



Universidad de Concepción Dirección de Postgrado  
Facultad de Educación - Programa de Magíster

# **Using dialogue-oriented strategies in the EFL class: an action research study with a group of secondary students from Lota, Chile**

Tesis para optar al grado de Magíster en Innovación de la Enseñanza, Aprendizaje y Evaluación del Inglés.

ROBERTO ANDRÉS GODOY SALAZAR

CONCEPCIÓN-CHILE  
2021

Profesora Guía: Dra. María-Jesús Inostroza Araos

Dpto. de Currículum e Instrucción, Facultad de Educación

Universidad de Concepción



Universidad de Concepción Dirección de Postgrado  
Facultad de Educación - Programa de Magíster

# **Using dialogue-oriented strategies in the EFL class: an action research study with a group of secondary students from Lota, Chile**

Tesis para optar al grado de Magíster en Innovación de la Enseñanza, Aprendizaje y Evaluación del Inglés.

ROBERTO ANDRÉS GODOY SALAZAR

CONCEPCIÓN-CHILE  
2021

Profesora Guía: Dra. María-Jesús Inostroza Araos

Dpto. de Currículum e Instrucción, Facultad de Educación

Universidad de Concepción

## **Acknowledgements**

First of all, I would like to thank my family, for always been there to support me, my parents, Maria and Sergio, and my older brothers, Francisco and Fabian, who had a really hard time raising me for my endless mistakes during my entire life. In spite of that, you always encouraged me to trust in my abilities and supported me to follow my dreams. THANKS!

To my girlfriend, Viviana, because without her support, none of this would not have been possible, for picking me up when I was on the floor and encouraging me to continue.

To my aunts and colleagues: Concepción, Rosa, Maria & Ignacio, who taught me the incredible value of education and for showing me that through it, we can create a better and equate world.

To all my friends: Pablo, Andrés, Juan, Camilo, Claudio, David, Rodrigo, for being there during the good and the hard times and always supporting me, thanks dude!

To my teacher advisor, Maria Jesus Inostroza, for all of her guidance through this process and always being there to support me.

And last but not least, to my pets: Clarita, Cleo & Leia, thanks for wiggling your tail beside me during all those nights in which I stayed up working.

## Table of contents

Abstract.....	7
Chapter I: Introduction	
1.1 Problem identification.....	10
1.2 Aims .....	11
1.3 Action research report outline.....	11
Chapter II: Theoretical Framework	
2.1 Collaborative learning .....	14
2.1.1 Collaborative language learning .....	15
2.1.2 Peer Assessment .....	16
2.2 Speaking skills .....	18
2.2.1 Willingness to communicate .....	19
2.3 Dialogic Pedagogy .....	20
Chapter III: Methods	
3.1 Type of research.....	25
3.2 Research problem .....	25
3.3 Stages of the Action Research .....	26
3.4 Research objectives .....	29
3.4.1 Research question .....	29
3.4.2 General objective .....	29
3.4.3 Specific objectives .....	29
3.5 Participants .....	30
3.6 Data collection techniques	
3.6.1 Focus group.....	30
3.7 Data analysis technique	
3.7.1 Thematic Analysis .....	32
Chapter IV: Findings	
4.1 Specific Objective 1: To explore students' perception towards the English lesson .....	34

4.2 Specific Objective 2: To identify students' perception towards the implementation of a collaborative, dialogic oriented project .....	39
4.3 Specific Objective 3: To identify students' perception towards the implementation of a collaborative dialogic oriented project in an extra-curricular ELF class.....	40
Chapter V: Discussion	
5.1 Specific objective 1: To explore students' perception towards the English lesson .....	43
5.2 Specific Objective 2: To identify students' perception towards the implementation of a collaborative, dialogic oriented project. ....	44
5.3 Specific Objective 2: To identify students' perception towards the implementation of collaborative, dialogic oriented project in an extra-curricular ELF class .....	45
5.4 Implications and limitations .....	46
Chapter VI: Conclusions	
6.1 Main findings .....	49
6.2 Personal reflection .....	50
6.3 Further Research .....	50
References .....	51
Appendixes	
- Appendix A: First focus group questions .....	57
- Appendix B: Second focus group questions .....	58

### **Table of tables**

Table 2.1: Benefits of collaborative learning .....	12
Table 2.2: principles present in Dialogic pedagogy .....	19
Table 3.1: Stages of the action Research .....	26
Table 3.2: description of the participants .....	28
Table 4.1: Students' perception towards the English lesson .....	33
Table 4.2: Activities performed during English lessons .....	35
Table 4.3: Student's view on the English subject .....	36
Table 4.4: Students' impressions about the project .....	38
Table 4.5: Students' perception towards the strategies implemented .....	39
Table 4.6: Students' suggestions to improve the project .....	40

## **Abstract**

When teaching English in Chilean classrooms, it can be observed a lack of motivation from the students towards the subject given the lack of opportunities they have to interact in the target language that the curriculum promotes and the low proficiency outcomes that it promotes. This action research seeks to explore the perceptions of a group of secondary students towards a set of dialogue-oriented strategies implemented in an extra-curricular ELF class, in particular students' perception towards the English lesson, the implementation of a set of dialogic oriented strategies as part of a collaborative research project and the experience carrying out the project itself.

Through two focus groups, students' responses were examined using a thematic analysis. The findings show that the students' perception towards the English class is positive, but they stated that the topics covered in these classes were not related to their daily lives, which is reflected in a lack of motivation towards the subject. In the same line, it was stated that more opportunities to practice their oral skills were necessary to know how to start a conversation correctly. Finally, their perceptions about the implemented strategies and project were very positive, they stated that they enjoyed choosing the topic they wanted to investigate and the different strategies that were implemented throughout the different sessions.

Keywords: dialogic pedagogy, speaking skills, peer assessment, EFL, secondary education, Chile

## **Resumen**

Al impartir inglés en las aulas chilenas, se puede observar una falta de motivación de los estudiantes hacia la asignatura dada la falta de oportunidades que tienen para interactuar en el idioma objetivo que promueve el plan de estudio. Esta investigación-acción busca explorar las percepciones de un grupo de estudiantes de secundaria hacia un grupo de estrategias orientadas al diálogo implementadas en un taller extracurricular de Inglés, en particular la percepción de los estudiantes

hacia la lección de inglés, la implementación de un conjunto de estrategias orientadas al diálogo. como parte de un proyecto de investigación colaborativa y la experiencia de realización del proyecto en sí.

A través de dos grupos focales, se examinaron las respuestas de los estudiantes mediante un análisis temático. Los hallazgos muestran que la percepción de los estudiantes hacia la clase de inglés es positiva, pero afirmaron que los temas tratados en estas clases no estaban relacionados con su vida diaria, lo que se traduce en una falta de motivación hacia la asignatura. En la misma línea, se planteó que eran necesarias más oportunidades de practicar sus habilidades orales para saber iniciar correctamente una conversación. Finalmente, sus percepciones sobre las estrategias implementadas y el proyecto fueron muy positivas, manifestando que disfrutaron eligiendo el tema que querían investigar y las diferentes estrategias que se implementaron a lo largo de las diferentes sesiones.

Chile Palabras clave: pedagogía dialogica, habilidades orales, retroalimentación entre pares, EFL, educación secundaria, Chile

# **Chapter 1: Introduction**

## **1.1 Problem identification**

English has become a major concern for the Chilean government due to it aims to improve economic competitiveness through the execution of national English language learning standards. However, these standards are still to be accomplished as the English Proficiency Index EF (2020) shows, where Chile ranks #37 among 100 countries. Furthermore, according to 2014 English SIMCE, 82% of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade students who participated failed to reach a B1 level, which is the target goal of the EFL National Curriculum.

This might be a result of the implementation of curriculum that does not consider students' interests and especially the irrelevance of the learning materials that are used to teach English, which has led to a low level of motivation among students towards learning English (Glas, 2013). In the same line, students believe that the contents that are studied in the English lesson are far from their lives and feel that these contents will never be used (British council, 2015).

The above-described situation can be observed as well in the school in which this action research was conducted. According to Simic (2014), when students' interests are considered in the learning process, it impacts directly on their motivation to interact with the target language. Given that Dialogic Pedagogy enhances the power of speech to foster students' learning, problem solving and their critical thinking skills, that this approach could of great contribution to respond to the identified issue of motivation in the current teaching context. Previous studies illustrate that when students are exposed to different dialogue-oriented strategies inside the classroom, they show a higher interest on participating.

## **1.2 Aims**

### **1.2.1 General objective**

- To explore the perceptions of a group of secondary students towards a set of dialogue-oriented strategies implemented in an extra-curricular ELF class.

### **1.2.2 Specific objectives**

- To analyze students' perception towards their English lesson
- To analyze students' perceptions towards the implementation a set of dialogue- oriented strategies in an extra-curricular ELF class.
- To identify students' perception towards the implementation of a collaborative, dialogic oriented project in an extra-curricular ELF class.

### **1.3 Action research report outline**

In Chapter 2, a revision of the literature related to collaborative learning and collaborative language learning, speaking skills and willingness to communicate as well as peer assessment and dialogic pedagogy.

In Chapter 3, a description of the type of study and action plan is presented. In this chapter, information such as the type of study, main features, participants and characteristics, as well as the research action plan and instruments used to collect information will be introduced.

In Chapter 4, data emerged from this study will be shown. Information will be presented in tables and excerpts that illustrate the participants' responses. Results will be presented by specific objective and categories of analysis.

In Chapter 5, data analyzed will be discussed in terms of the existing review of literature and personal reflections on the results, in order to draw the implications and limitations of this study.

Finally, in Chapter 6, personal reflections are outlined as well as suggestions on further studies.

## **Chapter 2: Theoretical framework**

## 2.1 Collaborative learning

When talking about Collaborative learning (CL), we must first understand what collaboration is. According to Laal & Ghodsi (2011, p.486), collaboration can be defined as “an interaction philosophy where subjects are responsible for their actions, including learning and respect the abilities and contributions to their peers”. There are some authors, such as Nokes-Malach, Richey & Gadgil (2015), who argued that there are some disadvantages on collaborative learning, such as the different pace on how students learn, or sometimes, shy students might not feel comfortable when working into numerous groups. Regardless these views, collaborative learning has long been emphasized as a method that can establish a non-threatening environment reducing students’ levels of anxiety and providing a low threat setting, which could improve the language acquisition process. In the same line, Austin (2000) states that nowadays there is a need on thinking and working together among students, which can bring benefits such as higher achievement and greater productivity; more caring and committed relationships, greater psychological health, social competence and a higher self-esteem (Johnson, 2009).

In this regard, Pantiz (1999) classified some of the benefits of collaborative learning into four different categories that can be observed in table 2.1

Social benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develops learning communities.</li><li>• Leads to diversity perception among the participants.</li><li>• It helps to improve social support system for learners.</li><li>• It helps to develop learning communities.</li></ul>
Academic benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It fosters critical thinking skills.</li><li>• Centers the learning processes in students.</li><li>• Improves students’ problem-solving techniques.</li><li>• Classroom results are enhanced.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It results on highly motivating activities among students.</li> </ul>
Psychological benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interaction among students and student-centered instruction enhances students' self-esteem.</li> <li>• Reduces anxiety.</li> <li>• Generates a good teacher-student relation.</li> </ul>
Alternate student and teacher assessment techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows the use of several assessment techniques.</li> </ul>

Table 2.1: Benefits of collaborative learning

Furthermore, Collaborative learning has been also present in EFL classrooms, as Srinivas (2010) argues collaborative language learning could provide more opportunities to students to interact with the L2 than teacher fronted classes.

### 2.1.1 Collaborative language learning

In language teaching, several activities are implemented with different grouping dynamics. Evidence presented in Gillies and Ashman's work (2003) shows that nowadays most of learners follow the approach of collaborative learning to enhance the learning process, sharing their knowledge within a short period of time. Similarly, Tunnard & Sharp (2009) suggest that collaborative learning is a very useful technique for ESL learners to acquire the L2 methodically in modern English classrooms. Furthermore, according to Srinivas (2010), when students face activities that present a group work dynamic, they have more opportunities to use the target language than in teacher-fronted class and through these student-student interactions, the input is more comprehensible. Subsequently, when learners face group tasks, they feel more comfortable, feel free to use the target language and learn new things as part of the group (Srinivas, 2010). In the same line, Donato (2004) argues that this interaction is considered content production due to the feedback given among students, the exchange of ideas and the collaborative productivity is considered essential to language learning. Additionally, Collaborative

language learning aims to enhance students high order thinking skills, presentation skills, organizational skills, communication, coordination and cooperation skills. In the same line, Srinivas (2010) argues that when Collaborative language learning is executed within a context and not simply taught as a content, it allows students to explore different subjects through English, which grants learners the opportunity to learn more than the target language, but also to gain knowledge of different subjects.

In this context, peer assessment plays an important role due to the dialogic nature of this research and how students interact using the L2 empowering and allowing them to evaluate their peers' learning process.

### **2.1.2 Peer assessment**

Peer assessment has received much attention during the last years due to the growing focus on learners' independence and autonomy, even though traditional assessment is still dominant in the Chilean educational context. Peer assessment can be understood as "an educational agreement in which students assess their classmates' work and provide each other with feedback" (Van den Berg, 2003)

Similarly, Topping (1998) stated that peer assessment can be defined as "an arrangement in which individuals consider the amount, level, value, worth, quality, or success of the products or outcomes of learning of peers of similar status" (as cited in Peng, 2010, p. 89) However, there are several authors who agree on that there are several drawbacks when putting into practice this kind of assessment. For example, Peng (2010) noted that students expressed dislike when they were asked to criticize their peers' tasks, which agrees with Cheng & Warren (2005) who claimed that students did not feel comfortable nor confident when assessing their classmates. In the same line, Patri (2002) said that in order to put into practice these techniques, there is a demand for training and practice to achieve objectivity in the feedback given, training that is extremely time consuming because training, preparation and monitoring is needed. Finally, Peng (2010) noted that, when training and practice are not present, two possible situations may occur: either students are too critical with their peers' outcomes, or they might be too vain. Following, there are

several authors that claim that there are several problems related to peer assessment in aspects such as validity and reliability. Because of that, Devenney (1989) argued that the assessment provided by the students and assessment provided by the teacher have different pedagogical values: the first one can be used as a formative tool, emphasizing the ongoing learning process, meanwhile that the latter one can be used as a summative assessment tool to judge the learners' outcome (as cited in Peng, 2010, p. 89).

However, Peng (2010) argued that peer assessment must be considered as an alternative due to the educational significance that it has because it allows learners to be a part in the evaluation process and it also gives students an opportunity to participate in and evaluate their peers' learning process and final products. There are several authors that highlight the benefits of including peer assessment in our practices, among which we can encounter Nilson (2003), who stated that peer assessment is very effective in enhancing students' critical thinking skills, communication and collaborative skills. Moreover, Sivan (2000) stated that peer assessment can enhance the students' responsibility towards their learning process and boost their motivation, also promoting active and autonomous learning among students (Orsmond & Merry, 1996). Furthermore, since peer assessment techniques are often used in higher education and in group work, Cheng & Warren (2000) presented that these techniques, when put into practice, could help to identify individual contributions to the group work. Finally, Brown (2004) stated that the most important benefit of these strategy is the cooperative learning.

Due to the nature of this study, it is important to revise what speaking skills are, the factors that influence this skill and how has been directed in the Chilean English curriculum throughout the recent years.

## 2.2 Speaking skills

Speaking is defined by Cunningham Florez (1999, n.p.), citing Burns & Joyce (1997) as “an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information and that depends on the context, the participants, and the purposes”. According to Nazara (2011), speaking is how we measure the knowing of the targeted language. In the same line, speaking is understood in theory as a social skill, in the aspect that it generates a relation among the speakers, maintains and modifies social identity, and involves interpersonal skills (Thornbury & Slade, 2006). However, according to Zare & Othman (2015), even though speaking skill is considered as a key skill, the amount of time which is employed on tasks or activities that have as an aim the learners’ oral production, allowing them to interact among each other using this skill, continues to be small.

As English teachers, speaking skills have always presented a challenge in EFL teaching as it entails a deeper understanding of the targeted language. Furthermore, Littlewood (2004) stated that there are six causes that affect the students’ L2 production:

- a) Tiredness
- b) Fear of making mistakes
- c) Not enough interest in the class
- d) Not enough time to generate ideas
- e) Deficient knowledge of the L2
- f) Shyness

In 2004, the national “English Opens Doors Program” was presented with the objective of improving the level of English among students in public schools and creating a generation of independent English learners who are functionally bilingual by 2018 (Fabregas, 2006). Following, in 2009, a reform to the Chilean educational system was made, which had a direct impact on the English curriculum focusing on the training of the four language skills (Barahona, 2016). This new framework is

expected to promote the use of the four different skills using authentic tasks, boosting the students' confidence to face the language acquisition throughout primary and secondary education. With these changes, it was expected that students would enhance their cognitive skills, as it adopts theoretical support from well-established learning approaches, including communicative language teaching approach, cooperative language learning, task based learning and natural approach (Barahona, 2016).

Following this, it is important to check the factors that influence language production.

### **2.2.1 Willingness to communicate**

Willingness to communicate (WTC) was first introduced in literature by McCroskey in 1985 and it only considered the use of students' native language use and it is defined as "the probability of engaging in communication when free to choose to do so", "the intention to initiate communication, given a choice" and as "a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using an L2" (MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei & Noels 1998, p. 546). Furthermore, WTC is defined by Farouck (2016) as "a concept that focuses on how language learners will utilize any opportunities to communicate in a second or foreign language" (p. 11).

McIntyre et al (1998) transformed this to the situation in which attempts to point out the influences that a subject might have to initiate L2 communication and the factors that influences it. The proposed model by this author presents a model which is divided into different layers, among which we can encounter:

- Layer 1 refers to the use of the L2.
- Layer 2 refers to the "behavioral intention", or the probability in which the student engages with the activity.

- Layer 3 refers to the “communicative confidence”, or the certainty that the speaker presents.
- Layer 4 presents “motivational propensities” which refers to the link that is present among the interlocutors.
- Layer 5 presents the “affective cognitive context”. This also concerns communicative competences, intergroup attitudes and aspects of the social situation.
- Layer 6 refers to the social individual context.

In this aspect, when talking about L2 competences, there are some elements that need to be considered, which might influence WTC. According to Simic (2014) these are: classroom atmosphere, group work, wish to practice speaking, interest in the topic, among others. As language development occurs through interaction, it can be inferred that more interactions can enhance language development and learning (Clement, 2003). In the same line, McIntyre (2001) argued that social support influenced WTC inside the classroom.

A common situation that can be observed inside the classroom is the anxiety that students feel when using the L2, and when they perceive the classroom as a threatening place, leading to a disadvantageous effect on learning (Pappamihiel, 2002). In the same line, Yashima (2002) identified three different types of anxiety: negative evaluation, test anxiety and communication apprehension.

This topic is of great importance to the current research due to the role that authentic communication plays on language teaching, and it is because of this, that dialogue is essential to this investigation.

### **2.3 Dialogic Pedagogy**

Teachers of English in Chile face daily students’ lack of motivation and willingness regarding EFL lessons. According to a British Council study on English in Chile (2015), this lack of interest might be because English is perceived by Chilean students as the language of the wealthy people and that they lacked the

opportunities to travel outside Latin America, which turns English into an unnecessary topic to study. This might be due to different factors, among which, we can find program topics that have very little to do with the students interests and reality.

It is ineludible that dialogue is an essential part of education. When this dialogue takes place, we are able to reflect upon our realities and re-signify our environment (Fiori, 2005). To improve this idea of dialogue in education, Bakhtin (1991) proposed the creation and development of “polyphonic classrooms”, idea that promotes the dialogue among different actors that are present in education, such as teachers, pupils, parents, etc. Moreover, according to Rogoff, Matusov & White (1996), this open dialogue has as aim to obtain a highly participative and democratic education. Furthermore, Alexander (2006) argues, Dialogic Pedagogy is an approach that exploits the power of talk to enhance students’ learning, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In the same line, several studies (e.g. Resnick, Asterhan & Clarke, 2015; Wilkinson, Murphy & Binicci, 2015) suggests that students who have experienced Dialogic Pedagogy in their classrooms, demonstrated better learning outcomes and a better attitude for schooling.

This Dialogic approach not only implies the traditional strategies to foster dialogue, but also, this type of teaching tends to privilege dialogue and discussion, which, as Alexander (2006) argues, have the greatest cognitive potential and are “the forms of talk which are most in line with prevailing thinking on children’s learning”. (p.103)

Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, different studies have been dealing with identifying the essential patterns to promote dialogic pedagogy inside the classroom, to promote classroom talk, enhancing students’ participation, engagement and learning (Howe, Hennessy, Mercer, Vrikki & Wheatley, 2019).

Using this approach, Alexander (2008) has been able to identify four different principles present in Dialogic Pedagogy: (see table 2.2)

<b>Cumulative</b>	Teachers & students build on others’ idea and chain it into a coherent line of inquiry.
-------------------	---

<b>Reciprocal</b>	Teachers & students share responsibilities collaborate for the flow of discussion and consider alternative perspectives.
<b>Supportive</b>	Students' voice their ideas freely within a constructive community and help each other to reach a common understanding.
<b>Collective</b>	Teacher and students collaborate with each other to build knowledge and understanding.

Table 2.2: principles present in Dialogic pedagogy

A study by Nystrand, Wu, Gamoran, Zeiser & Long (2003) showed a connection between the use of a set of dialogue-based strategies with 200 students from 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade, and an improve on students' learnings outcomes. The strategies used by the researchers seek to promote open-ended discussion in the classroom to enhance students' discussion, in which they can freely exchange their ideas and views about the proposed topics in conversational modes. In this research, the investigators seek to comprehend how dialogic strategies increased the number of interactions among students. In this line, the authors classified and defined the questions posed by the students into two categories, such as:

- Authentic questions, questions which answers are not prespecified. These questions are very important as students' answers are what they think and know about the topics.
- Uptake questions, clarification questions about what they recently said.

It was observed by Nystrand, Wu, Gamoran, Zeiser & Longs (2003) that students presented a higher interest on participating, asked several questions about their classmates' topics, and most of them were presented using the simple past due to the relation to their classmates' presentations. In the same line, these findings showed that the exposure to these techniques lead to an increase in students' participation. Despite that, the increase in students' participation was only present in small groups, and with topics related to social studies.

Similarly, Anderson, Chapin & O'Connor (2011) conducted a research in which the different dialogue-based strategies were implemented in 4<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms,

whose students age ranges from 9 to 10 years old, from five different schools in Massachusetts and Vermont. During the interventions, the teachers used different strategies that had different goals, such as:

- Goal 1: to help individual students share their own thoughts.
- Goal 2: to help students to orient and listen carefully to one another.
- Goal 3: to help students deepen their reasoning.
- Goal 4: to help students engage with others' reasoning.

The research concluded that strategies oriented to these four goals could have a powerful effect on students on building a listening culture. In addition, researchers found that students assume their role seriously as thinkers and contributors to the groups' effort.

Furthermore, as Mercer (2009) suggested, dialogic teaching is metacognitive, and it involves having teachers and students to reflect on their dialogue to boost their learning process and so to achieve the learning objectives. In the same line, it has been argued that some features that Dialogic Pedagogy brings into the classroom include greater students' involvement, joint inquiry, co-construction of knowledge and open exchange of ideas (e.g., Vrikki, Wheatley, Howe, Henessy & Mercer, 2018).

It is because of these investigations that three different dialogue-based strategies were selected, which have as an aim to achieve the following four goals: helping individual students to share their thoughts, helping them to listen carefully to another, deepen their reasoning and engage with other students' reasonings.

# **Chapter 3: Methods**

### **3.1 Type of research**

The following investigation is formulated using a descriptive scope, by describing the characteristics of the participants, the context and other elements that are a matter of study. The approach of this research is qualitative because what is being explored is the motivation that students show while negotiating the curriculum. According to Mackey & Gass (2005), this type of study involves the production of accurate and precise information.

The current investigation is an action research which, as Burns (2009) states, involves a systematic collection of data through planned intervention, followed by an analysis of what can be observed from the information retrieved and the reflection on the implications of the findings on further research. In the same line, Sutter (2006) summarized the potential benefits that action research can present to teachers as the professionals who perform such studies are reflective teachers, which could lead to remarkable enhancements to education. In this aspect, according to Hine (2013), action research grants teachers' technical abilities and expertise to change their classrooms. The current study follows this framework as it responds to an inquiry regarding my own teaching context, regarding the perceptions of a group of secondary students towards the English lesson, the students' perception towards the implementation of a set of dialogue oriented-strategies and their perception towards the implementation a collaborative dialogic oriented project in an extra-curricular EFL lesson.

### **3.2 Research problem**

Regarding English as a foreign language, the Chilean Government launched during 2003 the "English Open Doors Program", which has as an aim to begin English language learning from a younger age. Subsequently, according to the Chilean Ministry of Education, secondary students would develop an A2 level from 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and they would graduate from 12<sup>th</sup> gradel with a B1 level, according

to the CEFR. With this program, Chile aims to improve economic competitiveness through the implementation of national English language learning standards.

However, according to the English Proficiency Index, provided by EF (2020), Chile ranks #37 among 100 countries. Additionally, according to the English National Study (Estudio Nacional de Inglés, 2017) carried out nationwide with 7,340 students from eleventh grade (+17), 4,991 of them obtained an A1 level, and 2,349 students achieved A2 or B1 level. Also, according to 2014 English SIMCE, from 154,097 students that took this test, only 12.6% obtained a B1 level.

Currently, Chilean education faces a decontextualized curriculum that does not consider the environments in which schools are placed. This leads to a lack of motivation among students, who feel that they are learning things that will never be useful to their lives. Furthermore, according to Glas (2013), the unsuitability of the school curriculum, especially the irrelevance of the learning materials that are used to teach English. Moreover, the privatization of the educational system led to isolation among the private, subsidized and public schools, generating social segregation as the enrollment in the public system was focused mainly in the most impoverished population of our country (MINEDUC, 2016).

The previously mentioned situation is no different from the school in which the current action research study was carried out. The secondary students in this teaching context feel that English is something that they will never use, because for them it would be impossible to travel to a foreign country or to meet an English-speaking person, and some of them do not have as a future goal to continue studying in higher education. Because of that, students do not see English as a tool to improve their employment skills nor to access a wider range of information sources. Thus, this action research project provided students with the freedom to choose a topic of their interest and to engage them through different dialogue-oriented strategies to encourage students to participate.

In this context, Dialogic Pedagogy has great importance as it exploits the power of talking to enhance students' learning, critical thinking and problem-solving

skills. When executing dialogue-oriented strategies inside the classroom, students presented a higher interest on participating. Subsequently, students that were exposed to these techniques lead to an increase in students' participation. According to Simic (2014), these aspects are highly relevant as students' interest in the topic studied impacts directly on their motivation to interact with the targeted language.

### **3.3 Stages of the action research**

This action research study was developed in six sessions of 60 minutes each, twice a week, each of them with a specific purpose and focus. As part of the intervention, students had to choose a topic of their interest, research different aspects, such as the origin of the chosen topics, the evolution through time of these topic and presenting the final solution of their topics. Some of the topics chosen were dictatorships, dynamics in countries that are in conflict and the little support that Chilean scientists receive from the State. This was done in order to later discuss the retrieved information through three strategies oriented to foster the discussion within the classroom, namely envoys, listening triads and open discussions. In the first session, a focus group was carried out to obtain students' perception towards the English lesson in general.

During the second session, an open discussion strategy was introduced which aimed at starting to research general information about their chosen topic. After that, students had to present to their classmates the information retrieved during the session and answer their peer's questions. When this strategy was implemented, students participated actively and orally presented the information gathered making comments on their peer's findings.

In the third session, students investigated how the chosen topic evolved through time and by the end of the session, they had to report to one of their classmates their findings, following the structure of "envoys" strategy. This strategy involves the student responsible of the project shared the information collected with one of their peers. This peer reported the information to the rest of the class, being peer assessed by the student who was responsible of retrieving the information for

the project. During this intervention, students worked vigorously, listened carefully to their classmate's information and, after that, reported what they understood from his peers' presentation.

As for the fourth session, students followed the dynamic of a listening triad strategy, which means that students had to collect information about the conclusion of the investigated topic and present it to the rest of the class. While doing that, students had to take notes about the information presented with the aim of presenting questions to the student who was responsible for retrieving the information. After that, their classmates had to create an alternative ending to how it was originally solved. During this intervention, students participated thoughtfully, presenting different solutions or conclusions to the chosen topics.

During the fifth session, students presented the final results of their investigations, which were discussed with their classmates to clarify doubts about the presentations. During the sixth session, a second focus group was implemented, with the objective of obtaining the students' perception towards the project and their final outcomes.

In the following table (table 3.1), the objectives of each session and the main activities are described.

Session & date	Objective	Activities
1 4 <sup>th</sup> of May	To gather information about the students' perception towards the English lessons and to design a natively based project collectively	Students discuss about the English lessons and their perceptions about it.
2 18 <sup>th</sup> of May	By the end of this lesson, students will have a clear idea of the origin of the	Students gather information about the historical background of the topics they have chosen. After that, students get in pairs and present the gathered information to their classmate in no more than 4 minutes.

	topic they have chosen for their investigation.	After that, students change pairs and present the information given by his classmate, to check if they have got the information correctly. Students receive feedback from their classmates.
3 20 <sup>th</sup> of May	By the end of this lesson, students will present information orally about how the chosen topic has evolved in history.	Students look for information using internet about the topic they have chosen, has evolved throughout history. After that, students report their information to their classmates orally. When doing that, students take notes of the information presented to assess their classmates and clarify doubts when the presentation finishes.
4 25 <sup>th</sup> of May	By the end of this lesson, students will be able to present orally how the students would solve the chosen topics of investigation.	Students present a final solution to the chosen topic. Other students discuss the proposed conclusion, and they present an alternative outcome based on their thoughts and opinions.
5 1 <sup>st</sup> of June	By the end of the lesson, students will present their projects orally to their classmates.	Students present their investigations orally to their classmates and teacher. While doing it, students take notes to generate comments when the presentation finishes.
6 8 <sup>th</sup> of June	To gather information about students' perception about the project	Students express their thoughts and opinions about the project.

Table 3.1: stages of the Action Research

### 3.4 Research questions and Specific objectives

#### 3.4.1 Research question.

- What are the perceptions of a group of secondary students towards the implementation a collaborative dialogic oriented project in an extra-curricular EFL lesson?

#### 3.4.2 General objective

- To explore the perceptions of a group of secondary students towards a collaborative dialogic oriented project implemented in an extra-curricular ELF class.

### 3.4.3 Specific objectives

- To analyze students' perception towards their English lesson
- To analyze students' perceptions towards the implementation a set of dialogue-oriented strategies in an extra-curricular ELF class.
- To identify students' perception towards the implementation of a collaborative, dialogic oriented project in an extra-curricular ELF class.

### 3.5 Participants

This action research study is conducted at a subsidized school in Lota, Concepción, Chile. The participants are 4 students, 3 females and 1 male, from 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade with regular English lessons, ranging from 2 to 4 English hours per week. Their ages vary from 13 to 18 years old and they come from different social backgrounds. These students' level of English varies from A1 (beginner) to B1 (intermediate), according to the CEFR. These students attend to an English workshop which meets every Monday, and each session lasts 60 minutes, with the aim of improving their skills in the L2. A summary of these features can be found on Table 3.1 below.

The selection of these students is strategic, since they have low marks in the English class. For all the exposed previously, the kind of sample used for this action research is a purposive sampling, which is the intentional selection of participants with characteristics that are useful for the specific study (Mason, 2002). Participants are described in the following chart (see table 2)

	<b>Participant 1</b>	<b>Participant 2</b>	<b>Participant 3</b>	<b>Participant 4</b>
<b>Age</b>	15 years old	15 years old	17 years old	17 years old
<b>Grade</b>	2º medio	2º medio	4º medio	4º medio
<b>Sex</b>	Female	Female	Female	Male
<b>Level of English</b>	A2	A2	B1	A2

<b>Years of EFL instruction</b>	10 years	10 years	12 years	12 years
---------------------------------	----------	----------	----------	----------

Table 3.2 description of the participants.

### 3.6 Data collection techniques

#### 3.6.1 Focus Group

According to Wilkinson (2004), focus groups are a very useful tool to gather qualitative data which implies a small group of people into an informal discussion. It is a very useful tool to obtain information from students, as it allows students to express their thoughts unreservedly in an anxiousness free environment. This tool is often used to collect data from multiple individuals simultaneously, and is less intimidating for participants, which is helpful to discuss perceptions, ideas, thoughts and opinions (Krueger & Casey, 2000). In the same line, focus group empowers the participants to share their ideas as a group, which, according to Morgan (1998), can increase the income of important data. Furthermore, Krueger (2000) argues that the social orientation of this tool increases the sense of cohesiveness, and this helps participants to feel safe and share important information (Peters, 1993)

The focus groups considered open-ended questions students, and were carried out in Spanish, in order to obtain more information about the students' feelings. During this research, two focus groups were carried out: One during the first session which had as an objective to explore the students' perceptions towards the English lesson in general, and the second focus group was developed during the final session and had as an objective to obtain students' perception towards the strategies implemented during the interventions.

During the first Focus Group, seven questions were asked to students, addressing the following dimensions:

- Views on their English lessons
- Positive and negative aspects regarding English lessons
- Activities they enjoy the most in their lessons.

During this instance, the design and implementation of the project was discussed with the participants which, according to Downes & Groundwater-Smith (1999), would increase the student's optimism, excitement and eagerness to participate in the project.

During the final session, a second focus group was implemented, which aimed at addressing the second and third specific objective of this action research study, as it focused on information about the students' perception towards the intervention. All the participants took part in this activity, it lasted 20 minutes and 3 questions were formulated around three dimensions: the students' impressions about the project, their perception towards the strategies implemented and suggestions on how to improve the project for future interventions. For the complete instrument see Appendix A and B.

These instruments were submitted to validation with 5 different scholars that belong to a Masters' program at Universidad de Concepcion; these instruments were sent to them for revision with three columns: keep, delete or modify, and they were sent back with the corresponding teachers' instructions on how to improve them.

### **3.7 Data analysis technique**

#### **3.7.1 Focus groups**

To analyze the answers provided during the two focus groups, which aims are to gather information related to the students' perception towards the English lessons, to design and implement the project, and to collect students' perception towards the process, a Descriptive Thematic Analysis was used. This analysis has become widely used during the last years because it provides an accessible, rigorous and systematic approach, and, according to Braun & Clarke (2006) is going to be developed in six different stages:

- a. Familiarization
- b. Coding

- c. Search of themes
- d. Reviewing themes
- e. Defining and naming themes
- f. Writing the report.

## **Chapter 4: Findings**

#### **4.1 Specific Objective 1: To explore students' perception towards the English lesson.**

Regarding the students' perception towards the English lesson, most of the comments considered that English lessons were positive, students agreed on that English lessons presented an interesting dynamic in relation to the activities and how lessons are executed, students used a lot of English, even when they had a low proficiency level in the targeted language. On the other hand, students considered that more oral practice was needed and that the skills taught at school were mainly focused on receptive skills and on vocabulary. Table 4.1 below illustrates a summary of the main themes that emerged in this category.

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	Samples
Students' participation	Active Engagement	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- En general, las clases son buenas, todo el curso, participan todos los estudiantes. (1)</li> <li>- No son monótonas, incluye mucho a los alumnos, por ejemplo, las lluvias de ideas al principio hacen que participemos mucho más. (1)</li> <li>- las actividades que se hacen en clases obliga a todos los alumnos a participar (4)</li> <li>- Podemos practicar porque muchos de nosotros no tenemos la oportunidad de practicar en otros lados, y al final necesitamos practicar. (3)</li> </ul>
Topics	Repetitive	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Los temas son muy <u>repetitivos</u>, tal vez por lo mismo genera poco interés en los alumnos. (2)</li> <li>- No hay mucha variedad en los temas, se trata solamente los temas que están en el libro (3)</li> <li>- Encuentro que está bien hablar sobre el calentamiento global y contaminación, pero son muy repetitivos, y generan poco interés en los alumnos (1)</li> <li>- No hay mucha variedad en los temas que vemos en las clases de Inglés. (1)</li> <li>- No hay mucha variedad porque los temas están relacionados con el libro. (2)</li> <li>- Los temas son muy repetitivos y no generan interés en los alumnos. (3)</li> </ul>

	Cultural irrelevant	2	-Para que los alumnos nos intereseamos, los temas tratados deberían ser mas cercanos. (2) - No son los más adecuados, mucha cultura americana y europea. (3)
--	---------------------	---	---

Table 4.1: Students' perception towards the English lesson

These results show that this group of students have a positive perception towards the English lesson, among which we can encounter:

- Lessons are engaging.
- Good participation.
- Keep the students' attention during the lesson.
- On the other hand, these results revealed that topics do not seem to be interesting for students and are often repetitive.

Regarding the activities performed during English lesson, table 4.2 below shows that most of the students stated that the activities they enjoyed the most were those in which they were given the opportunities to talk, when they needed to guess the topic of the lesson based on a video, or when open questions were asked to the entire class. However, students expressed that English lessons are often focused on vocabulary, and they lack the opportunities to use it during the lesson.

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	Samples
Activities	Reading activities	3	- Me gusta <u>leer textos</u> e identificar información específica dentro de los textos. (4) - Me gusta cuando hacemos lluvias de ideas para ver cual es el tema de la clase. (2). - Disfruto mucho cuando tenemos que encontrar <u>información específica en los textos</u> (4)

	Speaking activities	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Me gusta cuando tenemos que <u>hablar</u>, como cuando hacemos los posters y presentamos al colegio (2)</li> <li>- Me gustan las preguntas abiertas, <u>escritas u orales</u>, aparte de leer (1)</li> </ul>
	Lack of oral practice	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Se necesita más <u>práctica oral</u>, para que mejoremos la pronunciación (1)</li> <li>- Las actividades están basadas en aprender vocabulario y leer (4)</li> <li>- No practicamos como <u>establecer una conversación</u>, no sabemos como hacerlo. (2)</li> <li>- Necesitamos <u>más practica</u> y ver menos contenidos! (3)</li> <li>- ¡No necesitamos aprender cosas tan específicas, necesitamos saber como comunicarnos! (1)</li> </ul>

Table 4.2: Activities performed during English lessons.

From these findings, it can be observed that students enjoyed activities such as brainstorming or open questions at the beginning of the lessons. These students are eager to have more opportunities to speak during lessons and to be taught less contents. In this regard, students argued that due to the lack of opportunities to practice English and activities mainly focused on specific vocabulary, they do not have a clear idea on how to have a basic conversation in English, which is not useful for communicating in a real context. In addition, students expressed that they enjoy reading activities, especially when they have to identify specific information within a text.

Finally, regarding the students' views on the contents studied in the English subject, table 4.3 illustrates that students have a negative view about the contents that are taught, and they consider that the topics that are covered in the English lessons are not useful. In the same line, students argued that they think that the level of English that they reach by the end of their school education is poor, and it does not allow them to be able to communicate properly.

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	Samples
English subject	Usefulness	2	-Es útil porque, cuando nos enseñan frases específicas con grammar, nos sirve harto para comprender (2). - Ha sido útil para no quedar como tonto cuando hablamos con gente de otros países. (1)
	Unreached proficiency expectations	7	- El nivel de Inglés con el que terminamos al salir del colegio es muy bajo. (4) - La meta es muy baja, las personas que salen del colegio no tienen la capacidad de comunicarse. (3) - El nivel al que llegamos es insuficiente (2). - A uno no le enseñan a hablar Inglés en el colegio, solo se aprenden habilidades básicas, como vocabulario, escritura y a leer.(4) - En comparación con otros países, en Chile se habla muy poco Inglés. (1) - Cuando hablo con gente de otros países, no recuerdo que he aprendido en el colegio (4). - No necesitamos aprender cosas tan específicas, necesitamos saber como comunicarnos! (1) - Las habilidades que se enseñan en el colegio son básicas y están enfocadas en vocabulario y leer textos. (4)

Table 4.3: Student's view on the English subject.

These findings show that students expressed a negative view regarding the contents that are taught throughout their primary and secondary education.

In this aspect, we can appreciate that:

- Students feel that the contents are disconnected from their realities.

- Students state that they study are extremely specific, and they will never use it.

Based on the answers given by the students in this first focus group, students stated that they enjoy English classes and the dynamics presented during them. In the same line, students stated that they appreciated when speaking and reading activities were presented, but more opportunities for oral practice were needed. On the other hand, students claimed that the final outcome of the English program during k-12 education is quite low and it is not enough to communicate effectively with people from other countries. Furthermore, students claimed that the contents presented in the English program are often too repetitive and not related to their everyday lives.

## 4.2 Specific Objective 2: To identify students' perception towards the implementation of a set of dialogue-oriented strategies in an extra-curricular ELF class

These students enjoyed the different strategies implemented and enjoyed presenting every lesson. Conversely, they argued that this kind of methodology would be very hard to implement in regular classes due to the factor of time.

In table 4.4, we can observe a summary of the categories emerged regarding the second dimension: students' perception towards the strategies implemented during the different interventions.

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	Samples
Research	Meaningful topics	2	- Me sentí más <u>motivado</u> a investigar sobre el tema porque está relacionado con el area que quiero estudiar. (3) - Estabamos más <u>motivados</u> a trabajar porque estamos investigando algo que elegimos, no algo impuesto. (1)
	Unrealistic	1	-En clases normales no podriamos aplicar esta metodología porque tomaría mucho tiempo. (3)

Table 4.4: Summary of the categories in the Dimension on Students' perception towards the dialogue-oriented strategies implemented

From this thematic analysis, it can be stated that students enjoyed the different strategies presented class to class, they found interesting the fact that each class had to investigate different aspects related to the topics they had chosen. In the same line, we can observe that students enjoyed presenting the information they retrieved during the different sessions orally. Furthermore, students stated that it was very interesting choosing the topic they wanted to investigate. On the contrary, they said that some of the questions were not correctly proposed due to the wideness of the topic they have chosen and how they could relate them to their specific investigations.

**4.3 Specific Objective 3: To identify students’ perception towards the implementation of a collaborative dialogic oriented project in an extra-curricular ELF class.**

Students’ impressions about the implementation of the collaborative dialogic oriented project are illustrated in Table 4.5. In this aspect, students had a positive view on the project as they engaged in research and expressed that it was very interesting to have the freedom to choose the topic that they wish to investigate. Furthermore, students argued that it was very interesting to present information orally along the different sessions. On the contrary, students argued that in some cases, the questions to be developed during each session was not correctly prepared for each of the topics.

Students’ perception towards the collaborative dialogic oriented project	Clear expectations	2	- Cuando tenemos claro el objetivo de la clase, no nos Podemos perder, porque sabemos específicamente que hacer en cada clase. (3) - Saber que información encontrar cada clase, y saber que al final de la clase la tenemos que presentar, te pone más ansioso y te motiva más a encontrar la info correcta. (2)
	Oral presentations	2	- Me gusto la metodolodía que usamos durante clases, me gustan las presentaciones orales. (4) - Me gusto presentar la información que encontramos al final de la clase (1)
	Unclear Questions	2	- Quizás las preguntas no eran las correctas para cada clase, quizás no servían para todos los temas. (1) - Las preguntas podrían haber sido mas específicas para cada tema. (3)

Table 4.5: Summary of the categories in the Dimension on Students’ impressions about the collaborative dialogic oriented project.

In table 4.6 below, we can observe that students suggested that, in order to improve some aspects related to the collaborative dialogic oriented project for further investigations, a connection among different subjects should be developed in order to generate a larger impact on what topics to cover. In the same line,

students suggested that some questions presented to students during the sessions could be narrowed down to specify the information they needed to research.

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	Samples
Students' suggestions to improve the project	Interdisciplinary work	2	- Creo que esta metodología sería mas util complementando distintas clases, por ejemplo historia. (3) - Si usamos esta metodología conectada con otra asignatura, tendríamos el doble de trabajo para hacer un mejor trabajo. (1)
	Reformulating questions	2	- Creo que, cuando tuvimos que investigar sobre como nuestro tema evolucionó en el tiempo, era una pregunta muy amplia, porque algunos de nuestros temas empezaron hace mucho tiempo, entonces era muy dificil de decidir que decir. (1) - Opino similar a (1), creo que las preguntas deben ser mas especificas. (3)

Table 4.6: Summary of the categories in the Dimension on Students' suggestions to improve the project

During this focus group, students claimed that they appreciated the different strategies presented during the sessions, they felt more motivated to research information about the chosen topics because of the freedom they had to choose the topics of their investigation. In the same line, students claimed that these strategies could be highly effective in their regular sessions but by connecting different subjects to reach a more meaningful research. On the other hand, students said that these strategies were very difficult to be implemented in our regular classrooms due to the lack of time.

# **Chapter 5: Discussion**

This research was conducted to explore the perceptions of a group of secondary students towards a collaborative dialogic oriented project implemented in an extra-curricular ELF class. The data findings are discussed in relation to the specific objectives as follows:

### **5.1 Specific objective 1: To explore students' perception towards the English lesson.**

Based on the findings, participants expressed their beliefs in different areas about the English lesson such as students' participation during the English lesson, the topics studied during the English lessons and the type of activities presented to students during lessons and their perception of the English subject.

In the first aspect, students stated that classes presented interesting dynamics and were very engaging due to their communicative nature, such as group work or speaking activities. These findings are aligned to Srinivas (2010) ideas, as he argued that when students felt more comfortable and are more eager to use English. Furthermore, Donato (2004), reinforces the ideas that this interaction enhances English learning due to the synergy executed among students. These authors convey on the idea that group work is highly relevant and should be considered given the positive impact that brings among students. As Pantiz stated (1999), when collaborative learning strategies are implemented in the classroom, several benefits can be observed which can be social, academic or psychological, such as fostering students critical thinking skills, reducing anxiety among students or enhancing students' critical thinking skills. In the same direction, Nystrand, Wu, Gamoran, Zeiser & Long (2003) stated that when students are exposed to group work, it can be observed that students participate more and are more engaged with the class.

Another aspect which emerged from these findings was the students' perception towards the topics studied in the English lessons. The current study students' who mentioned that the topics covered in the English lessons were often too repetitive, culturally irrelevant and not meaningful for them. These findings are a great example of what has already described in the literature which shows that Chilean English learners believed that English is the language of the wealthy and

that they lacked the opportunities to travel outside Latin America, which turns English into an unnecessary topic to study (British Council, 2015).

This current action research study also unveils students' perception towards the activities executed in the English lessons. In this point, students stated that they enjoyed participating when speaking activities were presented. However, they argued that, in order to improve their pronunciation, more opportunities were needed to interact in the L2. These views reflect those of Zare & Othman (2015), who stated that the amount of time provided to practice oral skills should be increased, allowing students to interact among each other.

Finally, these results show students' views regarding the English subject, in which they expressed that the level of English that they reached by the end of their secondary education is low; therefore, they agree on that are not able to interact in real life using English. These findings show that the expected outcomes stated in the National Curriculum Guidelines aiming at developing language competences in the four skills at 11<sup>th</sup> grade (MINEDUC, 2012) are far to be achieved. These results can be reflected in the *Estudio Nacional de Inglés* (2017), in which 7,430 students from 3<sup>o</sup> medio were evaluated, 4,991 showed to be at A1 level, and only 2,349 at A2 or B1 level in CEFR.

## **5.2 Specific Objective 2: To analyze students' perception towards the implementation of set of dialogue-oriented strategies in an extra-curricular ELF class.**

When asked about their perception towards the different strategies, students stated that they had a positive view on the different strategies that were executed during the different interventions due to the dialogic approach that each these strategies proposed. This finding is aligned to the findings presented by Howe, Hennessy, Mercer, Vrikki & Wheatley, (2009) who suggested that this experience fulfils the aim of dialogic pedagogy inside the classroom promoting classroom talk, enhancing students' participation, engagement and learning.

Additionally, students stated the aim of each of the sessions was very clear, and during each of the intervention sessions, they knew exactly what to do. Students

expressed that it was very interesting to have the freedom to choose the topic that they wanted to investigate. These findings are in the same line as proposed by Simic (2014), who stated that when considering students' interests in the classroom, students' willingness to communicate is fostered and they show a greater motivation to participate in the class.

Similarly, students agreed on that they enjoyed the different strategies presented and presenting orally the information they retrieved during the different sessions. From students' perspectives, it could be inferred that students appreciated the different strategies presented during the sessions, they felt more motivated to research information about a topic of their choice. These findings can be related to the results evidenced by Nystrand, Wu, Gamoran, Zeiser & Long (2003) who showed a connection between the use of a set of dialogue-based strategies and an improve on students' learnings outcomes. The strategies used by both, the researchers and the author of this action research, sought to promote open-ended dialogue strategies in the classroom to enhance students' discussion, in which they can freely exchange their ideas and views about the proposed topics in conversational modes. The increase on students' level of engagement from Nystrand, Wu, Gamoran, Zeiser & Long's research is consistent with the one observed in the current action research, when using similar dialogue oriented strategies.

### **5.3 Specific Objective 3: To identify students' perception towards the implementation of collaborative, dialogic oriented project in an extra-curricular ELF class.**

When asking students about their perception towards the implementation of the collaborative, dialogic oriented project, they stated that they enjoyed retrieving information through the different sessions and presenting the information after that. In this aspect, there is a connection among the current findings and the conclusions from Anderson's (2006) research, which concluded that when implementing dialogue-based strategies, it was possible to observe that students assumed a co-learner role very seriously, collaborating in their classmates' learning process, and it also helped to develop among students a powerful listening culture. The results

presented in the current investigation showed a high level of participation from the students towards the different strategies implemented during the different intervention sessions. Subsequently, it was possible to observe the contribution of Dialogic Pedagogy in students' motivation towards the lesson, which fosters the power of dialogue to enhance students' learning skills (Alexander, 2006). Furthermore, according to Clement's (2003) findings, providing more opportunities to students to interact the targeted language enhances language development and learning.

Additionally, students stated that these strategies could be implemented in regular classes and connecting different subjects, to learn English not only as a content but within a context. These findings are also aligned with Srinivas's (2019), who argued that when students felt more comfortable and are more eager to use English. This author also argued that when Collaborative language learning is executed within a context and not simply taught as a content, it could allow students to explore different subjects through English, which grants learners the opportunity to learn more than the target language, but also to gain knowledge of different subjects.

#### **5.4 Implications and limitations**

Action research, as other specific studies, investigate particular contexts; therefore, the results of this research are framed in a similar group of participants than the one that is investigated. Participants stated that the English lesson was very engaging for them due to the kind of activities that are executed during the lessons.

Students expressed that several of the topics that are studied during their education are often repetitive and are not attractive for them, which leads to a lack of motivation among them to interact with the target language. Similarly, students stated that several topics are culturally irrelevant, as the topics that are treated during classes are related to American or European culture. Thus, one of the implications from this study is that when teaching English, students' interests should be taken into consideration and topics should be more related to their everyday lives.

Additionally, students stated that more opportunities to practice their oral skills are needed, and to implement different strategies that can enhance students' speaking skills. Subsequently, another implication of this study is to create these opportunities as they are highly relevant for students providing more practice to establish conversations and use the language for communicational purposes.

One of the most important implications to highlight from this action research is the important role of presenting clearly the objective of each of the lessons, because, as participants stated, when this is clearly stated at the beginning of the session, they have a clear goal, and know what to do during the session.

Another important implication for the teacher researcher is that more room should be given to collaborative learning inside the classrooms. As it was observed during the intervention sessions students felt more motivated to participate and to interact with their classmates.

On the other hand, the main limitation of this study is the number of participants of this research. As students presented in the second focus group, applying these dialogue-oriented strategies in a regular classroom could be highly difficult due to the number of students. In the same line, other limitation is that this study only concerns about students' perception towards the English lesson and does not consider the teacher researchers' perception towards the English curriculum.

A final identified limitation within this study is the pandemic situation in which this action research was conducted. The online context in which the current research was applied affected the number of students that participated, given that the number of students who was initially selected to participate in this investigation was drastically reduced.



# **Chapter 6: Conclusions**

## **6.1 Main Findings**

The findings presented in this study regarding students' perception towards the English lesson in general, show that they perceive the English lessons as very engaging, presenting interesting dynamics in relation to how lessons are carried out and the activities that are executed. Furthermore, they stated that they were able to use a lot of English, even though they had a low proficiency level. In addition, , students claimed that topics studied during regular English classes were culturally irrelevant, disconnected from their realities and often repetitive. Students also claimed that the topics covered in English lessons are extremely specific, so they would never be used, arguing as well that the level of English they reach by the end of their educational process is low or insufficient to communicate their ideas freely.

In regards of the use of dialogic based strategies, students stated that they engaged with the strategies presented and that it was very interesting to have the freedom to choose the topics that they wanted to investigate.

Furthermore, students stated that they enjoyed each of the different strategies implemented and it was very clear to achieve the aim of each of the session given the clarity of each of the intervention sessions objectives. Subsequently, students see the potential of using these strategies with an interdisciplinary focus creating a more meaningful research project.

## **6.2 Personal reflection,**

After this action research process, several aspects changed for me as an individual, as a teacher, and now, as a teacher researcher. First of all, as an individual, this process taught me that through dedication, perseverance and constancy, nothing is impossible and any goal can be achieved, no matter how difficult it looks.

As a teacher, I think that the most important conclusion that this action research leaves is to consider students' interests while planning my classes. Furthermore, another important aspect to consider when planning classes is to provide plenty of opportunities to practice their oral skills, because, in opposition to what I thought as a teacher, students are eager to use the language, in spite of their knowledge of it.

Finally, as a teacher researcher, I think that this process taught me reflect on my teaching practices beyond than an obligation, to identify problems that are occurring in the classroom, to gather information on how other teachers have faced similar problems and to plan possible solutions for that problem.

### **6.3 Further Research**

As this study focused on an action research frame, and this follows a structure of reflection and action, it would be interesting to see how these different strategies could affect students' motivation when implemented in an interdisciplinary work, where different subjects are considered to provide students a larger context to use English.

Also, it could be useful to see how these different strategies could work with larger classes and how they could impact on the way students interact within the classroom when applying different peer assessment techniques. In the same line, it would be interesting to see how collaboratively learning can impact on student's motivation.

## References

- Alexander, R. (2018). Developing dialogic teaching: Genesis, process, trial. *Research Papers in Education*, 33(5), 561e598.
- Anderson, N., Chapin, S., & O'Connor, C. (2011). *Classroom discussions in math: A facilitator's guide to support professional learning of discourse and the Common Core, Grades K–6*. (Includes DVDs with 75 video clips.) Sausalito, CA: Math Solutions. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 21(3), 239–250.
- Austin, J. E. (2000). Principles for Partnership. *Journal of Leader to Leader*. 18 (Fall), pp. 44-50.
- Barahona, M. (2016). Challenges and accomplishments of ELT at primary level in Chile: Towards the aspiration of becoming a bilingual country. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 24(82). <http://dx.doi.org/10.14507/epaa.24.2448>
- Bengoa, J. 2009. *La Comunidad Fragmentada [The Fragmented Community]*. Santiago: Catalonia.
- Berg, B.A.M. van den (2003). Peer assessment in universitair onderwijs. Een onderzoek naar bruikbare ontwerpen. [Peer assessment in university teaching: an exploration of useful designs]. Doctoral dissertation, University of Utrecht, The Netherlands.
- British Council (2015) *English in Chile, an examination of policy, perceptions and influencing factors*.
- Brown, D (2004). *Language assessment: Principles and classroom practice*. New York: Longman.
- Bryman, A. (2012) *Social Research Methods*. Fourth Edition. Oxford University Press, New York, United States.
- Burns, A (2005). Action research: an evolving paradigm?. *Language Teaching*, 38, pp 57-74 doi:10.1017/ S0261444805002661
- Cheng, W. & Warren, M (2005). Peer assessment of language proficiency. *Language Testing*, 22(1), 93–

- Clément, R. (2003) *Willingness to Communicate in a Second Language: The Effects of Context, Norms, and Vitality*
- Devenney, R (1989). How ESL teachers and peers evaluate and response to students writing. *RELC*
- Donato, R. (2004) Aspects of collaboration in pedagogical discourse. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 24: 284–302. *Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 7(2), 193–213.
- Fábrega, R. (2006). Hacia un Chile bilingüe [Towards a bilingual Chile]. In *Revista de educación* no. 323
- Farouck, I. (2016). A project-based language learning model for improving the willingness to communicate of EFL students. *Journal of Systemics*, 14(2), 11-18.
- Gillies, R. M. and Ashman, A. F. (2003). *Co-operative learning: The social and intellectual outcomes of learning in groups*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Hine, G. S. C. (2013). The importance of action research in teacher education programs. In *Special issue: Teaching and learning in higher education: Western Australia's TL Forum. Issues in Educational Research*, 23(2), 151-163. <http://www.iier.org.au/iier23/hine.html>
- Howe, C., Hennessy, S., Mercer, N., Vrikki, M., & Wheatley, L. (2019). Teacher-student dialogue during classroom teaching: Does it really impact upon student out- comes? *The Journal of the Learning Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10508406.2019.1573730>.
- Johnson, D.W. & Johnson, R.T. (2009). An Educational Psychology Success Story: Social Interdependence Theory and Cooperative Learning. *Journal of Educational researcher*, 38(5), pp. 365-379. *Journal*, 20(1), 77–90.
- Krueger, R. A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied researchers* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Laal, M and Ghodsi, S.M (2011) Benefits of collaborative learning. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 31 (2012) 486 – 490. Published by Elsevier Ltd.
- Littlewood, W (2004). Students' perspectives on interactive learning. In O. Kwo, T. Moore & J. Jones (Eds). *Developing environments in higher education*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- MacIntyre, P.D., Clément, R., Dörnyei, Z., & Noels, K. (1998). Conceptualizing willingness to communicate in an L2: A situated model of confidence and affiliation. *The Modern Language Journal*, 82, 545–562.
- Mackey, A. and Gass, S. (2005) *Second Language Research. Methodology and Designs*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers. Mahwah, New Jersey. United States of America.
- Mercer, N., L. Dawes, and J.K. Staarman. 2009. "Dialogic Teaching in the Primary Science Class- room." *Language and Education* 23 (4): 353–369.
- Mills, G. E. (2011). *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher* (4th ed.). Boston: Pearson. Osterman, K. F. & Kottkamp, R. B. (1993). *Reflective practice for educators: Improving schooling through professional development*. Newbury Park, CA: Corwin.
- Mineduc. 2016. IVE-SINAE Junta Nacional Escolar Y Becas [National Committee on Schools and Grants]. Santiago: Ministerio de Educación.
- Morgan, D. L. (1988). *Focus groups as qualitative research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage na%2017.06.2014.pdf
- Nazara, S. (2011). Students' perception on EFL speaking skill development. *JET: Journal of English Teaching*, 1(1), 28-43.
- Nilson, L (2003). Improving student peer feedback. *College Teaching*, 51(1), 34–38.
- Nokes-Malach, T. and Richey, E.J (2015) *When is better to learn together? Insights from Research on collaborative learning*. Springer Science+Business Media, New York.

- Nystrand, M., Wu, L. L., Gamoran, A., Zeiser, S., & Long, D. A. (2003). Questions in time: Investigating the structure and dynamics of unfolding classroom discourse. *Discourse Processes*, 35(2), 135e198.
- Orsmond, Paul & Merry, Stephen (1996). The importance of marking criteria in the use of peer assessment.
- Panitz, T.(1999). Benefits of Cooperative Learning in Relation to Student Motivation", in Theall, M. (Ed.) *Motivation from within: Approaches for encouraging faculty and students to excel, New directions for teaching and learning*. San Francisco, CA; USA. Josey-Bass publishing.
- Pappamihiel, N. (2002). English as a second language students and English language anxiety: Issues in the mainstream classroom. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 327-355.
- Patri, M (2002). The influence of peer feedback on self- and peer-assessment of oral skills. *Language*
- Peng, J 2010. Peer Assessment in an EFL Context: Attitudes and Correlations. In *Selected Proceedings of the 2008 Second Language Research Forum*, ed. Matthew T. Prior et al., 89-107. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project. [www.lingref.com](http://www.lingref.com), document #2387.
- Peters, D. A. (1993). Improving quality requires consumer input: Using focus groups. *Journal of Nursing Care Quality*, 7, 34–41.
- Resnick, L., Asterhan, C., & Clarke, S. (Eds.). (2015). *Socializing intelligence through academically productive talk and dialogue*. Washington, DC: American Education Research Association.
- Simic, I. (2014). Willingness to Communicate: A comparison between Austrian and Serbian students. Austria: University of Graz. Retrieved from [http://www.ecml.at/Portals/1/resources/Related%20Research/Simic%20\\_Iva](http://www.ecml.at/Portals/1/resources/Related%20Research/Simic%20_Iva)
- Sivan, A (2000). The implementation of peer assessment: An action research approach. *Assessment in Testing*, 19(2), 109–131.
- Srinivas, P. (2019). Collaborative learning in english language learning environment. 7.10.33329/rjelal.7119.330.

- Suter, W. N. (2006). Introduction to educational research: A critical thinking approach. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Thornbury, S. & Slade, D. (2006). Conversation: from description to pedagogy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Topping, K (1998). Peer assessment between students in colleges and universities. *Review of Educational Research*, 68(3), 249–276.
- Tunnard, S. and Sharp, J. (May 01, 2009). Children's Views of Collaborative Learning. *Education 3-13*, 37, 2, 159-164
- Vrikki, M., Wheatley, L., Howe, C., Hennessy, S., & Mercer, N. (2018). Dialogic practices in primary school classrooms. *Language and Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2018.1509988>.
- Wilkinson, I. A. G., Murphy, P. K., & Binici, S. (2015). Dialogue-intensive pedagogies for promoting reading comprehension: What we know. what we need to know. In L. B. Resnick, C. S. C. Asterhan, & S. N. Clarke (Eds.), *Socializing intelligence through talk and dialogue* (pp. 37e50). Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.
- Yashima, T. (2002). Willingness to communicate in a second language: The Japanese EFL Context. *The Modern Language Journal*, 54-66.
- Zare, P. & Othman, M. (2015) Students' Perceptions toward Using Classroom Debate to Develop Critical Thinking and Oral Communication Ability. *Asian Social Science*, 11(9).

# Appendixes

## **Appendix A**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Focus group questions**

1. What do you think about your English lessons?
2. What are some of the positive aspects of your English lessons?
3. What are some of the negative aspects of your English lessons?
4. What kind of activities do you enjoy the most in English classes?
5. Do you consider contents learned in English subject useful in your daily life?
6. What topics would you like to investigate in an English project?

## **Appendix B**

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Focus group questions

1. What do you think about the project?
2. From the project, what do you think can be improved?