Approximation and contextualization of the teacher's professional context

Aproximación y contextualización del contexto profesional docente

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Abstract

The present research work is of qualitative design with a descriptive approach, which shows important information that the trainee teacher focused on during the English language observation classes, emphasizing the challenges and responsibilities that a teacher faces daily, the same that the trainee teacher will have to face in the future. In addition, a detailed vision is provided regarding the professional context of teachers of English as a foreign language, highlighting findings related to the use of the English language as well as the incorporation of foreign cultures in the classroom for enriching learning, the methodology used to address the behavior of students, making them show interest in learning, and overcoming the difficulties they have with the language, taking into account that this is not their language of origin.

Similarly, the adaptations that teachers should make in terms of an improvement in the learning process of students highlight that correct use of the language concerning the level of English of the students has a significant impact on a better understanding of the topics addressed in classes, as well as promoting a good learning environment where values such as respect and empathy influence a harmonious coexistence where students participate without fear of making mistakes, as this is part of healthy learning. Likewise, an educator must respond to the needs of each student, thus guaranteeing a quality education.

Keywords: Professional context, English Teachers

Resumen

El presente trabajo investigativo es de diseño cualitativo con un enfoque descriptivo, en el cual se muestra información importante en la que el maestro en formación se enfocó durante las clases de observación del idioma inglés, haciendo énfasis en los desafíos y responsabilidades que un docente enfrenta a diario, mismos que tendrá que enfrentar el maestro en formación en un futuro. Además, se proporciona una visión detallada en cuanto al contexto profesional de los docentes de inglés como lengua extranjera, resaltando hallazgos relacionados al uso del idioma inglés, así como la incorporación de culturas extranjeras en el aula para un aprendizaje enriquecedor, la metodología empleada para abordar el comportamiento de los estudiantes, haciendo que estos muestren interés en aprender y superar las dificultades que tienen con el idioma, esto teniendo en cuenta que este no es su lenguaje de origen.

Del mismo modo, las adaptaciones que los docentes deben realizar en cuanto a una mejora en el proceso de aprendizaje de los estudiantes, destacando que un correcto uso del idioma en relación al nivel de inglés de los estudiantes impacta significativamente para una mejor comprensión de los temas abordados en clases, al igual que fomentar un buen ambiente de aprendizaje, donde valores como el respeto, la empatía influyen para una convivencia armónica donde los estudiantes participen sin miedo a equivocarse, ya que esto es parte de un aprendizaje sano. Asimismo, se evidencia que un educador debe responder a las necesidades de cada estudiante, para garantizar así una educación de calidad.

Palabras claves: Contexto profesional, docentes de Ingles.

INTRODUCTION

This study aimed to observe and describe the professional context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers through a qualitative research design with a descriptive approach. The study focused on observing the teaching and learning process, requirements for working as an EFL teacher, and the use of language and incorporation of foreign cultures in the classroom. The research was conducted through observation classes, in which an observation guide, field notes, and an interview were used to collect data. Also, these instruments were analyzed to understand teacher professional contexts.

The findings revealed that the teacher used language effectively according to the student's English level, which is essential for successful teaching. However, the teacher faced challenges incorporating foreign cultures into the classroom and managing student behavior. Additionally, the teacher demonstrated the ability to respond to students' needs but faced difficulties handling unexpected situations. The use of technological tools and adaptation of pedagogical resources were not observed in the classroom, which could limit student learning. Previous research has emphasized the importance of using language appropriate to the student's English level and incorporating foreign cultures into EFL education to create a positive learning environment. Teachers' intercultural awareness is also crucial for the successful integration of foreign cultures into EFL education. Furthermore, encouraging and validating students' participation is essential to clarifying the learning goals and eliciting evidence of students' understanding.

This study also evidenced the lack of resources for teaching English, which affected the teaching-learning process, and the challenges teachers face in adjusting to new technologies and pedagogical approaches. Therefore, ongoing professional development and support for teachers are necessary to integrate technology into their teaching practice effectively. All in all, the study provides insights into the professional context of EFL teachers and highlights the importance of effective language use, incorporation of foreign cultures, responding to students' needs, managing student behavior, and using technological tools and pedagogical resources in the classroom. To improve the quality of education, it is recommended that teachers incorporate foreign cultures into the

classroom, make efficient use of technology and pedagogical resources, and continue to meet the various requirements of their students.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study was based on a qualitative design with a descriptive approach, which will familiarize the observer researcher with the professional context of an English as a Foreign Language Teacher. Creswell (2017) highlights that qualitative research serves as a lens for inquiry data throughout observations and has the possibility of being generated throughout the analysis. In the same manner, Tenny (2022) remarks that qualitative research helps researchers explore problematics more deeply, finding solutions, based on hypotheses, experiences, perceptions, and behaviors. Likewise, Hempel 1996 cited by Asper (2019) said that qualitative research allows people to do studies in a natural setting, making interpretations and understanding the phenomena with a large range of empirical materials, such as case analysis, personal experience, introspective, life history, interview, observational, historical, interactive and visual texts, which describe problematic moments and meanings in the lives of individuals.

Firstly, this study aims to observe and describe the professional context of English teachers and allow the researcher to get familiar with the educational environment, as well as, the teaching and the learning process, the requirements that professionals need to carry out to work as an English as a Foreign Language Teacher. In the same way, it allows the pre-service teacher to develop critical thinking to fulfill the educational needs of students and innovate the teaching process with new methodological strategies that are useful for successful teaching. In this regard, the observer researcher prepared an intervention plan, in which the researcher included the details of the present project, which was to approach the work context of an English teacher through the research report.

On the other hand, it is essential to highlight that the pre-professional practices comprised a total of 80 hours, strategically distributed in 3 key stages: 20 hours for the development of the research instruments, 40 hours dedicated to the observations, and 20 hours for the elaboration of the inquiry. Consequently, the researcher presented the necessary documentation to be able to approach an educational institution to carry out the present project, this documentation included a request to the principal of the institution to have free access to it and to be assigned the schedule and the grades to be observed, as well as, the teacher who is the main participant to carry out the project.

Likewise, regarding the phases that the project involved, there are 3: the theoretical part, which is the first stage, it can be mentioned that this part provides a range of knowledge and familiarization about the professional profile, domains, professional requirements, and professional commitments related to the teaching and learning process. The practice is the second stage, where the researcher observes, analyzes, and collects data, using research instruments such as an observation guide, field notes, and an interview; finally, the research is the last stage which complements the study and provides a wide-ranging understanding of teacher professional contexts. Furthermore, it is essential to mention that the observation guide was based on the requirements that an English teacher should have to take part in the educational field, such as domains, professional competencies, professional commitment, and so on; Also, the field notes that supported the visualizations carried out by the observation guide and the interview that has allowed the researcher to recognize the limitations of an English classroom.

Concerning the participants of this study, it can be mentioned that the main actor was the teacher assigned by the principal of the high school, the grades in charge of the same teacher, in this case 6th, 7th, and 8th grades, each grade with a total of 30 students; average of age is from 10 to 13 years old, where students with educational needs also took part. Finally, the procedure for conducting this research was based on the inquiry, analysis, and organization of the data collected through the instruments which allowed to have a clear view of the perspectives of each participant, in this case, the teacher's perspective.

RESULTS

The present research work carried out by the pre-service teacher, whose purpose was to have an approximation and contextualization with the Teacher Profile, yielded significant findings that provide the researcher with a deeper understanding of the factors that influence the teaching and learning process, which it was observed that having a good environment where the students are emotionally well influences in the successful teaching. In the same way, these findings hold that good training and capacitation of teachers are important in the educational context, where it is necessary to respond to the student's needs and implement educational policies that promote quality and equitable education.

On the other hand, data were collected by using the observation guide, which was key to getting results related to the use of language according to the student's English level, the methodological strategies, the classroom management, as well as the student's interaction, and the used of pedagogical resources.

Graphic 1: Observation results
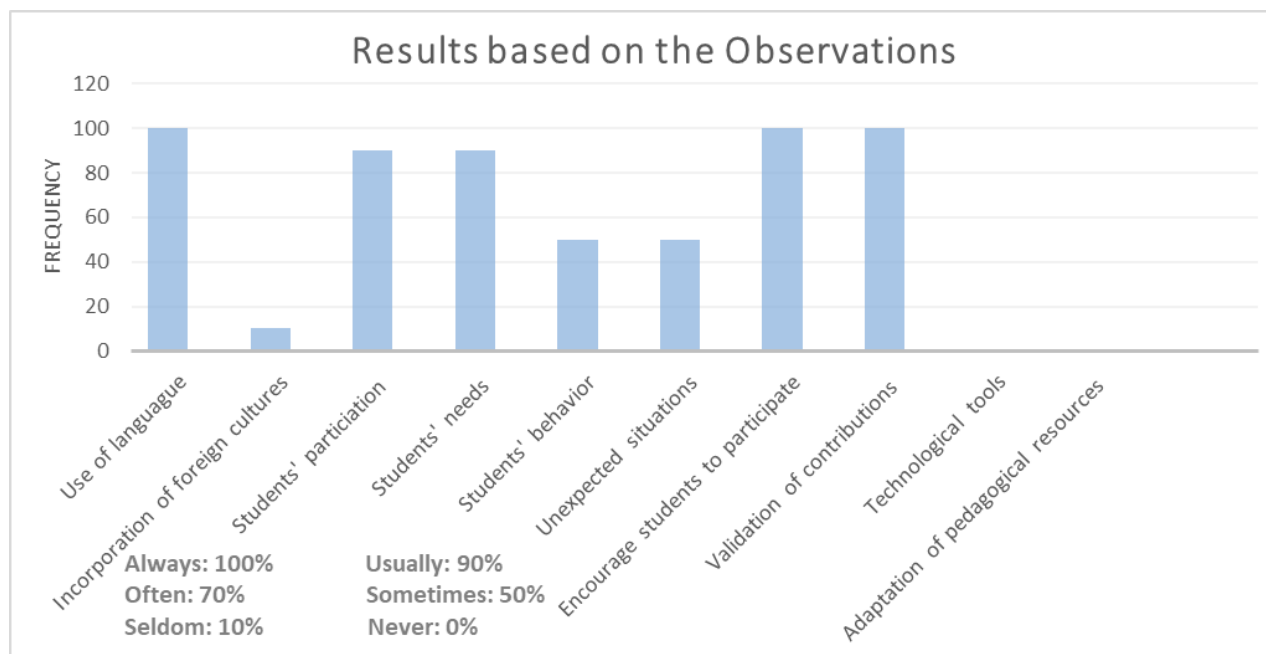
Elaboration: Paccha, Alizon (2024)

The total number of indicators used was ten; each of them was chosen and analyzed according to the theoretical part of the project itself where the teacher-student observed and examined teaching aspects such as domains, and standards of teaching EFL,

responsibilities, and teacher's role, students and professor's rights, and the policies that an educator must cover during the teaching process. From this point, the teacher-student found that the teacher taught a total functioning of the use of language for teaching English as a Foreign Language, which is essential and enriching in the teaching process because it allows students to have a good understanding of the topics taught in class, thus extending their understanding.

Also, it is essential to mention that the teacher used the language according to the English level of the students using a mix of languages, in this situation English and Spanish for the understanding of the topics taught in class, reflecting a frequency of 100% (always) to this indicator. Likewise, this is balanced with preserving an optimal learning environment, because the teacher fully showed support and validation of the students' collaboration and contribution, thus obtaining 100% (always) in said indicators.

However, the teacher did not know how to integrate foreign cultures into classes, thus obtaining 10% (seldom) in this indicator, a fundamental aspect for a successful education, which can delimit in a certain way the education and learning process of the subject itself. Regarding students' participation, the frequency reflecting was 90% (usually), which reflects how active the classes were, but more than anything the understanding of the topics observed throughout the class. In the same way, the teacher demonstrated the ability to respond correctly to the student's needs, mentioning that the teacher had at least 3 students with disability associated with educational needs, shimmering a frequency of 90% (usually).

On the other hand, the art of teaching is not a simple task, on the contrary, it is an arduous task, knowing how to maintain control of the students' behavior and knowing how to handle unexpected situations is the responsibility of the educator. In this situation, the teacher trained a capacity of 50 % (sometimes) in the two indicators, considering that each classroom had 30 students.

Finally, regarding the use of technological tools and the habituation of pedagogical resources, 0% (never) of them were used, due to the lack of resources for the education process, which limits student learning.

DISCUSSION

Taking into account that the present research project is of approach and characterization with the professional context, it can be mentioned that the pre-service teacher found the use of language important in the teaching-learning process, since this is of great importance for successful teaching, an aspect that is mention by Ellis (2003) who remarks that the correct use of language is an important factor that can impact both positively and negatively on the effectiveness teaching and learning process of the English language in the classroom. Likewise, Carless (2007) mentions that previous research has shown that the correct use of language according to the student's English level helps significantly in the creation of a positive learning environment, which allows for a better understanding of the topics being taught.

On the other hand, Farrell (2019) discusses that teachers' intercultural awareness is decisive for the accession of foreign cultures in EFL education, finding that EFL teachers who have greater intercultural awareness are more capable of ensuring a prevalent learning process. In the same way, Byram (1997) highlights the importance of providing teachers with the training and support they need to integrate foreign cultures into their teaching practices. In this way, something that in some way limits the learning process of the students identified by the researcher in the present project.

Furthermore, the researcher found that having a good environment that enriches the students' participation, where the professor encourages their participation and validates their contributions is important to allow them to learn actively, fostering respect in the classroom, something that Bennet (1994) supports since through their article highlights that encourage and validate student's participation is important to clarify the learning goals, as well as, eliciting evidence of student's understanding, also providing feedbacks to the students, fact that the pre-service teacher analyzed during the practice.

Regarding the students' needs, the researcher figurate out that responding correctly to the student's needs is important, however, in this case, the professor had mentioned that sometimes it is difficult to cover all the student's needs, as well as, to have total control of the student's behaviors and handle with unexpected situations, since sometimes when you work as a teacher you have to handle with students with special needs, and this interferes with the progress of your classes, an aspect that Brophy (2006) argues, since through his article statement that is crucial to focus on student-centered learning, which is effective to respond and act according to the student's needs,

and for the development of appropriate scaffolding and support, as well as, to have control of the factors that affects the teaching process.

As limitations, the pre-service teacher noticed that the lack of resources significantly affects the teaching-learning process, and through an interview, the professor mentioned the financial support that public institutions have from the government is not enough, in this sense, Murray (2014) statement that technology can support differentiated instruction and personalized learning by enabling teachers to tailor their instruction to the needs and preferences of individual students, so it is important to implement these resources, which in this case affects students' learning progress. However, Kessler (2018) suggests that despite the potential advantages of using technology in teaching English as a foreign language, studies have also shown that teachers may face challenges in adjusting to new technologies and pedagogical approaches. Therefore, it is important to provide ongoing professional development and support to teachers to ensure that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to integrate technology into their teaching practice effectively.

CONCLUSIONS

The efficacy of the teacher's methodological tactics, classroom management, and class interaction can be deduced from the observation procedures. Students were allowed to participate in class discussions and have their contributions recognized by the teacher. The teacher's capacity to incorporate other cultures into the classroom was, however, constrained. This emphasizes how crucial it is to include cultural elements in EFL instruction, although the teaching practice is a challenge, the teacher effectively employed a blend of Spanish and English to help the pupils comprehend the material being covered in class. With this method, students can follow up with the teachings and actively participate in class discussions.

Furthermore, the ability of the instructor to assist students with special needs and address their inquiries and worries demonstrated their attention and commitment to the requirements of the pupils. It is important to remark that because technology and educational resources were not used in the classroom, the teacher's use of them was restricted. This emphasizes the importance of using pedagogical materials and technology in lessons to improve student learning and engagement.

To sum up, the findings of the observation suggest that the teacher employed successful methodological tactics, managed the classroom well, and fostered good class engagement. The incorporation of different cultures, the application of technology and educational resources, and the teacher's attentiveness to the requirements of the pupils can all be strengthened, though. Continuous learning and professional growth can help with these areas. It is advised that teachers integrate foreign cultures into the classroom, make efficient use of technology and pedagogical resources, and keep meeting the various requirements of their pupils to improve the quality of education. All pupils will benefit from a more thorough and interesting educational experience as a result.

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Conflict of interest

The authors indicate that this research has no conflict of interest.

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