A Comparative Case of Second Language Acquisition Theories and their Application by the Ministries of Higher Education for EFL Teacher's Training Programs in Two Latin-American Countries

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Abstract

The present article sought to compare two-case studies on the relationship between the theories of Language Acquisition and of their application for EFL Teachers Programs, in two different national settings. The first one conducted in the Republic of Chile and the second one, more recently developed in the Dominican Republic.

It prompted our attention the fact that since the demand for effective programs in the formation and professional consolidation of future in-service EFL Teachers, mostly for the national public systems of the above cited countries (Chile and The Dominican Republic), had to be based on the grounds of some firmly rooted linguistics theories, rather than on the grounds of some methodologies *a la mode* with not a single trace of credibility.

The relevance of the two cases that we bring to the table for analyzing, consist in the fact that they were the results of two grade thesis (conducting to a B.A. in English as a Foreign Language)in both Spanish speaking countries like Chile and the Dominican Republic, with their correspondence similarities and differences, not only in terms of their cultures, idiosyncrasy, and native language uses, but also within the scope of their national authorities goals with respect for their educational programs.

Finally, it must be highlighted, that the importance of conducting a deep analysis on how those theories of Second Language Acquisition and of the concern of those national authorities, at the moment of weighing their real value within their respective spectrum, it constituted a factor of decisive importance for us to engage in such a task.

Keywords: Second Language Acquisition Theories, EFL National Programs, Higher Education Ministries, National Education System.

Introduction

In Chapter I of this work, we dealt with the theoretical framework as it is normally done for most cases, when it comes to structuring a conducted research. and even when it exclusively tried with theories analysis and not experimenting a field study through the application of an experimentation tool.

In Chapter II the Chilean Case on this matter is partially extracted and fully examined and commented by us.

In Chapter III, the Dominican Case is brought to, for the same purposes of the Chilean case and to have a fully understanding of the intricacies and singularities of it.

In Chapter IV entitled "A Final Comparative Analysis of both Cases" the heart of this work" developed to fully compare similarities and differences as well as the results of both investigations conducted in two different latitude of the Latin-American continent, so close and yet so far. And also brought us the Conclusions and final notes on account of our own interpretation extracted from the analysis of both cases.

Chapter I: Theoretical Framework

Overview

The importance of having and/or being linguistically and theoretically based regarding the programs of EFL Teacher's training for any country is very essential for the academic and professional development of their school task forces. It is of upmost relevance for the current educational system not only in Latin-American countries, but for any country of the world to design the above mentioned program with the certainty of the true basis of the field.

As indicated on the title; the theories on Language Acquisition as developed by the most influential authors constitute an unavoidable point of reference in this field.

The Most Important Theories on Second Language Acquisition so far Discussed, are among others:
1.-Krashen's Hypothesis on Second Language Acquisition:

The 5 hypotheses of Krashen's Theory of Second Language Acquisition consists of five main hypotheses:

- the Acquisition-Learning hypothesis;

- the Monitor hypothesis;

- the Input hypothesis;

- and the Affective Filter hypothesis;

- the Natural Order hypothesis.

The **Acquisition-Learning** distinction is the most fundamental of the five hypotheses in Krashen's theory and the most widely known among linguists and language teachers. According to Krashen there are two independent systems of foreign language performance: 'the acquired system' and 'the learned system'. The 'acquired system' or '**acquisition**' is the product of a subconscious process very similar to the process children undergo when they acquire their first language. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language - natural communication - in which speakers are concentrated not in the form of their utterances, but in the communicative act.

The "learned system" or "**learning**" is the product of formal instruction and it comprises a conscious process which results in conscious knowledge 'about' the language, for example knowledge of grammar rules. A deductive approach in a teacher-centered setting produces "**learning**", while an inductive approach in a student-centered setting leads to "**acquisition**".

According to Krashen 'learning' is less important than 'acquisition'. *(See here our in-depth analysis of the Acquisition/Learning hypothesis and its implications)*.

The **Monitor** hypothesis explains the relationship between acquisition and learning and defines the influence of the latter on the former. The monitoring function is the practical result of the learned grammar. According to Krashen, the acquisition system is the utterance initiator, while the learning system performs the role of the 'monitor' or the 'editor'. The 'monitor' acts in a planning, editing and correcting function when three specific conditions are met:

- The second language learner has sufficient time at their disposal.

- They focus on form or think about correctness.

- They know the rule.

It appears that the role of conscious learning is somewhat limited in second language performance. According to Krashen, the role of the monitor is minor, being used only to correct deviations from "normal" speech and to give speech a more 'polished' appearance.

Krashen also suggests that there is individual variation among language learners with regard to 'monitor' use. He distinguishes those learners that use the 'monitor' all the time (over-users); those learners who have not learned or who prefer not to use their conscious knowledge (under-users); and those learners that use the 'monitor' appropriately (optimal users). An evaluation of the person's psychological profile can help to determine to what group they belong. Usually extroverts are under-users, while introverts and perfectionists are over-users. Lack of self-confidence is frequently related to the over-use of the "monitor".

The **Input** hypothesis is Krashen's attempt to explain how the learner acquires a second language – how second language acquisition takes place. The Input hypothesis is only concerned with 'acquisition', not 'learning'. According to this hypothesis, the learner improves and progresses along the 'natural order' when he/she receives second language 'input' that is one step beyond his/her current stage of linguistic competence. For example, if a learner is at a stage 'i', then acquisition takes place when he/she is exposed to **'Comprehensible Input'** that belongs to level 'i + 1'. Since not all of the learners can be at the same level of linguistic competence at the same time, Krashen suggests that *natural communicative input* is the key to designing a syllabus, ensuring in this way that each learner will receive some 'i + 1' input that is appropriate for his/her current stage of linguistic competence.

The **Affective Filter** hypothesis embodies Krashen's view that a number of 'affective variables' play a facilitative, but non-causal, role in second language acquisition. These variables include: motivation, self-confidence, anxiety and personality traits. Krashen claims that learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, a low level of anxiety and extroversion are better equipped for success in second language acquisition. Low motivation, low self-esteem, anxiety, introversion and inhibition can raise the affective filter and form a 'mental block' that prevents comprehensible input from being used for acquisition. In other words, when the filter is 'up' it impedes language acquisition. On the other hand, positive affect is necessary, but not sufficient on its own, for acquisition to take place.

Finally, the less important **Natural Order** hypothesis is based on research findings (Dulay & Burt, 1974; Fathman, 1975; Makino, 1980 cited in Krashen, 1987) which suggested that the acquisition of grammatical structures follows a 'natural order' which is predictable. For a given language, some grammatical structures tend to be acquired early while others late. This order seemed to be independent of the learners' age, L1 background, conditions of exposure, and although the agreement between individual acquirers was not always 100% in the studies, there were statistically significant similarities that reinforced the existence of a Natural Order of language acquisition. Krashen however points out that the implication of the natural order hypothesis is not that a language program syllabus should be based on the order found in the studies. In fact, he rejects grammatical sequencing when the goal is language acquisition.

The Role of Grammar in Krashen's View

According to Krashen, the study of the structure of the language can have general educational advantages and values that high schools and colleges may want to include in their language programs. Any benefit, however, will greatly depend on the learner being already familiar with the language. It should also be clear that analizing the language, formulating rules, setting irregularities apart, and teaching complex facts about the target language is not language teaching, but rather is "language appreciation" or linguistics, which does not lead to communicative proficiency.

The only instance in which the teaching of grammar can result in language acquisition (and proficiency) is when the students are interested in the subject and the target language is used as a medium of instruction. Very often, when this occurs, both teachers and students are convinced that the study of formal grammar is essential for second language acquisition, and the teacher is skillful enough to present explanations in the target language so that the students understand. In other words, the teacher talk meets the requirements for comprehensible input and perhaps, with the students' participation, the classroom becomes an environment suitable for acquisition. Also, the filter is low in regard to the language of explanation, as the students' conscious efforts are usually on the subject matter, on *what* is being talked about, and not the medium.

This is a subtle point. In effect, both teachers and students are deceiving themselves. They believe that it is the subject matter itself, the study of grammar, that is responsible for the students progress, but in reality their progress is coming from the medium and not the message. Any subject matter that held their interest would do just as well.

Another Important Approaches on Second Language Acquisition

The Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has been subject of interest since the early beginnings of human culture, but it found its niche of development around the 20th century (Cook, 2008a). SLA as a discipline came into being with the publication of two seminal papers

by Pit Corder and Larry Selinker, which are often associated with the awakenings of the field. Both of them focused on the actual language produced by learners as they try to communicate in the target language (L2) instead of the Contrastive Analysis between the target and first language that was carried out until then (Ortega, 2011). This perspective actually foresaw the first change of paradigm in the field, which established a leap from the contrastive analysis (contrast between language systems) to Error Analysis (contrast between the learner's speech and the native's speech) (Cook, 2008a).

Accordingly, following the inception of SLA, and SLA research, several trends and theories concerning the acquisition of a second, or additional language, have been developed throughout the subsequent decades. After Corder and Selinker contributions, SLA shifted into a more cognitive and psycholinguistic perspective, which was developed by authors such as Barry McLaughlin or Lydia White. In the meantime, Chomsky presented his Universal Grammar theory in 1980, which proposed an innatist perspective to the acquisition of a mother tongue.

Also, this theory would be extrapolated later on into SLA, and eventually became the mainstay of one of the two dominant approaches during the 1990s: on the one hand, the Universal Grammar-influenced prism, and on the other hand, the Cognitivist-Interactionist viewpoint (Ortega, 2011). Although these two approaches saw their more productive period during the 1990s, two new theoretical forces came into fruition during this time as well: the study of L2 acquisition through the Sociocultural theory of mind developed by the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky; and the application of the usage-based theories (Ortega, 2011).

These two perspectives, added to the previous ones, would progress into the four main theories that have been currently present in SLA theory and research: Behaviorism, Innatism, Cognitivism and the Sociocultural perspective, which will be explained in the following sections. Nowadays, SLA research is an extremely rich and diverse subject, drawing on aspects of Linguistics, Psychology, Sociology and Education (Cook, 2008a). In regards to this, it is very important to notice that some theories will sometimes present dissimilar or conflicting points of view. Therefore, it is fundamental to present separate and several proposals in order to have a more complete idea of the different trends in SLA.

Second Language Acquisition Definitions and L2 Teaching

The SLA, some of these basic terms include SLA itself, theory, methods and approaches, and finally, teaching techniques and styles. While these might seem like already known and familiar concepts, it is in fact difficult to come up with just a single, straightforward definition of these notions because authors have different views about them (Brown, 2000; Gass, 2013; Pica, 2005). For this reason, some of these definitions will be presented in order to have a more comprehensive idea about them.

On the one hand, Lourdes Ortega (2013) claims that SLA is the "scholarly field of inquiry that investigates the human capacity to learn languages other than the first, during late childhood, adolescence, or adulthood, and once the first language or languages have been acquired" (p. 12). She adds that it is an interdisciplinary domain concerned with the many different phenomena and factors that influence language acquisition in different contexts (such as EFL or ESL settings), which contribute to the diverse outcomes of learning a non-native

language. Its main purpose is to understand the forces behind the acquisition process, which includes universal, individual, and social ones.

While Ortega points out that SLA encompasses both naturalistic and instructed learning, for the purposes of the present study, the focus will be on instructed learning. This term refers to the learning of additional languages through formal education, such as the one taught at schools (Ortega, 2013). Furthermore, she makes an additional relevant distinction between SLA and the concept of L2 learning: the first one is basically the field of inquiry and discipline, while the latter is the process of learning a second or foreign language (or in other words, the very object of this field of study).

Also, other authors have provided some definitions of SLA as well. Doughty and Long (2003), for example, offer a definition based on the ideas of several scholars, pointing out that SLA

> "Encompasses basic and applied work on the acquisition and loss of second (third, etc.) languages and dialects by children and adults, learning naturalistically and/or with the aid of formal instruction, as individuals or in groups, in foreign, second language, and lingua franca settings" (p. 3).

Along the same lines, Mitchell and Myles (2004) point out that ", the learning of any language, at any level, provided only that the learning of the second language takes place sometime later than the acquisition of the first language" (p. 5). They add that this learning process can occur in an either "formal, planned, and systematic (as in classroom based learning) or informal and unstructured way" (p. 6). Taking this into account, it can be seen that their own definition does not actually differ from the ones previously suggested by other scholars.

On the other hand, a concepts associated with SLA is the term theory. Since learning an additional language is a complex phenomenon, it is necessary to describe the way in which learners internalize their new knowledge, as well as the processes and mechanisms involved. In relation to this, scholars have proposed several theories that explain this learning process.

Following Mitchell and Myles (2004), a theory is "a more or less abstract set of claims about the units that are significant within the phenomenon under study, the relationships that exist between them and the processes that bring about change. Thus, a theory aims "not just at description but also at explanation" (p. 7). In other words, a theory is an abstraction that scholars propose in order to explain the process of SLA, which can be reduced in scope, or more detailed and comprehensive.

According to Vivian Cook (2008c), the term teaching method is used "as a broad cover term for the different activities that go on in language teaching" (p. 235). Thus, it is a notion that covers a wide range of activities employed in the teaching process. This author further explains that different proposals have been suggested in order to explain, or either suppress, the notion of method. One of the most remarkable ones is the conceptualization and organization suggested by Edward Anthony in 1963, which distinguishes between the terms approach, method, and technique.

As well as, Richards and Rodgers (2001) state that Anthony's proposal is a hierarchical relation that explains different levels of abstraction. An approach describes and specifies the nature of language and language learning. For instance, teachers might be able to choose an either oral or written approach in their classes. A method involves the decisions about the

teaching process (such as the specific content and skills that will be taught). For example, the Audio-lingual Method derived from a structuralism perspective, and thus, it mainly focuses on forms such as Phonetics and Morphology.

Finally, a technique implies the level at which classroom procedures are described; a clear example of this is the use of drilling exercises, which consist on the repetition of structures and patterns through oral practice.

Relevant Second Language Acquisition Theories

On the one hand, Several theories of SLA have been proposed in order to explain aspects of the language acquisition process. In this sense, the main objective of any SLA theory is to try to account for and explain language acquisition by learners with a variety of characteristics in diverse contexts (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). As well as, many theories have arisen under different perspectives. Some of the most important ones include:

Behaviorism, which sets imitation and habit formation as the basis of language learning (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). The Universal Grammar which sees acquisition of language as a genetically endowed process (Chomsky, 1972).

Cognitivist Theories which claim that language learning does not differ from any other sort of knowledge (Myles, 2002); And the Sociocultural perspective which assumes language learning arises from social interaction (Vygotsky, 1962).

All of these theories are also related to certain teaching techniques, which are, as it was previously stated, pedagogical methods that are consistent with the theory to which they are

related. For the sake of clarity, information regarding SLA theories is displayed in the table

below. The relations among the different theories, models, methods and approaches are briefly

explained in Table 1, and they are further explored later on in this work.

Chapter II: The Chilean Case

Overview

A group of Six Chilean College Students led by Aravena Ruiz et al (2015) underwent a study in order to obtain a B.A. in Foreign Languages from UNIVERSIDAD DE CHILE FACULTAD DE FILOSOFÍA Y HUMANIDADES DEPARTAMENTO DE LINGÜÍSTICA titled: "*Second Language Acquisition Theories: their Application in the Ministry of Education's Curriculum and their Expected Impact on Teacher Training Programs from three Chilean Universities".* According to their abstract their purpose was explained as follows: "Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Language Planning and Policy (LPP) play a fundamental role in the design of public policies concerning the teaching of a second language. Thus, the present study focuses on the analysis of SLA theories in the teaching of the English language in the country, as well as their implementation in the curriculum proposed by the Ministry of Education and the curricula from three selected teaching programs created by the following institutions: Universidad de Chile, Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación and Universidad de Santiago de Chile.

The gap this investigation aims at filling is the current limited research in education and, particularly, regarding the teaching of the subject. The major findings indicate a lack of an explicit theory proposed by any of the aforementioned institutions, except by the program from Departamento de Estudios Pedagógicos of Universidad de Chile. The implications concerning these results are mainly related to the proposition of improving the policies that are functioning today in order to have a more homogeneous approach to the teaching of English in Chile".(P.11)

Introduction

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has been an extensively discussed field for the last 50 years. In this regard, this discipline plays a fundamental role in the shaping of policies concerning the teaching of a second language (Tollefson, 2000; Lo Bianco, 2004; Cassels, 2012). This is not an unfamiliar topic for Chile, since the country's efforts aim at acquiring English as a second language and becoming a bilingual country. In this context, one of the most critical problems in Chile concerning this issue is the disparity regarding the training of teachers which, in turn, directly affects the teaching and learning of the language.

With the intention of pertinently approaching the object of study, that is to say, the teaching of English in Chile and the corresponding formation of teachers, a solid background is firstly needed. Owing to this, several aspects that hold relation with this issue are presented.

   The first feature consists of the motivations that drive the present investigation. In this sense, the main impetus is the future creation of the Facultad de Educación1 belonging to Universidad de Chile.   This is, currently, a central discussion within the academic circles in this institution, particularly, since a significant number of decisions need to be made in order to create a program of excellence. In accordance, one of the most important aspects to consider is the nature of the programs that will be offered: concurrent or consecutive (Universidad de Chile [UCh], 2011).

   This crucial catalyst has direct ties with the subject matter of Language Planning and Policies (LPP) (Tollefson, 2000). In this respect, a summary of the developments within the field are described, so as to provide a solid basis for the subsequent presentation of the Chilean reality under this light. After this pertinent background, the different SLA theories are presented, in order to understand the diverse possible approaches to the teaching of English and their implications in practice: classrooms around the country (Cook, 2008a).

   Finally, the teacher's role is depicted in order to connect it with their performance in classrooms and the creation of curricula (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). In consequence, the gap that rises, considering all the aspects previously mentioned, is the apparent lack of research in Education, and, particularly, in the teaching of English. Furthermore, the recent history of the country unmistakably illustrates a deficit in creating appropriate public policies in this discipline with the purpose of improving the said field.

Accordingly, the aims of this study are, on the one hand, to determine whether the Ministry of Education's guidelines are unquestionably followed by the selected teacher training programs and, on the other, to ascertain whether the said programs explicitly state an SLA theory in their curricula. This examination reveals a handful of findings which are, in turn, interconnected. In the first place, it is possible to detect an absence of explicit and straightforward guidelines on the part of the Ministry. In the second place, there is a lack of acknowledgement of only one theory, on the contrary, there are several elements that may be identified with more than one paradigm.

   This same phenomenon can be observed in all the documents examined from the universities, except by one program that reveals an explicit acknowledgment of an SLA theory. Overall, a lack of consistency within each document is found in all of the aforesaid curricula. The structure of the present dissertation is the following: in the first place, the Literature Review. Secondly, the Methodology is presented. This section is further divided into: Institutions Selected for the

Study, Materials, Procedures and Analysis. Thirdly, the Analysis and Results section. Fourthly, the Discussion of Results. Fifthly, the Conclusions section and, finally, Further Research and Limitations close this study.

The findings indicate that the lack of a theory explicitly mentioned by the Ministry of Education may not allow a uniformity in the teaching of English in the country which, in turn, may create a disparity in students' levels of proficiency. Moreover, the imprecise nature of the documents may say relation with the absence of specialists in the creation of these curricula. (P.12)

Motivations

The imminent creation of the Facultad de Educación directly concerns us as students of Universidad de Chile, and particularly as future English teachers and specialists in the language. As a consequence, the programs that may lead to teaching training degrees, particularly the English Linguistics and Literature one, might be influenced by this process. Therefore, this study will be focused on the discipline of English teaching. On this subject, one of the most relevant issues in the creation of this new Institute is how teachers are being formed. Thus, the kind of program universities provide is a pivotal matter. In Chile, there are basically two different types of teaching programs: concurrent and consecutive. The former consists of the development of a curriculum that simultaneously offers general and specific training in relation to the area of specialization of the future teacher. The latter, on the other hand, is oriented to eligible applicants who already possess a licenciatura (a four-year program that trains specialists in any given area) or a professional degree (UCh, 2011). The mission of Universidad de Chile is well-known since it lies at the core of the institution's endeavor as a complex university. The main responsibility of the university is to contribute to the development and improvement of the national educational system. Thus, the institution has been committed to the creation, integration and spread of knowledge in all its associated fields (UCh, n.d.-b). Accordingly, the discussion of the creation of the new Institute is not only relevant locally, but it holds national relevance because of its historical presence. The university was founded in 1842 under the historical context that included Rationalist ideals and the separation of Church and State. Its creation is usually seen as a continuation of the Real Universidad de San Felipe (1747-1839), which was the first university of the State (UCh, n.d.- a; UCh, n.d.-c). (P.14

The Current State of English in Chile

In the present section, a general background regarding the current state of English in Chile will be described. This includes the motivations to pursue bilingualism, the political decisions that have been made over the last decade, the situation of Chile in quantitative terms (rankings and results in standardized tests), and the main challenges that authorities have to face in the near future regarding this matter. 2.3.1. Chile on a Path to Becoming a Bilingual Country Language policies regarding the teaching of ESL in Chile have been the driving force to set the current linguistic scenario in the country.

All the efforts that the Chilean Ministry of Education has made during the last decade are summarized in one crucial aim: Chile must become a bilingual country (Bachelet, 2009 in Améstica, 2013; Bitar, 2003 in "Lanzan Plan", 2003). The immediate question that arises from this categorical statement is what being bilingual really means in this particular context, i.e., bilingualism in a country that meets the characteristics of the expanding circle according to Kachru's framework (1983).

Based on Kachru's categorization, Tollefson (2000) explains that this classification distinguishes three circles (inner, outer and expanding) according to the status and use of English in different countries.

The inner circle comprehends those countries in which English is the primary and dominant language (e.g., USA); the outer circle refers to those countries in which English is used at an institutional level and it is functional for the population, i.e., used in the government, education and the media (e.g., India); finally, the expanding circle is the one that comprises those countries where English has a high status and social prestige, i.e., it is recognized as an important international language but does not have a significant role in people's everyday lives (e.g., Japan). (P.22)

Methodology

The Methodology section contains a thorough account of the institutions selected, the documents, as well as the steps and concepts employed in the development of this investigation. Taking into account the literature review and the kind of inquiry that is been pursued, the present section provides a better approach for a qualitative research. Thus, for the purposes of this study, a Content Analysis was conducted. 3.1. Institutions Selected for the Study The documents

selected in the present study were taken from the Ministry of Education and three different teacher training programs from the following traditional Chilean universities: Universidad de Chile, Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación (UMCE) and Universidad de Santiago de Chile (USACH).

 Ministry of Education In Chile, the Ministry of Education is the organism in charge of supporting the development of education at all levels in the country. Its mission is to ensure the equality and quality of the Chilean education system, which must contribute to people's all-embracing and continuing education and to the development of the country. This aim is achieved by means of policymaking and sectoral regulation (MINEDUC, 2014b). Due to the fundamental role of the Ministry of Education and its active participation in the creation of language policies, the selected document has been considered as a benchmarking framework for the needs of the country regarding the teaching and learning of the English language.

Universidad de Chile Universidad de Chile was founded in 1842 as the first public institution of Chile. Its main mission was to offer higher education, as well as promoting and spreading both scientific and literary research (UCh, 2014a). Through time, Universidad de Chile has contributed to the development of several academic disciplines in different faculties. Among them, the School of Philosophy and Humanities and the Instituto Pedagógico de la Universidad de Chile3 were two fundamental entities involved in the process of disseminating the English language in the country. In 1981, the Instituto Pedagógico, which was founded as part of the Universidad de Chile in 1889, was separated from this institution due to political reasons, and thus, the teacher training programs were suppressed from the university. As a result of this, the Facultad de Filosofía y Humanidades4 became responsible for the four BAs in main areas of the humanities: Philosophy, History, Literature, and Linguistics (UCh, 2014b). Due to this situation, a consecutive teacher training program was implemented in the institution. Currently, Universidad de Chile offers a four-year undergraduate program called Licenciatura en Lengua y Literatura Inglesas5 . This BA was created in 1981 under the name of Licenciatura en Lingüística Inglesa due to historical reasons, since during this year the university could not train teachers anymore by law of the military government (Vivanco, 2014). Nowadays, this academic degree can be complemented with a general teaching program imparted by the Facultad de

Filosofía y Humanidades, which can be focused on English language. Owing to the aforementioned historical reasons, the Departamento de Estudios Pedagógicos emerged as an institution devoted to fill the gap left by the Instituto Pedagógico in the teaching training field. Initially, it was founded in 1994 under the name of Programa de Investigación en Estudios Pedagógicos (PIEEP), but currently it is known as Departamento de Estudios Pedagógicos (DEP) (UCh, 2014c). Specifically, the teacher training program is known as Licenciatura en Educación Media con Mención en Inglés, and it is taught in a time span of three semesters.

This program aims at offering an academic degree for teaching English language at school level, as well as providing tools to carry out research in the field of education (UCh, 2014e). The Universidad de Chile emphasizes that this program has a critical vision regarding the teaching scenario in the country (UCh, 2014d). Therefore, this institution was selected as it is a prestigious university that has a long-standing tradition in the field of Education.

Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación UMCE was originally known as Instituto Pedagógico and it was founded in 1889 (Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación [UMCE], 2013) depending upon the School of Philosophy and Humanities at Universidad de Chile. Its main objective was to provide pedagogical training to those professionals who were already working as teachers without having any previous training. Additionally, it enriched and complemented the educational labor that was being carried out exclusively by Escuelas Normales (Teacher Training Colleges) during this period. The Pedagogical Institute was separated from Universidad de Chile during the military regime in 1981, as a product of this curtailment.

Academia Superior de Ciencias Pedagógicas de Santiago (ASCP) was founded. Four years later, the name of the institution changed to UMCE, which allowed it to regain its university status. Currently UMCE is a renowned pedagogy-related institution in Chile, as most of its academic offer corresponds to teacher training programs. This institution imparts a concurrent BA in education with a major in English and English Pedagogy which has been offered since 1889.

Universidad de Santiago de Chile USACH, originally known as Universidad Técnica del Estado7 , was founded in 1849 as an institution in charge of providing technical training for the industrial needs of the country. However, the university widened its horizons to new disciplines

at the beginning of the 1890s in order to become part of the new education system. Presently, USACH is a public institution that offers a significant number of undergraduate programs, among these, English Teaching for High School.

At the beginning, this program was part of their Instituto Pedagógico, which was founded in 1944. Then, it became part of the Facultad de Estudios Generales in 1975. Since 1986, it has belonged to the Faculty of Humanities of the university. This is a five-year concurrent program, which includes simultaneous linguistic and pedagogical training (Universidad de Santiago de Chile [USACH], 2011). The vast experience of these three institutions, their accredited status, and the nature of their teacher programs were the reasons why they were selected for the present study.

In regards to the experience, on average, all these universities have taught for over a century. Additionally, all these institutions are presently accredited by the CNA (Comisión Nacional de Acreditación). Finally, USACH and UMCE are concurrent programs while Universidad de Chile offers a consecutive one

Materials For the purposes of this study, the materials used were the English curriculum for Primero Medio de Enseñanza Media designed by the Ministry of Education and the self evaluation reports for the English Teaching programs of the three aforementioned universities. The curriculum designed by the Ministry of Education provides national education standards for the teaching of the English language. This document includes the objectives and contents of the subject. On the other hand, the reports created by the universities include all the information regarding the characteristics of the English Teaching programs to train future English teachers. The analysis undertaken deals exclusively with the sections of the documents that are relevant to this study, that is to say, the ones related to pedagogical implications connected to the target subject: English language. These documents are:

● Idioma Extranjero Inglés retrieved from Bases Curriculares 7° básico a 2° medio – MINEDUC (2013)

● Perfil del Egresado y Competencias Licenciatura en Lengua y Literatura Inglesas, Volumen I – Universidad de Chile (2009)

● Resumen Ejecutivo: Informe de Autoevaluación (IAE) – Departamento de Estudios Pedagógicos, Universidad de Chile (2013)

● Informe sobre Didácticas de Especialidad, Solicitado por Pares Académicos Evaluadores – Departamento de Estudios Pedagógicos, Universidad de Chile (2013)

● Informe de Autoevaluación Licenciatura en Educación con mención en Inglés y Pedagogía en Inglés – UMCE (2013)

● Informe de Autoevaluación Pedagogía en Inglés – USACH (2011).

In order to carry out the analysis, a theoretical approach was necessary. Due to this, Ritchie and Lewis's (2003a) approximation for conducting qualitative research was selected. The document used was the following:

● Carrying Out Qualitative Analysis – Qualitative Research Practice A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003a) The method of analysis proposed by these authors and its application to the present study will be presented in the section devoted to. *Procedures.*

Procedures This study consisted of the analysis of the six aforesaid official documents created by the Ministry of Education and the three universities chosen. The steps taken were based on Ritchie and Lewis's (2003a) framework. Accordingly, the first step taken was reading the said documents in order to become familiarized with them. In the second place, the identification and consequent labeling of initial themes and concepts found in the reports were done.

The purpose of this step was to provide a first examination of the ideas that appeared in the materials which, by answering the question 'what the idea is about', were categorized within the most appropriate tag. Moreover, this initial labeling provided an introductory sorting of the data. The information analyzed up to this point was, afterwards, tabulated into a thematic chart so as to further organize and synthesize it.

The most important aspect to consider at this stage was for the instances to be balanced in regards to the amount of information they represented, that is to say, it was crucial neither to over-contextualize nor to under-contextualize the ideas present in the chart in order to not lose their meaningfulness (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003a). In the fourth place, the categories previously established were refined so as to obtain more precise terminology and further classify the data into more abstract notions. The aim was to arrive at more encompassing categories that granted a significant conceptual understanding of the said tags and for the merging of somewhat similar

conceptions. Furthermore, at this phase, there was an explicit opportunity for reassigning the data into more suitable headings. Thereafter, typologies were created. The main utility of this step was to create distinct labels that contained related tags among them. The nature of these connections was flexible. Once this aspect was executed, each instance of the documents was matched with the most fitting SLA theory - taken from the Literature Review. This stage of the analysis was crucial so as to reveal which, if any, theory was behind each particular document analyzed.

The aforementioned stages of the analysis were carried out simultaneously for all the documents, but through an independent examination of each of these. At this point, the associative analysis was conducted. Presently, all the analyses were gathered in order to contrast them and find similarities and disparities that emerged among the texts in the previously stated goal. With all the information gathered up to this point, the Results section was ready to be written.

This section included a thorough presentation of the findings obtained through the analysis. With the intention of being as clear and systematic as possible, the findings were organized by institution. Immediately after, the discussion section was reported which included the last section depicted by Ritchie and Lewis (2003a): developing explanations.

This last level of analysis intended to provide a final interrogation of the data by means of both explicit and inferred aspects with the addition of the use of common sense. All these elements allowed for a further understanding of what prompted the phenomena which consequently provided for the reaching of satisfactory answers for the said experience.

In practical terms, in this latter section, the Research Questions were answered considering all the information presented in the previous segment:

The Results. Once again, for clarity issues, each question was answered considering the information from the whole set of documents, with the purpose of granting a more natural flow of the data that provided a focused discussion. Along the process of analysis, the necessity of ensuring quality criteria emerged.

The first step was to think of a way of reaching inter-rater reliability, which refers to the extent to which assessments, judgments, ratings and so on, are agreed or replicated between

researchers (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003b). To do this, the eight authors of this study established common patterns to follow in the analysis. Adopting this measure was necessary due to the methodology chosen in terms of the distribution of the tasks. This distribution consisted in dividing the group of researchers into four pairs; each of them conducted the analysis of one of the four institutions selected. Then, since each couple carried out the analysis of the documents independently, having common parameters of analysis (tags) was mandatory.

These tags and their description/explanations are shown in the following subsection (Analysis). On the other hand, in order to achieve research validity for the present study, two out of three strategies presented by Dörnyei (2007) were used: building up an image of researcher integrity and validity/reliability checks (research design-based strategies were not considered).

The strategy related to the image of the researcher consists of four aspects; all of them were taken into account in this study: a. leaving an audit trail, b. contextualization and thick description, c. identifying potential researcher bias, d. examining outliers, extreme or negative cases and alternative explanations. Then, regarding validity checks, peer checking was the strategy used after the process of analysis. Firstly, leaving an audit trail refers to the detailed and reflective account of the steps taken to achieve the results.

By doing this, the researchers who carried out this enquiry can generate confidence in the audience regarding the nature of the research process. Pursuing this aim, a complete description of the participants and the rationale for their selection was provided, as well as a detailed Methodology section that could allow future replication. In brief, the main purpose of the thorough description of every step of the procedure here presented is to give transparency to the whole research process, for the audience to understand how the findings were obtained. Secondly, the contextualization and thick description of the findings of this enquiry have as their main purpose to help the audience feel identified and involved with the project. Therefore, in order to achieve such objective, the results were shown by presenting actual instances from the documents that could represent the main findings that emerged. In other words, by putting forward these illustrative excerpts, the audience counts on the evidence from the data, which allows them to verify the correlation between the corpus studied and the findings stated by the researchers. Thirdly, the researchers were aware of the possible biases that might have arisen in the study due to the nature of the data. Specifically, some of the documents did not provide

straightforward answers to the research questions posed at the beginning of the study and involved a process of interpretation. Bearing this in mind, finding a way to avoid possible biases was essential.

The strategy to reduce this possibility as much as possible was the exhaustive revision and analysis of the data, whose results were based on the literature reviewed in this study. Also, the recurrent discussion among all the members of the work team allowed them to share different standpoints and to neutralize biased perspectives. This point will be further explained in the paragraph devoted to peer checking. Fourthly, since the credibility of this enquiry was a fundamental aspect to consider, the authors of this study established its outliers explicitly in the Results section while presenting the analysis of the data, and also in the Discussion section and Conclusion.

This was the particular case of the Ministry of Education, the only institution that could not be matched with any particular SLA theory, unlike the others institutions selected. This finding was not expected at the beginning of the enquiry, however, the researchers presented what emerged in the data, trying to provide an alternative explanation for that situation. Once all the documents were analyzed by each couple, the process of peer checking took place.

This strategy was used because, as mentioned before, each work team conducted the analysis individually; the feedback provided by the other members of the group was crucial so as to determine whether the findings were pertinent or not. This way, the discussion around the initial results allowed every couple to either confirm or reformulate them, and also, to enrich their ideas about it. In sum, peer checking served as a way to come to agreements regarding the final results and also to unify the work.

Analysis

The establishment of conceptual categories was a key step to analyze the reports. They were taken from more general conceptions that emerged after the first examination of the documents. In order to obtain more precise terms, the initial notions were refined so as to use them as parameters to examine the data. The present section, then, will provide a description of each tag employed during the process of analysis. (P.64)

Discussion of Results

   In this section, the research questions posed at the beginning of this enquiry will be answered. Is there a Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory associated with the English curriculum proposed by the Ministry of Education? If so, which is the theory?

   The Chilean education system has been facing a crisis for over the last 40 years due to the absence of appropriate reforms and policies. Because of this collapse, the Ministry of Education, as the higher authority regarding this issue in the country, should provide transparent parameters in order to homogenize the teaching of English. More so than ever, when at present, there is a significant number of institutions offering teacher training programs that may not fulfill the basic standards that are needed for a successful and significant learning. Thus, a document that represents the guidelines of this institution should be especially clear and straightforward.

   This is particularly critical since the efforts of the Ministry are oriented towards developing a bilingual country. Hence, an SLA theory emerges as the foundation of the said endeavor. Regarding the connection between an SLA theory and the English curriculum proposed by the Ministry, the previous section showed that there was no explicit theory that served as a basis for this document. Moreover, in the presentation of the curriculum there were mere hints to SLA theories. Although there was a tendency towards the Constructivist paradigm, it was not the only theory suggested. In that sense, the Sociocultural theory also emerged from the analysis. In other words, it was significant that no mentioning was made to such a pivotal issue and that it was only implicitly stated.

   Two possible explanations for the aforementioned results will be presented. First, it may have been the objective of the Ministry not to constrain the document to any given theory, so as to provide a level of flexibility for teachers to adjust their methodologies to each classroom. Second, as a counterpart to the previous explanation, it may seem that there was no intent to support the document with any theory. Accordingly, this particular curriculum may have been created taking into consideration previous curricula, that is to say, following tradition rather than providing an innovative work that required thorough investigation. (P.116)

Chapter III: The Dominican Case

Overview

A group of five Dominican College Students led by Santos, B. et al (2020) conducted a research work in order to present a grade thesis at Universidad Autonoma de Santo Domingo, Campus of Bonao City for obtaining a B.A. in Foreign Languages, with the title of: "Second Language Acquisition Theories and their Application by the Ministry of Higher Education for EFL Teacher's Training Programs in the Dominican Republic ". That work's abstract consisted as follows: *The study focuses on analyzing theories of second language acquisition and its application in the Ministerio de Educación Superior, Ciencia y Tecnologia-MESCyT for EFL teacher training programs in the Dominican Republic, with the assumption that improving these improves the teaching process-learning. For this, a descriptive, qualitative study of interpretative approach is used, through different techniques of information collection that include, documentary analysis, direct observation, interview, questionnaires and group techniques. The study includes 5 teachers from the UASD, and a student population in the language area 76 students. The analysis of the results identifies needs related to the change in teaching practices, such as teacher training, reorientation towards a comprehensive and innovative evaluation practice, improvement of teaching resources and integration of theoretical-practical knowledge. Although students in general are satisfied with the work of most of their teachers, there are certain levels of disagreement regarding the effective learning of the English language.* (P. x)

Statement of the Problem

In the following investigation we addressed the problems arising from the theories of the acquisition of a second language and its application by the Ministerio de Educación Superior,

Ciencia y Tecnologia-MESCyT of the training programs for teachers of English as a foreign language in the Dominican Republic. The same, is addressed in the (Fundamentals of the curriculum Volume I), presenting the different qualitative problems of the educational system, since at the time of starting the ten-year plan of education was going through a moment of great dissatisfaction regarding the curriculum offer of the education system. They questioned the conceptions, contents, procedures and techniques that served as the foundation for the current curriculum, among which the following stand out: The "intellectualist", "bookish" and "memory" conception of education, which promotes the reproduction of knowledge assumed to be true absolute and definitive. From this point of view, the function assigned to the school is to transmit "accumulated knowledge", which is considered complete and general and, therefore, common to all subjects. Knowledge is conceived as the appropriation of immutable truths that have been "generated" by exceptional men. (p.1)

Objectives

General Objective

To analyze the second language acquisition theories and their application in the Ministerio de Educación Superior, Ciencia y Tecnologia-MESCyT for EFL teacher´s training programs in the Dominican Republic.

Specific Objectives

1. To describe Second Language Acquisition Theories.
2. To investigate the teacher's role and curriculum in second language acquisition.
3. To analyze the elements and approaches of the foreign language curriculum.

4. To investigate the role of the Ministerio de Educación Superior, Ciencia y Tecnologia-MESCyT on its teacher's training program.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between the foundation of the curriculum in the area of English with the epistemological beliefs of teachers in their pedagogical practices?

2. Is there a second language acquisition (SLA) theory associated with the English curriculum proposed by the Ministerio de Educación? If so, which is the theory?

3. Which is the SLA theory that lies behind the curriculum for English teaching programs chosen for this study?

4. Are these theories congruent with the ones proposed by the Ministerio de Educación? (P.5)

Justification

In today's society, the management of more than one language is considered a key element for academic, economic, labor, technical-scientific success and, in certain cases, in the field of social mobility. That is why the Ministerio de Educación in the application of the teaching English as a foreign language program, focuses on adapting and optimizing the professional profile of teachers responsible for facilitating and expanding English language learning. Likewise, the Ministerio de Educación through the general directorate of curriculum makes available to the entire educational community the new curriculum design, with which it guides and directs the levels of the training process: initial, primary and secondary. (Tudor, 2003).

This process is developed with the purpose of adjusting the curriculum to the demands posed by modern society, in accordance with the right to complete and integral human

development of all citizens. In the context of the review and update of the importance of

the national curriculum as a learning path and a reference to guide the teaching practice,

committed to improving the quality of learning is renewed. But this is also the

responsibility of the Ministerio de Educacion Superior, Ciencia y Tecnologia-MESCyT,

regarding its training programs for teachers in the EFL area. However, it should not be

forgotten that the reason for existing of any educational program must respond to the

needs and characteristics of multiple factors, such as: the social environment, the

economic environment, the political environment and the educational environment in

which it intends to implement. That is, it must be relevant and relevant depending on the

context in which it will be developed, precisely so that it works optimally, since it is

considered the implementation of some innovation from an ecological perspective

(Tudor, 2003). (P.6)

The Dominican Offer in Modern Languages at the State College (UASD University)

Bachelor's Degree on Foreign Languages; English-French.

This program forms a bachelor of foreign languages (English-French), an independent

and creative integral professional of excellent academic level, who can give an adequate

orientation in foreign languages in secondary education, both in academic and in training at

work, with a vision of the social function of language; connoisseur of the educational reality of

our country; that he carry out his academic activity with critical conscience, ethical commitment

as a person, with respect and tolerance for the ideas of others. (https://www.uasd.edu.do).

Occupational Profile

The Bachelor of Foreign Languages English - French, will be able to serve as a teacher in formal education at the basic levels (1 to 9 grade) and middle education (10 and 11 grade). In the same way, this professional will be able to work as a language teacher in the different areas of education for work and human development, within the parameters established by law. In general, the graduate is competent to design, execute and evaluate training and dissemination programs in the English or French languages.

Professional Profile

a) High level of proficiency in English and French.

b) Solid pedagogical training that enables you to respond to continuous educational and social changes.

c) Development of skills in the management of new technologies.

d) A high human quality based on ethical and moral values

e) Critical and investigative capacity.

f) Competitiveness, awareness and commitment to your profession.

This degree is a contribution to the search for solutions to the problems detected in the teaching of foreign languages and a response to the requirements of the one demanded by the Ministerio de Educación Superior, Ciencia y Tecnologia-MESCyT, in relation to the teaching of foreign languages in higher education. The program aims to provide solutions to the difficulty of the performance of the teacher of foreign languages in the different linguistic areas.

Likewise, it seeks to respond to the priority needs of the future teacher, such as scientific and pedagogical knowledge of the teaching-learning and teaching process of the foreign language and the identification of the different factors that influence language, in its communication context social.

On the other hand, foreign languages fulfill a more formative than communicative function. Knowing one or more foreign languages allows users to discover the recognition of their identity by identifying the other. The teaching of any foreign language in our country must fulfill, as a priority, an educational function, related to the interests and needs of students, rather than serving the teaching of language by language. This implies preparing future teachers to form, from an early age, men and women who are knowledgeable about their rights and respectful of the freedom of others, knowledgeable and receptive of the cultures inherent to the languages with which they will interact, with in order to prepare a solid path for the fraternal and peaceful coexistence that is desired from a clear perception of the world seen through "idiomatic lenses", different from their own. (https://www.uasd.edu.do).

Competencies.

1) *Basic Competences.* They make up the set of fundamental knowledge to exercise the profession as a teacher in foreign languages and that corresponds to ethical, humanistic, linguistic and pedagogical attitudes.

2) *General Competences.* In line with the international parameters on education, the program aims for the future professional to develop the following competences that

facilitate their adaptation to changes in the conception of the world. (https://www.uasd.edu.do).

Modern Languages Mention in English

According to the portal my university career.com for the mention of English we have that the Modern Languages career lasts 10 semesters where it is necessary that your students know how to work in a team, they like both learning how to teach foreign languages, having an interest in areas such as education, the humanities and society at a national and international level. A graduate in modern languages with an English mention is one who understands the foreign league, who is able to read, speak and write it; he is sensitive, responsible, has values, good attitudes, tolerant, is reflective, is critical, and has leadership skills.

It works perfectly both in your mother tongue and in your foreign language; comprehensive citizens are formed; they take into account various contexts when carrying out them analyzes (cultural, social, economic, political); they respect differences (cultural, ethnic, individual); they use theories of language, teaching and learning; to facilitate language teaching and learning, they rely on the use of technology.

They propose solutions to problems related to intercultural processes; they promote new techniques for learning and teaching languages; application of different theories (teaching, learning and language) for usefulness in teaching and adaptability depending on the context, and conducting research. In the workplace, this professional can work as a teacher in foreign languages, advisor, researcher, educational administrator, businessman, and director of training programs. (https://micarrerauniversitaria.com)

Modern Languages Pensum

The Modern languages curriculum is designed so that students adapt to any environment, through knowledge and mastery of different cultures and languages, being able to function in professional, academic, collective and entrepreneurial environments. The objective is that students see learning a new language as a tool to establish relationships of any kind, without the language being a barrier.

In addition to them, they will meet new cultures and will be able to share theirs, having stronger and more genuine ties. At the same time, it is sought that they have full knowledge of their mother tongue, that they empower themselves and spread their own culture, in this way they will be ambassadors for their own country. Aspects such as mastering your language and culture as well as the foreign one, will allow you to be at the forefront in a world as globalized as it is today, where language professionals are needed in different business and organizational areas.

Modern Languages Subjects

To give you an idea of the subjects you will see throughout the course, here we present the curriculum of the Universidad Autonoma de Santo Domingo (UASD). They divide their curriculum in Modern Languages in English and French into 4 components, equivalent to 180 credits, with a duration of 10 semesters. (See Annex D) (https://micarrerauniversitaria.com)

The English Immersion Program Sponsored by the Ministry of Higher Education (MESCYT)

According to the article published in internet, this program was created with the purpose of raising the quality of Higher Education students. Increase the competitiveness of the

Dominican Republic in the national and international market through training of human resources. Promote the economic development of the Dominican Republic.

It is a program of English as a foreign language taught for four hours a day from Monday to Friday that achieve a total of 830 hours to be completed, this is carried out in universities, institutes recognized for the teaching of English as a foreign language and in centers under coordination of the MESCyT. Classes are taught entirely in English and in all spaces of the centers where the program is run, all staff, including students, must speak only English.

Teaching is taught in the morning, afternoon and evening hours. Students have free access to textbooks, workbooks, CDs and / or cassettes, and computer-aided software for teaching English as a foreign language. This software allows students to reinforce what they have learned in face-to-face classes; accelerate your learning in an easy and entertaining way, and at the same time, develop basic skills in the area of computing. The scholarship student in this program must have time for the four hours of class per day and to carry out the tasks assigned by the teacher. You must be willing, after completing the Immersion English Program, to continue your university studies, or otherwise, to enter the country's workforce. (https://uneveip.wordpress.com/)

Profile of the Graduate in Modern Languages

According to the portal Eternal Life, published in an article on the Internet on its page (professionals.com.mx), it exposes the following:

1) Manage the four communication skills of the language studied (listening and writing, speaking and writing), at a bachelor's level.

2) Determine the existing limitations in the Modern Languages career in order to penetrate the tourist field.

3) Know the terminology used in the tourist area, both in Spanish and in foreign languages.

4) Satisfy certain demands that are not supplemented by knowing the languages.

5) Develop skills that allow companies or units related to tourism to be managed.

6) Manage new information and communication technologies in the field of languages and tourism.

7) Highlight the importance of knowledge of foreign cultures for mastering the tourism field.

8) Apply good human relations for the benefit of the tourist field.

9) Apply their linguistic and pedagogical knowledge, as well as their practical experience in teaching the studied language in institutions that require it.

10) Integrate knowledge and processes to explain a given phenomenon or solve a problem that occurs in your workplace.

11) Apply their administrative knowledge in coordinating teachers in institutions related to their profession.

12) Understand the culture or cultures related to the studied language and its interaction with it.

13) Apply their knowledge of the language studied in the teaching of literature and / or courses based on disciplinary content in that language.

14) Deepen the study of the target language from the acquired linguistic / theoretical knowledge.

15) Apply your knowledge and skills developed in the language studied to perform translations from that language into your mother tongue at a professional level.

16) Analyze and produce texts in Spanish to improve their command of Spanish according to theories of discourse.

17) Carry out linguistic and / or educational research work.

18) Develop critical attitudes of self-evaluation to achieve a dignified and quality performance.

19) Ethically assume your professional practice.

20) He communicates effectively in the English and French languages within his work environment.

21) Culture dominates in the national and international context.

22) Handles basic aspects of information and communication technologies.

23) Prepare operational budgets and sales projections.

24) Manage tools for solving problems and conflicts.

25) He works as a team and influences the decisions of his work environment.

26) Apply new technologies in the design of teaching materials for teaching English.

27) It will critically analyze the different linguistic currents and their contribution to applied linguistics.

28) It will identify the main approaches to learning foreign languages.

29) You will understand the role that cultural and literary aspects of the target language play in acquiring it.

Conclusions of the Dominican Study

The present research work was organized in four chapters: where Chapter I. Construction of the object of study. Chapter II. This chapter is the literature review, which aims to develop the different topics that support this research. Chapter III. Methodology, this chapter explains the methodological quadrant to be used. Chapter IV. The results of the analysis of the data obtained are presented, and lastly, we point out the conclusions we reached regarding each specific objective set out. In addition, the bibliographic references and annexes that support the work carried. Following are the results of the research have been presented, from which we will start to make the following conclusions based on the research questions:

Conclusions for the first research question. In this context, the SLA theories used in the development of curriculum play a fundamental role in the teaching of the language. Taking into consideration all the aforementioned aspects, English arises as the language that has to be learnt. In this regard, there are several benefits associated with bilingualism, namely, cultural and intercultural awareness, cognitive and socio-economic benefits.

Regarding the first benefit, the acknowledgment and appreciation of a foreign culture, and all the elements associated with it such as peoples 'identity and practices, becomes important since this awareness promotes respect and tolerance towards diversity and a more valuable perception of one's own culture. Secondly, the cognitive benefits are related, on the one hand, to the brain plasticity present in those who speak more than one language and, on the other, to the density of gray-matter.

Furthermore, there are major verbal abilities in those who learn an additional language from an early age. In a nutshell, it can be stated that the main benefit, in this respect, is that these people possess higher mental abilities that improve their performance not only in language, but in other aspects as well. The final set of benefits associated with bilingualism refers to the social and economic ones. This aspect is significantly important because of the ruling economic system of the country. Along these lines, the axes proposed by the Ministry seem to suggest that the English language opens doors to social mobility and economic advantages mainly. Also, it can be asserted that there is a high correlation in terms of theories behind the three teacher training programs, even though they are not always explicitly stated. Both consecutive and the concurrent programs show a tendency towards two theories: Constructivist and Sociocultural views, which are modern perspectives related to the learning process.

Conclusions for the second research question. Constructivism corresponds to a general theory of learning that can be applied to different disciplines such as Mathematics and Language, while the Sociocultural perspective has been specifically applied to SLA. Therefore, this means that the three programs involved in this study follow some of the most current paradigms in general teaching, and SLA. The adoption of these modern theories by the selected institutions shows a simultaneous correspondence with the development of new paradigms of teaching and learning, as well as SLA. In other words, these teacher training programs follow the prevailing theories that are presently used in education internationally.

These theories are reflected on teachers 'training and in the manner in which students are considered by this new paradigm. The Sociocultural approach has reformulated the conception of students and teachers in terms of prominence or importance in the classroom. In the past, teachers were responsible for the major part of the teaching and learning process, emphasizing their instructional functions. On the other hand, students performed a passive role that consisted on receiving disciplinary contents. This paradigm contemplated a unidirectional exchange of knowledge. Currently, teachers play the role of facilitators while students are in charge of most of their learning process. The degree of students 'awareness about their learning is enhanced by the development of critical thinking, which also allows them to be conscious of their environment.

Conclusions for the third research question. Since there is not an explicit SLA theory behind the curriculum of the Ministerio de Educación, it is difficult to determine its relationship with the programs of the universities. The lack of a theory in the curriculum allows for certain freedom in the creation of the teaching programs, which might explain the differences among them. To illustrate this point, it can be observed that there are differences in terms of the theoretical basis of the teacher training programs.

Conclusions for the fourth research question. After the in-depth analysis of the curriculum of the Ministerio de Educación, it can be argued that due to the lack of explicit theories, this document was not written by specialists in language acquisition since these experts are not regarded as important in the design of the curriculum. This indicates that there is a deficiency of specialists not only in education, but also in SLA,

Applied Linguistics and EFL, who should be involved in the creation of the curriculum and the improvement of language policies.

Even though the analyzed institutions allegedly have specialists in the field, their programs are not categorical in terms of a theory and clarity in their creation, except for the teaching program of the University. If the Ministry actually set clear guidelines and established an overt SLA theory in the English language curriculum, this entity would be able to supervise the universities in charge of training teachers. In this way, there would be a common standard for all the educators in the country. However, since this does not actually occur, this situation leads to a never-ending circle, in which teachers are not trained according to the Ministry's benchmarks because this entity does not provide clear standardized guidelines.

Chapter IV: A Final Comparative Analysis of both Cases

   The present final analysis it is understood to be driven within the socio-political and economical framework of these two Latin-American countries' realities. Although we are dealing here with two-case studies which exclusively deal with Language Acquisition theories and of their application of the ministries of higher education of Chile and the Dominican Republic in an expected academic scenario, mostly for the public educational system in the pre-college stages.

   But an undeniable fact, besides the analysis of the academic factors herein reviewed it is the differences that as Latin-American nations are found in both countries, to start, Chile is a country located in the South Cone of Latin-America and the Dominican Republic is a Caribbean island (it shares the Hispaniola Island with Haiti), so let us share and compare the realities of these two countries in order to completely understand how these two Spanish-speaking countries have a lot of differences and not many similarities.

The main Features of the Chilean Society.

Chile is one of the longest countries in the world, encompassing a diverse set of landscapes and climates. Regional and geographical differences aside, many Chileans tend to believe their society is homogeneous. The Chilean Spanish language, Catholicism and the relative isolation of Chile from the rest of South America have all contributed to the unity of Chilean culture. With the reorganization of the economy and politics under dictator Augusto Pinochet and the subsequent return of democracy, nearly every aspect of Chilean society has changed in the past 20 years. Traditional values are adapting to globalization and social mobility has markedly increased. While family is still the bedrock of society, the prominence of family life has diminished slightly as Chileans relax some of their more conservative attitudes.

Ethnicity and Language

According to the CIA World Factbook (2016), 88.9% of the Chilean population is white or non-indigenous. This figure includes those who are of mixed European-indigenous descent (also

known as '*mestizos*', although Chileans rarely use this term). Approximately 9.1% of Chileans are '*mapuche*', which is the main indigenous population in Chile. Chileans often like to be thought of as a homogeneous society, largely because the majority of the population possesses mixed ancestry and thus shares ethnic heritage in one way or another. However, for some, there is a feeling that the emphasis on homogeneity fails to acknowledge the multi-ethnic nature of

Chilean society. Indeed, indigenous rituals and respect for the natural world have impacted Chile's customs and traditions throughout history. Some indigenous communities may feel ignored because of such attitudes.

Despite ethnic differences, nearly all Chileans speak Spanish (99.5%), which is also the official language of the country. The Chilean dialect of the Spanish language has evolved to encompass numerous indigenous words from the Mapuche language as well as many *chilenismos* (Chilean slang). Due to this and other linguistic features, Chilean Spanish is quite characteristic and distinctive across South America (see 'Verbal' in *Communication*). Despite the country's geographic length and diversity, there is a relative absence of recognizable regional accents. The basis of accent distinctions is usually on differences among social classes. The national coverage of many Santiago-based radio and television programs also assists the standardization of Chilean Spanish.

Social Stratification

Chilean society tends to be stratified according to quite distinct socioeconomic groups. Indeed, one's socioeconomic status is considered to be a major determinant of one's identity. The importance of social class is reflected in the various Chilean words used to describe the social position of someone. For example, '*cuico*', '*pituco*' and '*esnob*' are often used to refer to the upper class, while '*roto*', '*ordinario*' and '*flaite*' are used to describe the lower class.

Chilean society has experienced a significant change in the last five years with the arrival of immigrants from countries such as Cuba, Venezuela, Haiti, Peru, Bolivia and Colombia (among others). Upon arriving in Chile, many of these migrants work in unskilled jobs or trades usually

associated with the lower social class – such as cleaning, waitressing, domestic work and street vendors – despite having high levels of education. This migration has stressed the living conditions for many Chilean families already living in poverty, resulting in the emergence of a new social class – the middle-low class.

The interaction between social classes is usually fleeting, occurring mainly through workplaces such as a businessperson interacting with a maid or taxi driver. Various facets of society perpetuate social class distinctions. One example is marriage, whereby family pressures can prevent one from socializing or marrying those from a different social class. Another notable example is in education, whereby the quality of teaching is largely dependent on whether the institution is public or private. Those in the upper classes often send their children to private schools, which are often too expensive and inaccessible to the lower classes.

One's social class can often be discerned by one's surname. For example, the Chilean expression "*apellido vinoso*" ("wine surname") refers to the select group of families that continue to have much influence over the country. Ethnicity may also be an indicator of one's socioeconomic class. The general pattern has seen those of darker skin to be more economically and socially disadvantaged. Typically, those of predominantly European or Middle Eastern heritage are in the middle or upper classes, while those of mixed indigenous and Spanish heritage are in the lower class. Traditionally, social mobility is quite difficult in Chile. While this has changed with the advancement of Chile's economy, many tend to stay within the same social class. (Cultural Atlas, 2021).

The Main Features of the Dominican Society.

The Dominican Republic, country of the West Indies that occupies the eastern two-thirds of Hispaniola, the second largest island of the Greater Antilles chain in the Caribbean Sea. Haiti, also an independent republic, occupies the western third of the island. The Dominican Republic's shores are washed by the Caribbean to the south and the Atlantic Ocean to the north. Between the eastern tip of the island and Puerto Rico flows the Mona Passage, a channel about 80 miles (130 km) wide. The Turks and Caicos Islands are located some 90 miles (145 km) to the north,

and Colombia lies about 300 miles (500 km) to the south. The republic's area, which includes such adjacent islands as Saona, Beata, and Catalina, is about half the size of Portugal. The national capital is Santo Domingo, on the southern coast.

The Dominican Republic has much in common with the countries of Latin America (with which it is often grouped), and some writers have referred to the country as a microcosm of that region. Dominicans have experienced political and civil disorder, ethnic tensions, export-oriented booms and busts, and long periods of military rule, including a Haitian occupation (1822–44), the oppressive dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo (1930–61), and military interventions by the United States (1916–24 and 1965–66). However, the nation's troubles have paled in comparison with those of neighboring Haiti. The two countries have long been strategic because of their proximity to the United States and their positions on major sea routes leading to the Caribbean and the Panama Canal.

Ethnicity

The population of the Dominican Republic is predominantly of mixed African and European ethnicity, and there are small Black and white minorities. It has long been believed that few people are descended, even indirectly, from the indigenous Taino peoples, who were largely decimated by disease, warfare, and the effects of forced labour shortly after their first contact with Europeans. Some scholars, however, have argued that Taino legacy is more pronounced than this, both genetically in the current population and in terms of survival elements in Dominican language and material culture.

Language and religion

The Spanish language has always been predominant, although English is becoming more common because of continued emigration to the United States—which has been accompanied by continual visiting back and forth—plus some repatriation. A French Creole is spoken among Haitian immigrants.

More than four-fifths of the people are adherents to the Roman Catholic church, which exerts a marked influence on all levels of cultural, political, and economic life. Many of the religious beliefs and practices of the rural populace are syncretic, rooted in the cultures of both the early Spanish and African communities. Evangelical groups account for a small but growing segment of the population. There are a few adherents of Judaism and other religions.

The country experienced one of the world's highest urbanization rates in the late 20th century: in 1950 roughly one-fourth of Dominicans lived in cities, but by the late 1990s nearly two-thirds of the population was urban. Santo Domingo expanded into formerly rural zones as it became more crowded, and its urban slums grew as well. Santiago, La Romana, and other cities also grew considerably.

The Dominican Republic's high rate of emigration has been primarily directed to New York City and other cities in the United States. Since the mid-1960s more than one-tenth of the total population has emigrated, principally to improve their economic situation; many have been illegal immigrants. The outward flow of people alleviated the strain on local resources (notably housing, water supplies, and food production) while boosting many families' incomes with remittances of cash and consumer goods. (Britannica, 2021).

Conclusions

As portrayed above, the differences between the Chilean and the Dominican Societies leaves no margin to the imagination and lead to the conclusion that even in the most remote case of academic invariabilities, there are indeed a lot of historical, socio-economical and political factors that exert an enormous influence on distancing both societies, and which can clearly exercise their imprint into the educational system in general of both nations, and not only for the case of the application of the prior mentioned theories to the teaching of English as a foreign language by the ministries of higher education to duly implement the formation of EFL teachers.

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