intent of acquiring the most accurate information possible about what the realities of English classes are nowadays.

Members of Mexico's public education system should learn more about EFL teaching programs thanks to the results of this study. Additionally, it is anticipated that this study could help strengthen its programs, with the intention of putting members in a position to create and put forth a policy in a setting that meets the requirements of all students and teachers. Therefore, the research question that led to the current study was What are the perceptions of 3 English teachers regarding the implementation of the National English Program (PRONI)?

It was decided to use a qualitative approach and emphasize on a case study to generate an in-depth understanding of the participants opinions. A questionnaire was designed as the primary data collection tool in order to address this research issue. The study will be linked appropriately with pertinent literature. Relevant details on the context and participants are provided. Additionally, key findings, results, and conclusions will be given.

2. Literature review

2.1 *History of English classes in Mexico*

During its relatively short history, the teaching of English classes in Mexico has had successes, undergone various changes, and experienced setbacks and several problems. English has been present in the curricula of Mexican schools since 1960 (British Council, 2015), and has not received adequate attention to obtain better academic results.

This quick examination starts with the 1982 English teaching curriculum, since there was not a clearly defined program with its own goals, strategy, and technique prior to the introduction of this curriculum. Written language was regarded as superior to spoken language since its main goal was to ensure that students had formal understanding of the language. It also stipulated that students should be able to read literature in the language being studied (the target language). Students should acquire and memorize grammar rules and vocabulary in the target language in order to translate literary texts in order to accomplish this goal.

Consequently, The National Agreement for Basic Education Modernization, or NABEM or ANMEB by its Spanish acronym, saw the emergence of one of the first English study programs in 1993. This program was based on the communicative approach (communicative language teaching), and its main goal was to develop communicative competence, which is defined as the capacity to know “what, who, and how to say it in an appropriate manner, in any given situation” (SEP, 2007).

Then, in 2006, a brand-new English-teaching program appeared; this comprehensive shift was known as “Reforma Integral a la Educación Secundaria” (RIES). This program’s methodology was founded on the communicative task-based approach, which is carried out through projects (or “Project-Work”). These projects were created from a challenging situation so that the students could solve it under the guidance of the teacher while taking into account the unique traits of each group. The main goal of these projects was for the students to engage in language social practices and improve their ability to communicate anywhere.

Furthermore, in Mexico the national English program was initially introduced in 2009. The new initiative replaced numerous state initiatives and sought to develop a unified curriculum that provided English teaching to all children in public schools nationwide.

2.2 *EFL classes in Mexico in the present*

The Mexican educational system has always been divided into public or private schools, and in terms of prestige, the middle and upper echelons of Mexican society have always valued English highly, and those with significant financial resources can send their kids to private schools.

Regarding public education, the Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP) created the “English in Primary School Program” with the clear awareness that knowing English helps the Mexican economy compete in a worldwide market. However, for many years the official teaching of English in public institutions in Mexico was limited to middle and high school levels (Ramírez-Romero & Sayer, 2016). This lack of attention can also be noticed by examining how proficient Mexican citizens are in English. According to Education First’s (2018) English Proficiency Index, Mexico currently ranks #57 out of 88 countries in English proficiency levels (Millán Librado & Basurto Santos, 2020). Although marginally superior to what it was in the previous century, the quality of the Mexican educational system today is far from ideal. The average educational level of the Mexican population is 9.1, which equates to the final year of secondary school, according to the Mexican Ministry of Education (SEP). Children between the ages of 3 and 14 had a net

enrolment rate of 94.8%, a completion rate of 98.2%, a coverage rate of 96.6%, and an illiteracy rate of 5.7% in 2014–2015 (SEP, 2015).

Reyes Cruz, Murrieta Loyo, and Hernández Méndez (2012) claim that the issue is that there is not a defined plan of action. Even though they are in line with global trends, it is difficult to make them completely functional in a dynamic environment like Mexico.

2.3 National English Program (PRONI)

The Programa Nacional de inglés (PRONI) is a federal program belonging to the Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP) and coordinated in the state by the Coordination of Educational Strengthening Programs, whose main objective is to help ensure the quality of learning in basic education through the strengthening of the teaching and learning processes of a foreign language (English) in the public schools (SEPEN, 2017). PRONI's curricular design is aligned with national and international standards: the National Language Level Certification (CENNI) and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). In this sense, the Program continues to promote English proficiency in students from basic education (preschool, primary and secondary). The PRONI aims to help public education schools strengthen their technical and pedagogical capacities for teaching and learning the English language, so that the population of Mexico has access to an excellent, pertinent and relevant education. The program took effect on 1 January 2016 and according to the agreement, it would be implemented in 33,093 public primary schools, and the expansion phase would continue from the third grade of preschool to the sixth grade.

The objectives of PRONI are as follows:

- (a) To support public elementary school's students' and teachers' development of competencies, through the production and distribution of educational materials for teaching and learning English.
- (b) To strengthen the academic knowledge as well as the teaching skills, and the international academic certification of teachers.
- (c) To promote international certification of students in English language proficiency, on the basis of equality between students.
- (d) To support the states in the implementation of second language (English) courses in public elementary schools from preschool to sixth grade.

The new program's goals closely resemble those outlined in the Program for Strengthening Quality in Basic Education (PFCEB). Because of this, it appears that the new program is a hybrid created by fusing the Programa Nacional de inglés en Educación Básica (PNIEB) and PFCEB, without explicitly stating the connection to either of them or the motivation behind the development of a new program.

Following the implementation of the national programs, greater coverage was achieved in terms of the percentage of students served in almost every state. However, this growth has been uneven across states. A study by Ramrez-Romero (2015) indicated that while some states had had significant increase, others had only experienced very modest or no growth at all, illustrating the unevenness of this expansion throughout the nation.

2.4 English teacher profiles

One of the main challenges of the widespread implementation of the English programs in Mexico has been the teachers: their qualifications, types, and working conditions. The Ministry of Education calculated that expanding the program to every school and classroom in the primary

grades across the nation would require hiring more than 99,000 teachers, taking into account that the majority of primary school teachers do not speak English and that there is a persistent shortage of qualified English teachers in the majority of states (Ramírez-Romero & Sayer, 2016). Consequently, the ministry established guidelines for the qualifications of new teachers, requiring that state coordinators fulfill the minimum profile and give preference to candidates with the ideal profile. A B2 or higher English proficiency is required for the ideal profile.

Given the shortage of qualified English teachers and the features of the sociocultural curriculum, state administrators have recognized that one of the solutions is to implement teacher training programs. There are three main areas on which they have concentrated, as with any L2 English program: (1) English proficiency, particularly in oral language skills; (2) language teaching methodology, particularly with the new sociocultural approach; and (3) general pedagogical skills, particularly for classroom management, working with children with special needs, and other concerns of public schools.

3. Methodology

3.1 *Research questions*

The focus of this research is to examine the perceptions and realities of the teaching and learning of EFL in public schools in the state of Guanajuato. The objective is to shed a light on what is the current state of the National English Program in Mexico by asking EFL teachers their perceptions. Therefore, the research question is:

- ◆ What are the perceptions of 3 English teachers regarding the National English Program?

3.2 *Qualitative approach*

Creswell (2003) defines qualitative research as a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures. Data typically collected in the participant’s setting, in order to have access to unmodified information. Hancock et al. (2001) mentions that qualitative research is a disciplined, systematic approach to finding things out, using the method most appropriate to the question being asked.

My research design is aimed to be qualitative research. This because it was deemed the most appropriate because it provides the adequate methods that enable me to discover and understand teachers’ perceptions. Qualitative research tends to focus on how people or groups of people can have different ways of looking at reality, in this case, focusing on what their perceptions are towards the National English program.

3.3 *Case study*

A case study is a detailed study of a specific subject, such as a person, group, place, event, organization, or phenomenon. These studies are commonly used in social, educational, clinical, and business research. Case studies attempt to answer specific questions about occurrences and their explanations (Tuckman, 1999: 401). The case study approach is particularly useful to employ when there is a need to obtain an in-depth appreciation of an issue, event or phenomenon of interest, in its natural real-life context (Crowe et al., 2011). A case study research design usually involves qualitative methods, but quantitative methods are sometimes also used.

In order to obtain qualitative data, I decided to use a case study research design. This because by using this research design, it will provide a depth and concise selection of information from a select group's viewpoint. In this case, a group of EFL teachers from the state of Guanajuato. According to Yin (2009), case studies can be used to explain, describe or explore events or phenomena in the everyday contexts in which they occur. By using a qualitative approach, the data is collected in the participants context.

By using a case study research design, it will allow the project to be focused and manageable since I do not have the time or resources to do large-scale research. However, I have taken into account that case studies have a dependence on a single case, and it is incapable of providing a generalizing conclusion on the topic.

3.4 Contexts and participants

Three active English teachers from Irapuato, Guanajuato, were questioned for this research. All these EFL teachers are currently employed in secondary public schools and are working with the National English program. They have between 7 and 25 years of EFL teaching experience and have taught classes at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. They are familiar with the National English program, have sufficient experience with it, and have a clear idea of how it works. Their ages differ from 26, 31, and 42. Pseudonyms were assigned to participants in order to conceal their identities. The contestants are Jennifer, Yael, and Marianne.

3.5 Inquiry tools

A method of inquiry is an organized and systematic approach used by researchers and scholars for controlled investigations and experiments to efficiently obtain information, solve theoretical problems, and generate discoveries (Coccia, 2018). Methods of inquiry generally aim to obtain further knowledge so that researchers can have more information about their field and explain its nature and context.

However, there are many forms of gathering data, such as, interviews, questionnaires, observations, focus groups, surveys, and recordings. For this research, the main source for inquiry was semi-structured interview. A combination of a questionnaire and interview was applied to the teachers.

4. Results and discussion (Data analysis)

Three main themes surfaced after a preliminary review of the participants' responses. The teacher's had negative opinions towards implementing the National English program. Teachers have to adapt activities constantly. Teachers' opinions are not taken into consideration in the design of the program.

As mentioned in the literature review, the PRONI aims to help public education schools strengthen their technical and pedagogical capacities for teaching and learning the English language. However, Marianne mentioned that some primary schools she has applied for did not have an English curriculum. She mentions "most of the public schools I know does not or is very difficult to have English classes".

Teachers mention that just by having a program does not equal success. Marlene mentions "I've always said that, having a program makes your teaching a little guided but sometimes limited (because you need to complete every topic and exercise on the books)". Jennifer

adds by saying “English level (in the program) for secondary is very advanced for students”. Which led to the theme of having to adapt activities on a constant level.

When asked to point out any benefits and challenges about using the National English Program teachers mentioned to dislike it or felt indifferent about it. Marlene reiterated by saying “I think is the major benefit! Well, since there is one program instead of not having anything”. She emphasized on having the program as a guide, even if it is not well structured. She also mentioned “I used the program in kindergarten so, kids loved the classes. But I had to implement different activities in order students can do them”.

Jennifer said to really dislike the program because “I have to adapt activities and topics all the time, to the level of the students”. She mentioned that her attitude towards implementing the program brought her “concern and stress”. Which led to disliking the program.

Yael added by saying “the writing activities are good.” However, when asked her opinion she mentioned “(the program) is very ambitious and difficult”.

Overall, with their opinions taken into consideration, the program needs an in-depth analysis, to have a functional solution. With the help of the teachers, the program could include activities that are to the real level of the students and eliminate what is not useful. Since EFL teachers are the ones implementing this program, having their insight and opinions will have a positive impact.

Participants, when asked if there was a teacher training program offered by the government, to know how to implement the National English Program, mentioned there was one. Marlene mentioned the following “There is a training program. No matter what, whatever you use to learn something you don’t know, it’s useful”. With her response, it is perceived that it is better to have something to guide you as a teacher, than having nothing at all.

Jennifer compliments by mentioning “There is (a teacher training program). But the government should have one that has the reality of the level of students”. She mentions that the teacher training program could also, in addition to the PRONI, need an update.

Every issue that the participants identified above is a result of the government’s lack of support towards the English curriculum. Whatever the situation, though, a solution is required. Despite the fact that it is outside the purview of this paper. To evaluate the strategies that could be used to alter students’ views, more research is required.

5. Conclusions

The main goal of this small-scale study was to inform, describe, and increase knowledge about teachers’ impressions of many parts of the National English programs’ implementation. The teachers’ voices highlighted a number of influencing elements, such as: the programs, their teaching environments, teachers’ attitudes, benefits and challenges of using the National English Program, opinions, and training programs. The majority of teachers’ perceptions were negative. Teachers complained that the curricula they are required to follow did not seem to correspond to the actual language proficiency of their students. In addition, their responses revealed that there was no adequate teacher training program. This paper also included the perceptions teachers have on the benefits and challenges of implementing the program, which were mostly filled with challenges. It is concluded that the schools and state governments must take immediate action, according to the information at hand. If these problems are not fixed, they will only get worse, disrupting the system and preventing healthy system development while having a negative impact on English language teaching and learning.

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Appendix 1. Participant Questionnaire

Part 1	Part 2
Age?	From your point of view, as a teacher, what are the differences between public and private schools?
School and city you are currently teaching English?	Have you taught or are currently teaching English in a public or private school?
How many schools do you teach English?	From your experience, are there differences between public and private schools in terms of teaching English classes? If so, what are they?
Current grade of school you are teaching English?	What is your opinion about English classes in Mexico?
What previous grades have you taught English?	Do you use the National English program? Or what program do you use to teach English?
Years of experience teaching English?	What is your opinion about the using either of these programs?
Have you taken the TOEFL?	Is there any formal teacher training program to use the National English Program provided by the government? a) If there are, are they useful? b) If there isn't, should the government implement a program?
What would you say is your English proficiency level from these 6 levels? 1 – No Proficiency. At this lowest level, there is basically no knowledge of the language. 2 – Elementary Proficiency. 3 – Limited Working Proficiency. 4 – Professional Working Proficiency. 5 – Full Professional Proficiency. 6 – Native / Bilingual Proficiency.	Are teachers' opinions taken into consideration in the design of the National English program?
	What is the school's attitude about using this program?
	Are there any benefits with using the National English program? If so, what are they?
	Are there any challenges with using the National English program? If so, what are they?
	Overall, do you like or dislike the National English Program?
	Based on your experience, are there aspects that could be improved or implemented about the program? If so, what are they?
	In general, how do you perceive student's attitudes towards your English classes, regarding using this program?
	What do you perceive about other teachers attitudes towards implementing the National English Program?
	When using this program, do you adapt any activities or lessons? If so, how often?





Mexican High School Students' Perceptions Regarding Inductive and Deductive Grammar Teaching

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to discover the perceptions that Mexican high school students hold toward deductive and inductive grammar teaching. This study followed the qualitative method to make sense of the data provided by the participants. The study took place in a private catholic high school in Guanajuato, Mexico. Three female Mexican students who were on average 17 years old were the participants in this investigation. This research was a case study that examined participants' perceptions very closely. The data in the study were gathered through two questionnaires, and one interview. To analyze the data, the researcher implemented thematic analysis which permitted the identification of salient themes. Overall, the results seem to suggest that students perceive the implementation of the inductive approach as an interactive teaching strategy that generates an appealing learning environment. On the negative side, the participants considered that the use of the inductive approach took too much class time, and they saw this as a disadvantage. Moreover, the results indicate that students are used to the deductive approach, and they consider it to be easier to be applied and followed in the language classroom.

Keywords: perceptions, grammar teaching, deductive grammar, inductive grammar.

1. Introduction

In a large number of Mexican high school classrooms, the teaching of grammar rules either in a deductive or an inductive way seems to be a regular practice (Sayer, 2015). English instructors in high schools use these two approaches to teach grammar to different extents in their lessons. The teaching of grammar rules in English classes using these two approaches may yield different results (Benitez-Correa et al., 2019). The inductive and the deductive grammar teaching approaches may also have a different influence on the students, so they may hold distinctive perceptions in regard to these two approaches. Grammar teaching has been widely used in classrooms all over the world, but according to Pazaver and Wang (2009) "there exists a gap in the literature as regards students' perceptions on this important topic" (p. 27). Therefore, the present study was carried out with the intention to discover Mexican learners' perceptions regarding the implementation of the inductive and deductive grammar teaching approaches in a Mexican high school classroom.

This research work was conducted in central Mexico, a region in which high school English programs still contemplate grammar teaching as a predominant aspect of language Teaching. Teaching grammar in English courses is still a prevalent practice despite the fact that

since 1994 the Mexican educational authorities have selected English programs based on the communicative language teaching approach (CLT) which poses minimal emphasis on the explicit teaching of grammatical rules (Sayer, 2015). Even though presenting grammatical rules in a language classroom is considered an old and controversial way of teaching (Ellis, 2006), Alzu’bi (2015) indicates that “The teaching of grammar plays a central role in every English foreign language (EFL) teacher’s classroom and has been the focus of language teachers and learners for many years” (p. 187). It appears to be that grammar is considered a central element in English teaching, so that may explain why grammar teaching is strongly grounded in some Mexican high school EFL classrooms.

2. Literature review

In this section, the author will include some relevant concepts related to the teaching of grammar deductively and inductively in the Mexican high school EFL classroom.

2.1 Grammar

Grammar is a language component that may be challenging to define since it comprises several language elements in itself. Nevertheless, Close (1982, as cited in Dickins & Woods, 1988) establishes that “English grammar is chiefly a system of syntax that decides the order and patterns in which words are arranged in sentences” (p. 627). However, due to further research and changes in the scholars’ perceptions related to what grammar is, nowadays, the definition provided by Close (1982) may need to be expanded and modified. Dickins and Woods (1988) propose that language experts consider that grammar cannot be exclusively related to syntax. There are other linguistic forces that shape grammar. For example, pragmatic and semantic elements of a language.

2.2 Grammar teaching

Defining grammar and grammar teaching has proven to be a difficult task; fortunately, Ellis (2006) provides a comprehensive definition of grammar teaching and proposes that:

Grammar teaching involves any instructional technique that draws learners’ attention to some specific grammatical form in such a way that it helps them either to understand it metalinguistically and/or process it in comprehension and/or production so that they can internalize it. (p. 84)

Silvia (2004) also offers a definition of grammar teaching that could serve to better comprehend this concept. In a direct way, Silvia (2004) mentions that “Teaching grammar is basically teaching the language rules, also known as the sentence patterns, which are essential to define meaning and use” (p. 127). Furthermore, Silvia (2004) mentions that “In traditional setting, grammar teaching is seen as the presentation and practice of discrete grammatical structures” (127).

In the same stream, Silvia (2004) provides reasons to support that grammar teaching is beneficial for EFL learners and states that “Grammar teaching holds a crucial role in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, as without good command of grammar, the language use will be constrained” (p. 127). However, Alzu’bi (2015) also recognizes that there are views in favor and against grammar teaching, and this author remarks that “Some people perceive it [*grammar teaching*] as essential to teaching any foreign language whereas others view it as an impediment to second language acquisition (SLA)” (p. 187, *emphasis added*).

2.3 Deductive-grammar teaching

The presentation of grammatical rules could happen in several ways, yet in this research the author only focused on the deductive and inductive grammar teaching approaches. It is necessary to define each approach in order to have a clear view of what each of them entails. The deductive-grammar teaching approach is popular in language classrooms, and it requires that the teacher presents a set of rules openly to the students, so they can apply the rules to complete exercises. Benitez-Correa et al. (2019) offers a definition of deductive grammar teaching and states that “Teaching grammar from rules involves the deductive or rule-driven approach, which starts with the introduction of a rule followed by examples in which the rule is applied” (Benitez-Correa et al., 2019: 227).

2.4 Inductive-grammar teaching

Opposite from the deductive approach, in the inductive approach the instructor presents examples of the target language first, so the students can notice and make generalizations of the rules contained in the language examples. Benitez-Correa et al. (2019) determines that “Teaching grammar from examples is related to the inductive or rule-discovery approach that starts with some examples from which a rule is inferred” (p. 227). In the inductive approach, the learners are guided by the instructor to notice patterns and infer the rules that are usually embedded in sentences or complete texts. The concept of noticing is relevant in this grammar teaching approach as it derives from the noticing hypothesis which claims that “second language learners must consciously notice the grammatical form of their input in order to acquire grammar” (Truscott, 1998: 103).

3. Methodology

In this section, the researcher will describe the methodology followed in this study, so the audience can better understand how the data were gathered, categorized, and interpreted.

3.1 Research question

What are common high school learners’ perceptions toward the deductive and inductive teaching of grammar rules in a Mexican high school classroom?

3.2 Participants

The students, who participated in this study, volunteered to do so. The participants were three high school students whose average age was 17 years old. They were enrolled in a private high school in central Mexico, and they had had English classes in that institution for one and a half years. Their proficiency level was A2. Previous to the beginning of the study, the researcher explained the main objectives of it to the participants, and they were informed that their participation was voluntary. Since the participants were minors, the participants’ parents were asked to sign a letter of consent that gave permission to the researcher to use the data provided by the participants. In the letter of consent, the researcher informed the parents that the participants’ privacy would be of utmost importance and that the information collected would be used only with academic purposes.

3.3 Procedure

In this study, the participants were presented a grammar topic (gerunds and infinitives after verbs) where the teacher used the inductive approach of grammar teaching in one lesson, and one week later they were presented another topic (Gerunds as subjects and as objects) using the deductive approach. After each lesson, the participants were given a questionnaire that they could answer at home. Once the questionnaires were answered, the researcher collected them. Then, the participants were asked to answer a three-question interview. It needs to be stated that all the data collection instruments were answered in Spanish by the participants, so the quotes used in this study were translated into English.

3.4 Qualitative approach

The primary goal of this research work was to discover high school students’ perceptions toward the inductive and deductive grammar teaching approaches. For that reason, the study followed a qualitative approach since “The main purpose of conducting qualitative research is to examine in detail the opinions and experiences of the participants in order to understand of and/or interpret the phenomena according to the meaning that participants attach to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017, cited in Huertas-Abril et al., 2021: 4). Friedman (2012) indicates that “Qualitative research is a distinct approach to scholarly inquiry that may also entail a different set of beliefs regarding the nature of reality (ontology) and ways of knowing (epistemology)” (p. 181). Furthermore, Dörnyei (2007) establishes that “Qualitative research involves data collection procedures that result primarily in open-ended, non-numerical data which is then analyzed primarily by non-statistical methods” (p. 24).

Definitions and characteristics of qualitative research are addressed by several scholars; however, Denzin and Lincoln (2000, cited in Snape & Spencer, 2003) describe other relevant features that make qualitative research useful for the study at hand. For instance, these authors state that “Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world [...] Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (pp. 2-3).

3.5 Case study

This investigation was carried out following the case study research methodology since the focus of the research was placed on a specific group of individuals carrying out an activity in a specific context. In regard to this research methodology, Duff (2012) declares that:

Its focus is a small number of research participants [...] The individual’s behaviors, performance, knowledge, and/or perspectives are then studied very closely and intensively, often over an extended period of time, to address timely questions regarding [...] current topics in applied linguistics. (p. 95)

Despite being a case study, this research work is cross-sectional in nature. The researcher spent only one month gathering data from the participants. In contrast, in terms of studying the participants closely, the researcher utilized two instruments to collect data in order to obtain a deeper understanding of the participants’ perceptions toward deductive and inductive grammar teaching.

4. Inquiry tools

The instruments utilized to gather data from the participants will be illustrated in this section.

4.1 Questionnaire and interview

In order to elicit data from the participants, which “involves the use of an instrument to generate data” (Friedman, 2012: 187-188), the researcher applied one open-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire inquiry tool was chosen by the researcher because it had the potential to promote that the participants shared details about their perceptions regarding the use of deductive and inductive grammar-teaching approaches in the classroom. Friedman (2012) mentions that “The advantages of questionnaires are that they are easier to administer, allow participants more time to formulate responses, and do not need to be transcribed” (p. 190).

From the responses given by the participants in the questionnaire, the researcher developed and delivered a structured interview with the intention to explore more in depth the noteworthy comments found in the first data collection tool (Open-ended questionnaire). Friedman (2012) mentions that “The most common data elicitation method is interviews, which may be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured” (p. 188). More specifically, in this research work, the author decided to make use of a structured interview since in “structured interviews, the same set of questions is asked of all participants in order to permit cross-case comparisons” (p. 188).

5. Data analysis

In this study, the data collected from the participants were analyzed using thematic analysis with the intention to find salient themes regarding students’ perceptions toward deductive and inductive grammar teaching (Alhojailan, 2012). Four categories emerged from the data: (1) Positive perceptions of the inductive approach; (2) Drawbacks of the inductive approach; (3) Positive perceptions of the deductive approach; (4) Drawbacks of the deductive approach. To code the data, the participants were assigned a number from one to three. Q1 and Q2 referred to questionnaire 1 and questionnaire 2 respectively, and the abbreviation I stood for interview. Finally, the views of the participants were interpreted by the researcher.

6. Main findings and discussion

As stated in the data analysis section, four main categories emerged from the data collected, so the findings will be divided in the same number of sections.

6.1 Positive perceptions of the inductive approach

In questionnaire number 1, some participants remarked that with the inductive approach of grammar teaching they felt more involved in the actions happening in the classroom since the lesson became more welcoming and interactive. While using the inductive grammar teaching approach, there was a constant conversation between the teacher and the students, so the students seemed to appreciate that they were active participants in the discovery of some grammar rules. The following excerpts exemplify that:

I found the inductive way of teaching grammar very good because the teacher did not explain the rules as such and made the class more participative by letting us dig into our knowledge to discover the rules. (P3Q1)

With the inductive approach, the class was more active and everyone participated. (P1Q1)

The information stated in the extracts above suggests that the participants valued the fact that with the inductive approach the language classroom became an interactive forum where

they could express their ideas. Furthermore, it appears to be the case that the inductive approach promoted the growth of rapport in the classroom which as Benitez-Correa et al. (2019) recognize is one benefit of the inductive approach. Benitez-Correa et al. (2019) also indicate that rapport in the language classroom grows because of students' participation and interaction with the teacher.

Another positive perception of the inductive approach expressed by one participant was that it has the potential to promote that grammar rules can be better understood. This particular finding aligns directly with the results of a study conducted by Haight et al. (2007) in which it was uncovered that the guided inductive grammar teaching approach produced substantially positive effects on the long-term learning of grammatical structures. The next excerpts clearly represent this conception:

With the inductive approach, I felt really good because this approach led us to think, to reason, to identify, and to realize the grammar rules that the examples followed. (P1Q1)

The inductive approach helped to me to comprehend the topic much better because the teacher made us reason. I had to think to find the rules. (P1Q1)

The data above allows to observe that the inductive approach appears to positively influence the students' comprehension and retention of the grammatical information presented in class. This boost in comprehension and retention may have been caused by the intense mental effort that the students had to devote to decipher the grammar rules comprised in the examples given by the professor (Warren, 2013). In the same stream, by consciously noticing the grammatical rules in the input (Truscott, 1998), chances are that learners could have mentally internalized the information presented in a more successful way.

6.2 Drawbacks of the inductive approach

The inductive approach to teach grammar rules offered several advantages according to the data provided by the participants; however, the three students involved in this research pointed out that the class time required to discover the grammar rules using the inductive approach was excessive. The learners saw this aspect as a major flaw of the inductive approach, and for this reason, they considered that it was not completely appropriate to be used in 50-minute high school classes. The next excerpts reveal the participants perceptions in regard to the time consumed when the inductive approach was used:

With the inductive form, we take longer in the explanation and the whole class goes there and there is almost no time to do exercises and reinforce what has been learned. (P1I)

With the inductive form, it took us more time to discover the rules, the class ended, and I did not have time to complete the exercises. (P2I)

With the inductive approach, I feel that the class becomes long and even tedious. I feel like we don't make progress because we don't all understand the rules. The truth is that I consider that we wasted a lot of class time. (P3I).

The three participants agree that discovering the grammar rules from contextual examples of the language is time consuming. Consequently, this shortens the time to complete exercises, so they can put the grammar being presented into practice. In general, the participants appear to see a need to find a balance between the time allotted to carry out the guided-grammar-rule discovery and completing exercises to provide further practice.

6.3 Positive perceptions of the deductive approach

The data showed that there was a general consensus among the participants in regard to the fact that they find the deductive approach to be simple and clear, as suggested in the following extracts:

I felt really good with the topic. The rules were given, so it was simple and very comprehensible. (P1Q2)

I felt that with the deductive approach, it was a bit easier to complete exercises. (P2Q2)

I felt great because the teacher gave us the grammatical rules, so I did not have any complications while completing the exercises. (P3Q2)

The responses above denote that the three Mexican learners are accustomed to the deductive approach. Quite frankly this is not a surprise. In Mexico as in other parts of the world, Presentation Practice Production (PPP) “constitutes the dominant approach promoted in teacher guides” (Scrivener, 2005; Ur, 1996, cited in Ellis, 2015: 266). In the Mexican context, PPP with its deductive nature, is widely used not only in English classes but also in other subjects such as, math, chemistry, or physics. The constant application of this teaching methodology in Mexican classrooms has probably led the participants to perceive it as simple and easy to be followed.

6.4 Drawbacks of the deductive approach

Despite the fact that the deductive approach is widely applied in the Mexican education system, the information provided by the participants illustrated that students perceived one major flaw on this teaching approach. The shortcoming of the deductive approach was the unpleasant learning environment that it could create. The next excerpt serves to exemplify this:

This way of explaining a grammar topic (deductive approach) is more efficient, we (the students) have time to learn rules and complete exercises, but, on the other hand, the lessons where the deductive approach is used tend to become slow and heavy because we do not interact much, and we really do not have to think. (P3Q2)

From the extract previously presented, one could infer that learners believe that the deductive approach may be detrimental to the development of meaningful interactions in the classroom. The learners appear to acknowledge that the lack of positive teacher-student and student-student interaction negatively affects the learning atmosphere (Saricoban, 1998, as cited in Saricoban, 2005). Additionally, learners seem to distinguish that by using the deductive approach, the teacher monopolizes the talking time, so they may not feel engaged in the classroom activities; thus, developing the perception that the lessons are slow and boring. It appears to be that the teaching technique selected by the teacher greatly influences the students' learning experience.

7. Conclusion

The purpose of this research work was accomplished on the grounds that it permitted the discovery of some perceptions that Mexican high school students hold regarding the inductive and deductive grammar teaching approaches. The participants in this study noticed that the inductive approach generated positive effects on classroom interactions and the classroom atmosphere. The participants valued that with the guided inductive approach, they were active participants in the lesson. However, despite the nice learning environment that the inductive approach promoted, the participants perceived that this approach can take too much class time. The participants saw this as a disadvantage because they did not have enough room to do extra

exercises to practice the grammar rules being presented. The participants' perceptions in regard to the deductive approach showed that they find this way of teaching grammar easy and clear because they are used to it. This way of teaching is employed not only in English classes but also in other subjects; therefore, students are familiar with the deductive approach. Finally, the participants noted that with the deductive approach, a language class may become tedious since the teacher is the only one talking and meaningful interactions are limited.

The author of this study hopes that the students' perceptions regarding the inductive and deductive grammar teaching approaches found in this research work serve English teachers to make informed decisions on the way they present grammatical information in their classes.

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The Influence of Media in Autonomous English Learners

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to know the impact that the media have had on the learning of English, taking into account factors such as linguistic globalization and the influence that the media have had on the spreading of the language. It is important to highlight that the media have been very present in the daily life of recent generations of individuals and although they can be perceived as a means to perform recreational activities, they have also functioned as a tool to learn or develop skills, including among them the learning of English. Nevertheless, several questions arise regarding the outcomes of an autonomous English learning process. This study intends to explore to what extent social media is a useful tool for people to learn a language autonomously through the experiences of several individuals that happen to learn English using media as an instrument.

Keywords: English language, media, influence, autonomous English learners.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, there are an infinite number of possibilities for learning and entertainment, many times the media serve as a tool to stimulate learning, while interacting with elements of personal interest that are not necessarily related to the person's environment. As Ezeh (2021) mentioned, active learning means that the mind is actively engaged. Visual and audio-visual resources could be very useful and easy to access for autonomous learners.

“Autonomous learners take advantage of the linguistic affordances in their environment and act by engaging themselves in second language social practices” (Shakouri, 2012: 839). This study explores how a group of autonomous learners has developed their language skills by using tools such as T.V. shows or series, music, platforms to watch videos, video games and Facebook and Instagram for self-directed English learning.

Autonomous learners have the advantage of choosing what content to interact with as well as how they will manage their time to learn the language which could result in them looking for resources that add to their learning style as well as the most convenient time for them to practice their language skills. This study aims to answer the following questions: To what extent does media exposure benefit autonomous learners of a foreign language learning? What are some of the challenges that autonomous learners face? Is it possible to achieve proficiency in a language through self-directed learning using media and social media as resources?

2. Literature review

2.1 *The role of motivation in autonomous language learning*

Human beings have the inherent capacity to develop many things autonomously, and it is even easier for them to do so if there are stimuli related to the skill to be developed in their daily lives. In order for an individual to develop a skill there must first be an interest in it. An individual must have an intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is understood as the desire that an individual has to perform an activity due his/her personal interests and not motivated by a type of retribution. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation refers to the performance of an activity that is motivated by a person's interest in what he or she will obtain as a result of doing it.

Llamen-Nucamendi (2014) defines autonomy as the self-regulation of will, that is, the control individuals exercise over a set of propensities which gives general shape to the individual self. Therefore, motivation plays an important role in autonomy when learning an L2.

To determine the parameters for self-regulation an individual must have settled a goal to learn the target language. This goal may be determined by the intrinsic or extrinsic motivation of the individual to acquire the language, and may have an impact on the frequency with which he or she will study it, the vocabulary or grammatical structures he or she wishes to learn, and the contexts in which he or she wishes to apply the knowledge acquired.

Legault (2016) states that in order for intrinsic motivation to flourish, the social environment must nurture it. As mentioned before, the context of the individual can favor or detract from his motivation and therefore his learning experience. The individual needs to have the necessary resources to learn a language in an autonomous manner, which may seem challenging. This is another reason why motivation plays an important role when learning a second language in an autonomous way, as this will influence whether the person seeks the necessary resources to have a continuous progress in their learning.

2.2 *Media as a resource for autonomous learning*

As discussed previously, the social context is a major factor that influences the permanence of motivation in autonomous second language learners. Media has had a strong presence in the lives of the participants in this study since childhood and has served as a means to have contact with the target language even though it is not the dominant language of their country. Currently, the general public has access to various resources such as movies, videos, songs, series and even some social networks that allow them to listen, read, speak and write a language foreign to their own.

As stated by Aschroft (2018) incidental vocabulary learning can be contrasted with deliberate vocabulary learning, where students target specific lists of words and phrases to study, using flashcards for example. This translates to the fact that the individuals participating in this study were continuously exposed to a foreign language through visual and auditory stimuli may have had an impact on their eventual proficiency in L2.

2.3 *Incidental vocabulary learning through media*

The autonomous learners who participated in this study state that their first contact with the language happened at an early age and that it was mainly through music and movies. The media has an important role currently and it has become a vehicle by which individuals are able to be in constant contact with the language. As it is stated by Aschroft, Garner and Handicham

(2018) It is essential for learners to maximize their opportunities of learning new words and a good strategy to achieve it is to expose learners to as much L2 input as possible.

Features such as movies and music in an early stage of life seem to work as a vehicle for individuals to be exposed to the language and to start developing their abilities in the language. It also seems to be a vehicle for learners to feel motivated to work in their language skills at an older age. Having contact with the language at an early age happens as an incidental occurrence, however doing it more consciously at a later age could result in something more meaningful for the learner. "Imitating good speech models; like a competent teacher or speakers on the BBC can improve one's spoken English" (Anidi, Ezech & Nwokolo, 2021: 97).

Constant repetition of a song or dialogues can greatly enhance the listening comprehension of an autonomous learner, broaden his or her linguistic repertoire and also work as a main for them to develop their pronunciation skills in the target language.

Contact with the language through media also gives students the opportunity to hear the language in an authentic way that will allow them to know specifically which words to use in the various situations you may encounter in the future. Therefore, exposure to the language through these media should not be discarded in a learning process, as it is not only entertaining for learners of all ages, but also allows them to develop their listening and interpreting skills.

3. Methodology

3.1 *Research design*

The research approach was a mixed one. Next, the features that correspond to qualitative research will be described. Firstly, the data was collected by using a survey to find out which platforms were the most common for learning the language among self-employed learners. The survey was made employing Google Forms in which learners answered a set of questions regarding how the exposition to T.V. shows or series, music, platforms to watch videos, video games, Facebook, Instagram and learning apps influenced their autonomous learning experience since the beginning of their language learning process and how has it added to their current proficiency and confidence when communicating in the language. The questionnaire has as a purpose to recognize specifically what is the impact that media has had though all of their learning experience.

In the following paragraph the elements that correspond to quantitative research will be presented briefly. Circular and bar graphics were used to present the results in a concise manner. Numerical data was required in order to measure and contrast what was the specific media that was used the most through their autonomous learning process of the target language and to revise the frequency with which each learner used it in order to learn the language.

3.2 *Participants and context*

There were six participants in this research. They have an age range that goes from 23 to 32 years old. Five of them are female and one is male. All of them started to learn English consciously and autonomously during their adolescence, at a time when the media began to broadcast content related to communities where English was spoken as a first language and they currently possess the ability not only to comprehend English widely but also to communicate in it with other language learners or speakers.

All participants live in contexts where they have constant contact with native speakers of the language at the present time. The following table indicates the way in which English is part

of their current daily life, which provides the study with veracity that participants can engage in conversations with other English speakers as a result of their autonomous learning.

Participant	Occupation
Participant 1	Independent business interacting with foreign suppliers using English for communication
Participant 2	Currently has a couple from Holland and they live together, English is the second language of both.
Participant 3	Works as an English teacher and is the coordinator of the English department at the school where she works.
Participant 4	He has a C1 level certificate in English and studies at a university that receives students from foreign countries, with whom he communicates through the language.
Participant 5	Works as an English teacher
Participant 6	Studies at a university that receives students from foreign countries, with whom she communicates through English.

3.3 Data collection instruments

Participants responded to a survey in which they were interviewed on which media-related tools they used the most during their autonomous learning process. They were also questioned about how much they felt these tools had influenced their language performance and their confidence when having contact with native speakers through them. The survey was conducted using www.googleforms.com as a tool, in which participants were allowed to type paragraphs that explicitly narrated their second language learning experiences as well as the tools they used during their self-directed learning process.

4. Results

Two points emerged as a result of the survey outcomes. The first main result indicates that the participants' first contact with the language was mainly through movies or music and later they began to use social networks as tools to continue their learning process. The second outcome indicates that students consider the use of media as a key factor for the development of their language skills in their autonomous learning process.

4.1 Linguistic globalization

All the group of participants commented that they had their first contact with the language through television and music, therefore it can be assumed that the linguistic globalization of English has made it easier to have access to audio-visual content in the language. As stated by Lukač-Zoranić and Fijuljanin (2013) globalization enables interference of populations, cultures, languages within international borders as a result of the intensifying economic, social and cultural exchanges within different societies.

The linguistic globalization of English and the increased consumption of audio-visual content by individuals through mobile devices or television has favored individuals to have contact with the language. One of the participants stated the following comment “From a very young age I watched subtitled movies and in high school I became interested in listening to and understanding music in English.” At the beginning his contact with language was for recreational purposes and it was incidental, later his interest in language grew and he began to look for resources to learn it autonomously.

4.2 Media and motivation in autonomous second language learning

As in many learning processes, motivation is crucial to maintain continuity in learning English as a second language. As stated by Nguyen (2019) learning and motivation have the same importance in order to achieve something. Learning helps students gain new knowledge and skills, and motivation pushes them or encourages them to go through the learning process.

Motivation in the learning field is divided into two types: Intrinsic and extrinsic. A second language learner inside a classroom could be driven by the achievement of a good grade or the obtaining of a certificate, reasons that are linked to an extrinsic motivation. On the other hand, a learner could be motivated due to a personal interest in interacting with people from other countries, moving abroad, understanding audio-visual material of interest to them or an appreciation of the culture linked to the language.

Here are some of the participants’ responses to the following question: Do you think that being able to find content related to something you like in another language has motivated you to continue learning? How?

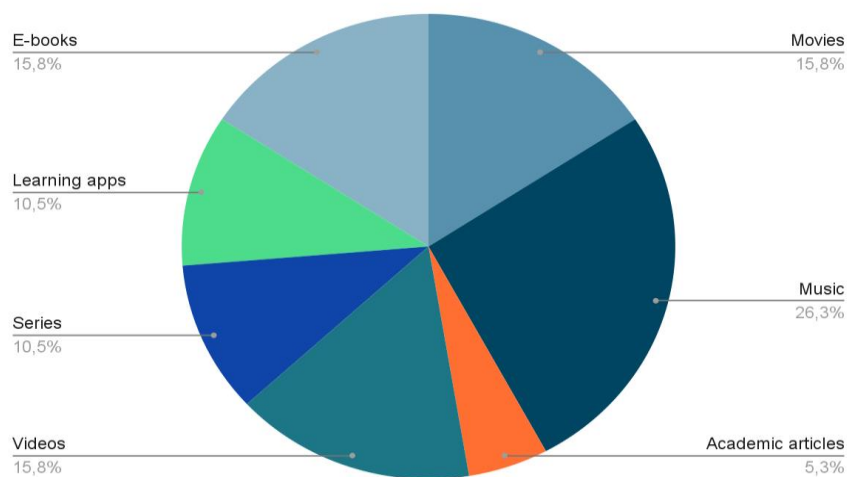
Participant 1	“Of course, it has been one of the most important factors for my autonomous learning. The need to understand 100% of the information that interests me.”
Participant 2	“Yes, there are some topics of my interest in which there is more information in English than in Spanish, so it is very useful.”
Participant 3	“Yes, it helps me to keep practicing in a "relaxed" way without having to keep an eye on my grade.”
Participant 4	“Yes, directly or indirectly learning and sharing about these topics has helped me to keep expanding my vocabulary and grammar.”
Participant 5	“Of course, I continue to develop and improve the way I communicate and to inquire more about the topics of my interest, because the more interest I have, the more I learn.”
Participant 6	“Yes, it has served me well that, by having a subject of interest the goal is not as such to learn English, but as a secondary gain.”

The apprentices who participated in this research coincided in being motivated by extrinsic motives. All the participants mentioned that their first contact with the language was through audio-visual material such as movies, music, series or books and that it was these events that motivated them to continue being in contact with the language, since they were linked to their interests.

Participant number three reports that in addition to feeling motivated to learn through the media, he does not feel pressured to get a good grade. Autonomous learners can self-manage the amount of time they practice and the manner in which they practice, unlike in a classroom where the teacher teaches the content, decides what materials will be used, and conducts assessments. Additionally, media is useful to keep students from giving up on the learning process. As pointed out by participant number five, the more interest he feels, the more he wants to

continue learning. These are tools that are available to them all the time, as we currently have contact with devices such as television, cell phone, radio and computer in domains such as the home, public places and at work.

The following chart indicates the means by which students had most frequent exposure to the language in the initial stage of their learning process. Students continue to use media to develop their language skills, although they have changed over time the presence of media in their learning process has always been existing, constant and significant for their motivation in their learning process.

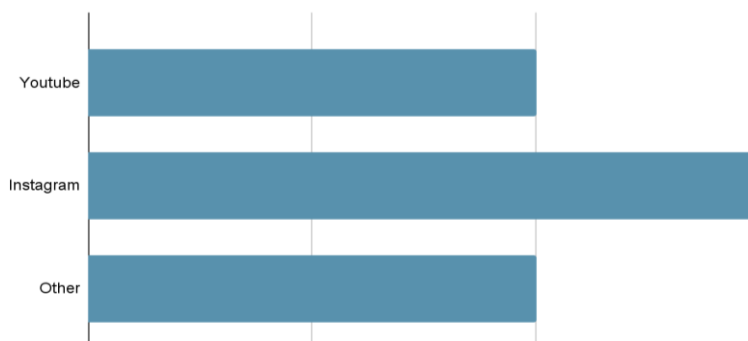


4.3 Language skills development through media

The results of the participants' survey indicated that they have a preference for consuming content in English through movies, series, E-books, videos, music, academic articles and language learning apps. As illustrated in the graph, individuals who participated in this study have had more contact with English mainly by listening to music and watching videos and movies in the target language. As a result of exposure to the language through these media the receptive skills of the participants (reading and listening) have been developed. This raises the question of whether only the participants' receptive skills are developed while their productive language skills are not enhanced to any extent.

Hence, for the purposes of the study, it was necessary to also analyze the way in which the students developed their productive language skills in an autonomous manner. The apprentices were asked about their interaction with other speakers of the language through social networks. Social media such as Instagram, Facebook, Tik Tok, Twitter, YouTube allow autonomous learners not only to view content in the language, but also to interact with other Internet users through comments. Some of the participants claim to use apps different to the ones mentioned above through which they can develop their productive language skills (speaking and writing), among them are <https://www.penpalworld.com/>, <https://www.tandem.net/es> and <https://twitter.com/?lang=es>.

The outcomes of this study indicate that autonomous learners use the Internet as a resource to find tools in social media to develop skills such as speaking and writing. Therefore, it is possible for autonomous language learners to use the media to complement their learning with activities that enable them to build their perceptive and productive capabilities in the target language.



Another question arises when talking about autonomous learning: how can students measure their level of language learning and ensure that they are making progress? For this reason, students were asked about the skills they have to communicate in the target language. It was also considered that through social networks they can interact with people from other nations where English is predominant. Participant 1 states the following: “I speak with native speakers, write business emails, and understand scientific articles almost completely.” The use of social networking is helpful for independent English learners to interact with other English learners or speakers of English in a comfortable way and to develop self-confidence in feeling that they are understood or that they are able to understand others.

5. Conclusion

The media have been part of the daily lives of individuals for several generations, which has had a direct or indirect impact on their lives. In the case of the participants in this study it influenced their second language learning process starting with incidental events and then transforming into a conscious autonomous learning process, in which the learners used the media as the main support tool.

Autonomous learning involves many questions regarding whether it is possible to achieve proficiency in all language skills. Through this study it was proven that autonomous learners have the ability to develop these skills using various media and social networks. It was found that they even seek apps that are focused on learning English as a resource to measure their level of learning and continue learning.

It was also observed that self-management in autonomous students allows them to feel the freedom to learn in contexts in which they do not feel pressured to get a grade or meet a class schedule, which allows them to be more relaxed when learning and even to do so through activities that are everyday occurrences, such as watching television, listening to music or reading.

While the media serves as a means for recreational activities, it should not be underestimated as a tool for learning to develop new skills, such as speaking a second language. All of the study participants claim to have enjoyed their learning process from the beginning and to be satisfied with their language skills.

This study is not intended to discourage language learning in the classroom, but to encourage both teachers and people who do not have access to private language classes not to discard the media as a useful means for learning and to make them aware that there are tools at our disposal that allow us to develop our skills on a daily basis if we look for what can be most useful to us.

As English teachers, I believe that there are tools in the context in which our students live that we can use to motivate them to learn the language through elements that are of interest to them.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - [Google forms survey](#)

Appendix 2 - [Google forms survey responses](#)

Appendix 3 - [Signed consent letters of the participants](#)





Anxiety, Frustration, and Bad Experiences When Learning a Foreign Language Interfering in the Oral Production of a Teenager: A Case Study

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Abstract

Learning a language involves more than willingness and effort; it also involves emotions, good and bad experiences, and the effects of all of them in the production of all four skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Sadly, emotions and mental disorders such as anxiety, depression, and overthinking are put aside when learning a language. Mental disorders should have a stronger recognition in learning a language, those can affect the production of the language, therefore; the learners might feel frustrated for not achieving their expected goals in the language.

Keywords: Anxiety, Oral production, second language learning, affective-filter hypothesis, frustration.

1. Introduction

Mental disorders need to have more discussion in the field of second language acquisition, especially when dealing with teenagers. This paper aimed to understand what role the filter-affective hypothesis plays in the oral production of a teenager with anxiety and frustration when it comes to speaking in English. It was of vital importance to address the filter-affective hypotheses in this study as it gave us a wider grasp of the importance of mental disorders when learning a language. This paper also dealt with how bad experiences affect the process of learning a language. It can be assumed that bad experiences and mental disorders go hand in hand when it comes to preventing the learner to produce any language, in this case, speaking production.

2. Literature review

2.1 *Second language acquisition*

It is important to first understand what second language acquisition is and why it is important to define it in this study. Language acquisition can be a concept difficult to define, nevertheless, Ellis (1997) defined it as: “L2 acquisition, then can be defined as the way in which people learn a language other than their mother tongue, inside or outside a classroom” (p. 3.) It can be assumed that learning a second language implies doing it so inside or outside the classroom and that it is an additional language besides the mother tongue. “Second language acquisition

research focuses on developing knowledge and use of a language by children and adults who already know at least one other language” (Spada & Lightbown, 2019: 111). So far, it seems that one of the requisites to learn a second language is known at least one language. Second language acquisition was the main aspect to discuss in this study as it is the main factor affected by mental disorders and bad experiences.

“Attempts made by adults to learn second languages incidentally through communicative interaction are only partially successful. Although such interaction has the potential to provide the necessary evidence for acquisition, the use of comprehension strategies and communication strategies motivated by communicative pressure or learner predispositions means that the analysis for acquisition is avoided” (Skehan, 1992 in Schmidt, 1992: 209).

The previous quotation provided an interesting concept to the study which dealt with communicative interaction. Surprisingly, in this case, communicative interaction and communicative strategies were not used by the participant because she tried to avoid them as much as possible when learning a language. Therefore, the acquisition was somehow avoided too at some point.

2.2 Filter – affective hypothesis

Another essential factor to consider in this study was the filter-affective hypothesis. It was due to its relevance and focus on the motivation and self-confidence of the learners.

“Krashen argued that the affective filter is a kind of psychological obstacle that prevents language learners from absorbing available comprehensible input completely. He looked affective factors functioning as a filter that reduces the amount of language input the learner is able to understand. The affective factors include certain emotions, such as, motivation-self-confidence and anxiety and so on in the process of acquiring a second language” (Ni, 2012: 1508).

According to the author, the filter affective includes emotions such as motivation and anxiety. As it was mentioned before the filter affective hypothesis should have more recognition in the field of second language acquisition, because the lower the filter affective hypothesis is the less input the learner will receive.

According to Ni (2012: 1508), “a low filter should be created and advocated for the effective language teaching. It can be guessed that learner’s affective filter will be influenced by teacher’s feedback. Attempts should be made to lower the affective filter and let learners feel less stressed and more confident in a comfortable learning atmosphere.”

Another concept arose here, teacher feedback. No one could imagine that the way teachers provide feedback would be relevant to the affective filter of a learner. However, that same concept (teachers’ feedback) related to one of the bad experiences the participant had when learning a language.

2.3 Input in second language acquisition

Input arose as a relevant aspect when reviewing the literature and the data collected. It seemed that input also played a role in the way the affective filter hypothesis affected the oral production of the participant.

“Though Krashen’s hypothesis sounds appealing and we cannot question the importance of input to language acquisition, it certainly leaves several issues unresolved. When he indicates that speech will “emerge” he does not clarify that this emergence of language may depend on how highly motivated, extrovert, smart, and conscientious learners they are. For the

introverted, less bright, unmotivated, and anxious students language might not emerge for a long time or if so, it might emerge in an unsuccessful fashion” (Birkner, 2016: 20).

It seems that anxiety and motivation are related to each other, especially when acquiring a language. The speech will emerge longer if the learner is not motivated enough plus if the learner is anxious and introverted. Surprisingly, the data collected demonstrated that one of the reasons why the learner’s oral production is being affected is because of the lack of motivation and anxiety. “Anxiety contributes negatively to an affective filter which makes an individual less response to language input” (Krashen 1982, in Ganschow & Sparks, 1996: 199). Once more, anxiety is still the main negative factor why learners may receive less response to input.

2.4 Anxiety

Mental disorders among young adult learners seem to be increasing. Sometimes, teachers might think that a student is idle and does not want to participate in class, nevertheless, several reasons are behind it, and one should be able to identify them. “Anxiety is the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system” (Spielberger, 1983, in Horwitz, 2001: 199.) It can be inferred that anxiety carries more than tension, nervousness, and worry are also related to anxiety. The data obtained from the participant indicated that nervousness was present when the participant had to speak in the English classroom. “Foreign language anxiety is a “distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to language classroom learning arising from the uniqueness of the language process” (Horwitz et al., 1991, in Zheng, 2008: 2). It is important to address the importance of beliefs, feelings and self-perceptions of learners when learning a second language. Let us remember that learners will always have different perceptions of them from our perspectives as teachers. There will be times when anxiety will make students think negative things about them, like if it was self-sabotage.

2.5 Attention deficit

A new aspect appeared when analyzing the data; attention deficit seemed to be part of the problems that prevent the participant from her oral production. “In ADHD attention deficit is most pronounced in situations which lack external communication” (Hesslinger et al., 2002: 178). It might make sense that this mental disorder would be an important factor when trying to speak in English. “Lack of persistence often results in accusations of unreliability and selfishness. Patients often perform poor at college and work in spite of sometimes outstanding capabilities” (Hesslinger et al., 2002: 177). As mentioned by the authors, patients with ADHD often perform poorly at college even when they have some outstanding capabilities. The participant mentioned that her oral production is the most affected due to the attention deficit, however, the rest of the four skills have developed correctly.

2.6 Overthinking

Some mental disorders took part in this study, and overthinking was the unexpected one. However, it helped me have a better grasp of the participant’s responses. “Overthinking is a loop of unproductive thoughts. Overthinking can also be considered as an excessive amount of thoughts that are unnecessary. Overthinking can be associated with anxiety” (Petric, 2018: 1). It is of utmost importance to highlight the association between overthinking and anxiety; these mental disorders have been affecting the oral production of the participant.

One could think that overthinking is not something important or relevant in terms of learning a language. Nevertheless, these mental disorders can influence the lack of performance (spoken) in this case, in a learner's process. Overthinking when combined with anxiety can be a detrimental factor as they do not allow the learner to emerge themselves into the language at all. Overthinker learners are constantly if they should participate or not, whether it is in a spoken or written way.

3. Methodology

This study aimed to understand what role the filter-affective hypothesis plays in the oral production of a teenager with anxiety and frustration when it comes to speaking in English. This study also dealt with how bad experiences affect the process of learning a language. The paradigm this study took was a critical one as "Social constructionism places emphasis on "sharedness" and "negotiation", and the primary function of language is to facilitate those processes in order to create and maintain various patterns of social relations" (Shotter, 1995, in Karataş-Özkan & Murphy, 2010: 457). The paradigm led us to relate the patterns of social interaction and the functions of language to the aim of this study which are the mental disorders affecting a learner oral production.

3.1 Context

The context of this study took place in the city of León, Guanajuato, México. The participant in this case study is currently studying at the university level. This study was carried out in online way due to time constraints with the time's participants' time. The data collected were received online way too.

3.2 Participant

The participant of this case study was carried out with twenty-one years old female who has been learning English for seven years. The participant has been learning the language in private and public schools. Recently, she has not been learning English due to time constraints. The participant has been diagnosed with anxiety and attention deficit. The study took place online way as the participant did not have time to meet up in person. The participant submitted the responses via e-mail.

3.3 Qualitative approach

The main purpose of this research project is to investigate whether age, anxiety, and bad experiences when learning a second language play a role in the oral production of a young adult. The qualitative approach that the study followed was a qualitative one.

"The focus turns to understanding human beings' richly textured experiences and reflections about those experiences. Rather than relying on a set of finite questions to elicit categorized, forced-choice responses with little room for open-ended questions as quantitative does, the qualitative researcher relies on the participants to offer in-depth responses to questions about how they have constructed or understood their experience" (Jackson et al., 2007: 22-23).

In this research project, the data were collected using a questionnaire where the participant expressed their bad experiences when learning a second language, as well as the way her anxiety has been part of their struggle when trying to speak in English. The opinions and answers from the participant were interpreted by the researcher as the focus of this research

project was to see whether age and anxiety played a role in the oral production of a young adult in English.

3.4 Case study

The case study approach is particularly useful to employ when there is a need to obtain an in-depth appreciation of an issue, event, or phenomenon of interest in its natural real-life context. The researcher should define the uniqueness of the phenomenon, which distinguishes it from all others (Crowe et al., 2011: 1-2).

Case studies are empirical investigations of contemporary phenomena within real-life contexts. They comprise a bounded system, including an individual or entity and the settings in which they act. The decision to conduct a case study depends on the object to be studied, what the researcher wishes to learn about it, and what he hopes to do with the findings (Hood, 2009: 86). The decision of choosing a case study for this research was because it involves studying it in real-life contexts, which was something that helped me understand especially when interviewing the participant. The case study also demonstrated the reason for the phenomena investigated in this research which was obtained through the interviews to the participant.

3.5 Questionnaires

In order to elicit data from the participant, the tool that was used was a questionnaire. “Questionnaires offer an objective means of collecting information about people’s knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and behavior” (Boynnton & Greenhalgh, 2004, 1312.) This tool was useful when it came to understanding the participant’s attitudes toward the bad experiences the participant had when learning a language. As well as the knowledge the participant has regarding the mental disorders and how they affect the participant’s oral speaking performance.

4. Data analysis procedures

Once the data was received it was time to analyze it and see what responses would be relevant to the study. “Thematic analysis is a method for analyzing qualitative data that entails searching across a data set to identify, analyze, and report repeated patterns” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, in Kiger & Varpio, 2020: 2). It was important to analyze and identify the responses that the participant provided as well as notice all the emergent patterns in them.

“It is a method for describing data, but it also involves interpretation in the processes of selecting codes and creating themes. A distinguishing feature of thematic analysis is its flexibility to be used within a wide range of theoretical and epistemological frameworks and to be applied to a wide range of study questions, designs, and sample sizes” (Kiger & Varpio, 2020: 2).

As it was mentioned by the authors the use of thematic analysis allowed the process of selecting codes and then creating themes to have a better connection with the participant’s responses and the objective of the study. Thematic analysis was also useful to choose from all the responses the ones that seemed to have the closest connection to the aim of the case study.

5. Results

In this section, I present the results of the study with the objective of answering the role of the filter affective hypothesis in the oral production of a young adult English learner. As well as anxiety and negative experiences affecting the process of learning a language. The

responses of the participant lead to the conclusion that mental disorders should have more recognition when learning a language. Mental disorders can interfere not only with mental health but with learning performance in the classroom.

5.1 Anxiety and overthinking

Once the data was analyzed the mental disorders that seemed to be the main factor in her oral production were anxiety and overthinking. *“I think the anxiety is the one that don’t let me focus”*. Here the participant’s response pointed to anxiety as the one that does not let her focus and class; therefore, it might be a detrimental factor for not paying attention at all in class. When asked if the participant believed anxiety was an influence on her speaking production, the response was sort of interesting because it showed the importance mental disorders need to have when learning a language. The participant mentioned that anxiety makes her doubt herself and then she starts overthinking about the things she has to say and whether her responses are correct or wrong. As well as when she is asked to participate orally the participant feels nervous, starts to have a mental block, and forgets all the things she knows about English, she blushes because she feels exposed, and she does not like it.

5.2 Bad experiences in the English classroom

Another aspect that prevented her from her oral participation was the bad experiences the participants had in the learning process. The participant mentioned that some teachers were rude to her. The teachers were always comparing her to other people and forcing them to participate, as participation was mandatory, her anxiety was usually at a high level because if she did not participate she would not get a grade, and the participant did not like that. This bad experience marked the participant’s language experience due to the participation being mandatory and the fact of always being compared to other people. That is something so bad for teachers to do, I do not think they measure the mental damage they can create on a language learner.

5.3 Motivation

The participant also mentioned that motivation is an important factor, if she is motivated she might want to participate and perhaps enjoy the language-learning process. The motivation was strongly related to learning a language, and the participant is right, when there is motivation there is interest in learning new things about the language by participating. The participant also mentioned that motivation could make her feel safe, perhaps to participate more in the classroom. That was an interesting comment, as it seems the participant was not only demotivated but also felt unsafe.

6. Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to understand what role the filter-affective hypothesis plays in the oral production of a teenager with anxiety and frustration when it comes to speaking in English as well as the bad experiences when learning a language. The results indicated that certainly, mental disorders played an important role in the oral production of the participant. The data collected demonstrated that the affective filter of the participant was at a very low level due to the mental disorders and the negative experiences, therefore, the learning was being affected. The bad experiences were the ones that marked the participant in her learning process, participation was mandatory and that made the participant uncomfortable. As participation was mandatory, the participant started to feel anxious and started to overthink her

responses as she would have a mental block and forget everything she knew about the language. It might sound confusing, but even when participation was mandatory, the participant started to speak less and less in the classroom. Nevertheless, the participant was also aware of the importance of motivation in learning a language and recognized that if she was motivated, she would participate more and perhaps enjoy the process of learning. Hopefully, motivation can help the participant immerse herself in the language and allow her to speak more, and not let her mental disorders and bad experiences stop her from doing so.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Do you have any issues that might affect your learning of a second language? Please explain which ones. I have anxiety and attention deficit, but I think the anxiety is the one that don't let me focus on class.

Do you think anxiety is a factor that influences your English production? Why? Yes, of course because it makes me doubt of myself, for example, if I have to speak I start overthinking about what I have to say and then I get nervous, and then when I speak my voice changes it sounds like if I was crying and I don't like it and I don't wanna participate anymore. Also, when I have to write my anxiety don't let me think correctly because I am constantly thinking if I am correct or not.

How do you feel when your teachers ask you to speak in English? I feel nervous, I have a mental block and forget everything I know, and my mind is all black, also, I blush and I don't like it because I feel exposed and that makes me feel bad.

Is motivation linked to your learning of a second language? Why? Yes, because it makes you feel safe and motivated, if you are motivated you can learn faster, also if I am motivated enough, I might like the language and enjoy the process of learning.

Do you remember any situation where you did not feel comfortable to continue speaking in English? Elaborate. Yes, when I was in high school I remember I had a teacher who was always comparing ourselves to her kid, she said he was smarter than us, also the teacher was too strict and I was afraid of speaking because of that, also participation was mandatory, otherwise you will not have a grade, there, my anxiety was high because I felt obligated to do so when I didn't want to, that was a situation where I felt bad because I did not want to speak in English if it was mandatory.





12-year-old Mexican English Learners’ Listening Perceptions: Differences Between American Accent or Mexican Accent

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Abstract

Learning about what English learners think about the different accents while speaking English is essential to understand their reactions and ideas towards the use of the Mexican accent while speaking English. By presenting two different audios and asking the participants their perceptions about those, the research investigates what two 12-year-olds think about the use of the Mexican accent.

Keywords: native accent, foreign accent.

1. Introduction

Because of the stereotypes presented by the media and the idealization of native speakers of English, the use of the Mexican accent while speaking English has received negative comments. However, recently, there has been more exposure to this accent in media, and it presents its use as a normal feature and not as a sign of incompetence. Based on this recent exposure and the comments made by the exposition of this accent, I wanted to identify if 12-year-old Mexican learners of English still considered the Mexican accent as a negative aspect. To do so, the participants were exposed to a native English speaker and a Mexican English speaker. After that, they shared the differences found between both audios and what are their perceptions of the Mexican accent.

2. Literature review

2.1 Accent and pronunciation

The research focuses on the differences between accents identified by the participants. Therefore, defining accents and establishing the difference with pronunciation is needed. Accents can be defined as “different ways of pronouncing/speaking a language within a community” (Behravan, 2012: 13). Examples of this could be the difference between Spanish from Spain and the ones spoken in Mexico or Chile respectively. Pronunciation, on the other hand, involves features such as phonemes, consonant and vowel sounds, and suprasegmental features:

intonation and stress (Kelly, 2000). The distinction between accent and pronunciation is, then, that an accent is determined by the speaker's place of birth, and pronunciation will be related to how the speaker produces the speech (Amis, 1998). This particular research focuses on two different accents presented in the audio by a native speaker of English and a non-native speaker, more specifically a Mexican English speaker.

2.2 Native accent and foreign accent

As it was previously mentioned, this research focuses on two different accents; therefore, it is essential to specify the distinction between native accents and foreign accents. One of the definitions provided for native accent is “the way a group of people speaks their native language. This is determined by where they live and what social groups they belong to” (Birner, 1999: 1). This is the definition considered for this research. In this case, the native accent was presented by the English spoken by an American presented in one of the audios used.

On the other hand, a foreign accent, also called non-native, can be defined as “the patterns of pronunciation features which characterize an individual's speech as belonging to a particular language group” (Arslan & Hansen, 1996: 354). The foreign accent is more noticeable in speakers that acquired the language after the early years of childhood (Hopp & Schmid, 2013). In this case, the non-native accent was presented by the English spoken by a Mexican presented in one of the audios used in the research.

2.3 Learner expectations

Because of the ideal of achieving a native-like speaking level (Mbah et al., 2013), learners tend to have high expectations about accents. The idea of achieving the perfect accent is part of what some English learners want to accomplish at the end of learning the language. However, exposure to native English accents is not possible for all learners. The exposure to native accents in the Mexican context, commonly, comes from the audios presented in the textbooks. This means that the audios are created to be mini-dialogues or lectures planned for educational purposes (Mousavi & Irvani, 2012) and they are not used daily inside the classroom. Therefore, the accent that students listen to the most is their teachers' accent. In most cases, teachers have an easily detectable Mexican accent. Even though this Mexican accent is common, it tends to be stigmatized. In other words, accent stereotypes such as it being laughable or the person speaking being incompetent for having said accent (Zentella, 2017) can influence learners' expectations while listening to a Mexican speaking English inside and outside the English classroom.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research question

The research focuses on only one research question:

What differences do 12-year-old Mexican English learners identify in their listening comprehension after being exposed to different accents?

To answer the question established, the participant's responses will be compared to identify the differences between the accents found by them. There is a possibility of also finding similarities between the participants' responses; those will also be presented. However, the main focus is on the differences found.

3.2 Qualitative approach

The research presented follows the qualitative approach. This approach “focuses on people’s and the meaning they place on the events” (Skinner et al., 2000: 165). The qualitative approach aims to understand the phenomenon by analyzing the participants’ interpretations of the phenomenon. It focuses on how people interpret their experiences individually. Because this type of approach deals with individuals and their interpretations, the data can be recollected by using interviews, questionnaires, diaries, journals, and observations (Zohrabi, 2013, as cited in Mohajan, 2018: 2). In this particular case, the participants’ reactions and comments towards the two different accents will function as the qualitative data and will be presented as extracts in this research.

3.3 Case study

The methodology used for this research is a case study. A case study is “an intensive, systematic investigation of a single individual, group, community or some other unit in which the researcher examines in-depth data relating to several variables” (Heale & Twycross, 2018: 7). This means that the research focuses on a specific group of people. This research focuses on a pair of Mexican English learners and how they react to a phenomenon, the different accents presented by audio. However, the use of this methodology also emphasizes on how the results will vary depending on the contexts and participants’ personal reactions towards the phenomenon (Pearson et al., 2015). Therefore, the results can only be applied to the specific group and context in which the research is done.

3.4 Participants

Regarding the participants, their selection was based on the following parameters: they must be 12 years old and studying the first level of secondary. They also must have had previous English classes. There was not a specific level of English needed; however, they must have had interaction with the language at previous educational levels. For this research, two participants fit the profile. Their parents also accessed them to be part of. Because the participants are underage, their parents received a consent letter and they could choose to allow them to participate or not. It is also relevant to mention that their identities will be protected through the research. The data presented is what the participants answered in their interviews; however, their names are not mentioned. Each participant had been assigned a number to present their answers.

3.5 Data collection

For this particular research, the data collection was done through observations and interviews. The observations were done while the participants listened to the audios. To collect the results of these observations, the researcher took descriptive notes of what was seen (Cowie et al., 2009). By doing this, the researcher focused on reactions toward the different accents that might not have been mentioned in the interviews with the participants. In the case of the interviews, those were done in Spanish at the end of the listening of both audios. The interviews were structured, which means that the researcher had a set of questions to be answered and there was no space to add more questions to the interview (Legard et al., 2003). The questions were focused on what the participants thought of the audio, more specifically of the accents presented and what differences there were between the audios.

3.5.1 Audios

Because the research focuses on native and foreign accents and the perceptions participants have about them, the selection of audios was an essential step. In this case, the audios used were authentic material. In other words, those materials are not intended to be teaching materials (Safitri, 2017). For this research, the audios used were audio from interviews online where the speakers were native and non-native speakers. More specifically, the audio for the native accent came from an interview with Hailee Steinfeld, an American actress, and singer. On the other hand, the foreign accent audio came from an interview with Mabel Cadena, a Mexican actress.

The selection of said audios was based on the participants' knowledge of having contact with English outside the school. The audios were selected considering that the focus was not on the content, but rather on what differences the participants found within the audios.

3.6 Data analysis

The type of analysis done for this research is thematic analysis. To do so, I focused on meaning through the data recollected “to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences” (Braun & Clarke, 2012: 57). In other words, I identify themes within the data collected to have a better understanding of the differences identified by the participants. The procedure to do so was the following. After recollecting the data, I focused on identifying the themes presented in the answers. For instance, what audio was more comprehensible according to the participants, and see if they found similarities or differences. The results of the said analysis are presented in the following section.

4. Results and discussion

The following results are presented by answering the questions asked to the participants in the interview. To present the extracts from the interviews, each participant was assigned a number. Because the interviews were done in Spanish, the extracts presented as part of the results are translated from the original to English. There are also descriptions of the observations done.

4.1 What audio did you understand better? Why?

After listening to both audios, the participants provide the answers to the questions. In the case of participant number 1, she mentioned that audio B, the Mexican accent, was easier to understand:

I could recognize the accent better. Pronunciation... to me is easier reading than listening and the pronunciation was easier to understand. It was closer to the way words are written.

On the other hand, participant number 2 mentioned that both audios were understandable:

To me, both were understandable. I know most of the vocabulary and that helped.

Throughout the listening, both participants focused and their faces reflected concentration in the audios. However, as it is presented, the audio they found more understandable was based on preference and knowledge. For instance, I can assume that participant 2 feels confident with his knowledge and skills while listening. On the other hand, as she mentioned, participant 1 struggles with pronunciation, and the Mexican accent helped in the

listening comprehension because of the closeness between the pronunciation and the written form.

4.2 What aspects helped you understand it better? (e. g. speech speed, fluency, articulation)

The second question was related to what features helped the participants understand one audio better than the other. In the case of participant 1, she mentioned that the rhythm used in the audios and speech speed allowed her to understand one audio better than the other:

Audio A (American accent), the rhythm varied from time to time and it made it difficult to understand. Audio B (Mexican accent), it was the same rhythm throughout the audio. The speed made it clearer, words did not overlap.

For participant 1, the audio that presented the Mexican accent (B) provided time for each one of the words to be understood. On the other hand, the American accent audio (A) might have been faster and that produced the overlapping of words that did not allow the full understanding of the audio.

On the other hand, participant 2 found that audio B was not as fluid as audio A. It might be that for him, the articulation of the words was not as important as it was for participant 1:

The tone of voice. I think the speech speed was good in both audios. In audio B it was less fluid, but still understandable.

Another interesting aspect of this answer is that participant 2 considered the tone of voice. This is interesting because in audio A only one person is speaking; meanwhile in audio B, the person is not alone. This difference might affect the tone of voice while speaking and participant 2 considered that in both cases it was adequate to what was being said.

4.3 What differences did you find between the audios?

For the third question, participants needed to mention specific differences found in the audios. In the case of participant 1, speed and pronunciation were the main differences. For her audio A was faster than audio B. This answer supports her previous answer about the words overlapping:

Different speeds. Audio A was faster. The pronunciation was different in both. There were different accents.

On the other hand, participant 2 identified the structure of the audios while mentioning that audio A was structured more as an interview one-on-one, while audio B was a chat with more than two people involved:

Audio A was more like a video, just one person presenting something. Audio B was like a chat with others, sharing an experience. It was a different accent, maybe Canadian.

Another interesting aspect is that both participants mentioned different accents, but only participant 2 mentioned a possible nationality. I believe that this nationality might have only been mentioned randomly. However, it might be that the participant had recent encounters with a Canadian accent and that caused the confusion.

4.4 *Do you think accents are important? Why?*

While answering these questions, participants were free to mention preferences and personal opinions about accents in general. They were not instructed to only talk about native or only about foreign accents. Regarding their answers, they both agree. They believe accents are important; however, their reasons vary:

Yes, they are important. Sometimes at school teachers teach just one and you end up only understanding that one. It is easier to understand the one you learn. But, if they put other audios, it is more complicated to understand. An example is that a British accent will be difficult to understand if you have only learned to listen to the American one.

Participant 1 mentioned that accents are presented in school, but there is a limitation and it might cause problems. I believe in this answer, participant 1 reflected on her own experience. As it was mentioned in her previous answers, the struggle to understand audio A relies on the speed and overlap of words. This issue might come from the non-authentic audios used inside the classroom. Therefore, for her, it is important to be exposed to different accents and ways of speaking.

Contrarily, participant 2 mentioned that accents are important because they can provide an idea of the person speaking:

Yes, to know based on the accent who is talking. I think the accent gives you an idea of the person speaking.

This answer was interesting because participant 2 might have expectations based on the accent that he listens to. As it was mentioned at the beginning of the study, learners' expectations of accents might be influenced by stereotypes presented in different media. For participant 2, it might be that accents allowed him to create an image of the person speaking and put the person into a context that justifies the use of said accent.

Even though both participants mentioned different reasons why accents are important, how they help in the understanding of the message and create an idea of the person speaking, they both had a positive reaction to audio B. Both participants show positive signs while listening to this audio. They nodded and even showed some smiles while listening to the Mexican accent. I can assume that the ideas created around the accent listened were positive. Perhaps, participants seemed themselves or someone else they know represented in that accent.

4.5 *What is your opinion about the Mexican accent while speaking English?*

Lastly, participants needed to provide their opinion about the Mexican accent while speaking English. Because of the participants' age and their previous encounters with the Mexican accent, while speaking English, I was expecting negative comments as answers to this question. However, the answers provided by the participants were refreshing.

Participant 1 mentioned that the Mexican accent allows other Mexicans to understand English better:

I think it is easier to understand for Mexicans learning the language. It is easier to understand. I think it is fine to use it, but it is judged by others. I think it is better to use the accent you feel most comfortable using. I like the accent.

Based on the answer provided and the reactions that were seen, I believe that participant 1 considers the Mexican accent used to be correct. She might also feel encouraged to use it after reflecting on its use.

Contrary to participant 1, participant 2's answer supports the idea of having expectations towards the accents used while speaking English:

In some people, it is more noticeable, maybe because they are not competent enough in the language. I don't think it is noticeable in all people. Maybe it is noticeable because the person needs to practice more.

Participant 2 mentioned that the Mexican accent is not noticeable in all Mexican English speakers, but he also implies that the speakers can eliminate it with practice. Perhaps, for him, accents still present stereotypes of the people speaking, and to avoid negative reactions, the best would be to remove the Mexican accent from the speech.

Even though participants might infer different opinions about the Mexican accent while speaking English, they both agree that it is not a negative aspect while speaking the language. It might be that the foreign accent is more understandable for some learners because of the speed at which words are said and how they are said.

5. Conclusion

After doing the research and learning about the participants' comments about the use of the Mexican accent while speaking English, I could identify that those perceptions are not negative. Because of the participants' age and what I have previously heard as a student, I expected the perceptions towards the use of the Mexican accent to be negative. Even though I am aware of the scale of this case study and that the results might not be the same with different participants, I think what I found shows an improvement in the Mexican accent perception. I can conclude that participants do not feel its use is incorrect, nor would they react in a way that will make the person using it uncomfortable. However, as I already mentioned, these results might be different for other participants. I consider that doing this research on a larger scale might show clearer data that can help in the discovery of English learners' perceptions of the Mexican accent.

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