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Promoting Classroom Interaction in English through Scaffolding Strategies, Meaningful
Materials and Genres

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Abstract

This action-research aimed at promoting classroom interaction in English through scaffolding strategies, meaningful materials, and the genre of information report. It was conducted in a public school in Rionegro, Antioquia, with 35 ninth graders. Action research strategies unfolded in two stages: The first stage consisted of classroom observations to identify a research focus. During the second stage, an action plan was developed and implemented to address the limited of interaction in English in the classroom. Data gathering instruments included a multimodal pre-service teacher's journal, focus group interviews, classroom recordings, and informal talks with students. Findings revealed a positive impact on classroom interaction in English in presence of teacher and peer scaffolding, blackboard-mediated interaction materials, and purposeful genre-based planning.

Keywords: Scaffolding strategies, meaningful materials, genres, classroom interaction, oral production.

Título del proyecto en español: Promoviendo la interacción de clase en inglés a través de estrategias de andamiaje, materiales significativos y géneros textuales.

Degree requirement

This action research project is submitted as a requirement to obtain a bachelor's degree in foreign language education (English- French) at the Escuela de Idiomas, Universidad de Antioquia, El Carmen de Viboral, Colombia.

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Table of Contents

Abstract2

Degree requirement3

Acknowledgments4

Preface.....7

Description of the Context8

 The class8

 Participants9

Statement of the Problem.....9

Theoretical Background.....11

 Scaffolding.....11

Table 1 Scaffolding strategies for language learning12

(Based on Gibbons, 2015).....12

 Interaction.....14

 Oral production15

 The genre of information report.....16

Research Question17

General Objective17

Specific Objectives17

Action Plan.....	17
Development of Actions	18
Data analysis	19
Findings and Interpretations.....	20
The impact of scaffolding on lexical development.....	20
The improvement of pronunciation skills through scaffolding	23
Peer scaffolding and teamwork for encouraging interaction.....	24
Blackboard as a learning mediation resource	27
Meaningful Materials with Topics of Interest	29
Information reports: bridging students' context and daily life situations	30
Image #1 Student artifact sample: News report headline (March 22 nd , 2023)	30
Conclusions and Implications	33
Reflection	35
References	36
Annexes.....	38

Preface

As an undergraduate student of foreign languages at Universidad de Antioquia, Colombia, I regularly wonder about the changes in our teaching practices that could make students enjoy their learning process more. My interest in conducting this research stems from the observations in my first practicum semester. I realized students were often eager to participate and communicate with each other. Their attitudes towards English use were positive and active. However, students' lack of vocabulary, dependency on translation, and a focus on writing skills appeared as challenges to the creation of spaces for interaction in L2. Hence, scaffolding strategies, meaningful materials and the use of textual genres emerged as alternatives for mediating classroom interaction in English. This research study was conducted with 35 ninth-graders in a public school in Rionegro, Antioquia. This research project is mainly addressed to teachers, EFL researchers and the entire educational community who seek strategies, tools, and resources to facilitate language learning.

Karen Elisa Restrepo Buitrago

Rionegro, Antioquia, June 15th, 2023

Description of the Context

Institución Educativa Barro Blanco (IEBB) is a rural public school, located in Rionegro, Antioquia, Colombia. From 1986 until 1999, IEBB functioned mainly as a primary school. The development of the municipality and its demographic growth since 2000 led IEBB to expand its services and coverage with elementary and secondary education. Since February the 1st of the same year, two classrooms for deaf students were acquired.

Through values such as responsibility, sense of belonging, solidarity, honesty and equity, the institution aims at holistic co-education, thus promoting the exercise of their rights and responsibilities as citizens from active and social perspectives. The school also emphasizes inclusion initiatives for the deaf communities.

The school is a two-story building distributed as follows: on the first floor are the library, the restaurant, the teachers' lounge, the academic coordination, the principal's office, the assistant's office, stationery, the counsellor's office, and a small cafeteria. On the second floor are the classrooms from 6th to 11th grade, two classrooms for deaf students, the welfare coordination office, a computer room, and the restrooms.

The class

English classes took place twice a week and were divided into two-hour sessions on Wednesdays and Thursdays. The content developed on the course was based on the program *Colombia Bilingüe 2014-2018*, an initiative by Colombian Ministry of National Education (MNE) to enhance the English teaching practices in elementary and secondary education (2014 - 2018). The cooperating teacher (CT) sometimes used the textbook "Way to go! 8th grade" to guide topic choices for the English lessons. The CT also resorted to materials such as flashcards,

worksheets, texts, videos, and a television set, which were available in every classroom. She sometimes used one mobile phone and one laptop to project audio-visual content on the T.V.

Participants

Baseline data to this action research was gathered in the second semester of 2022 with an eighth-grade class of 37 students. For the second semester of my practicum in 2023, the group had changed, and actions were implemented with 35 ninth-graders. Knowingly, both groups had similar characteristics. The students ranged from 13 to 18 years old, most of them belonging to neighboring rural sectors of strata 1, 2, and 3. On a regular basis, students were talkative, participative, and active during English courses (Journal entries, 2022).

Their engagement level with the proposed activities for the English lessons presented variations. On the one hand, learners seemed highly involved in listening activities, reading aloud, games, and presentations (Journal entries 2022, and Field notes, 2023). On the other hand, their attention timespan was low when it came to writing and solving grammar exercises, as they tended to get distracted by their cellphones or chatted about different topics with their classmates in Spanish. They were prone to using the Internet to look for information online, translated texts, and accessed virtual dictionaries during activities (Journal entries 2022, and Field notes, 2023). The pace and motivation of students without a mobile device were comparatively negative to those with access to technological resources.

Statement of the Problem

From classroom observations, I was able to identify that students' English learning followed a cognitive approach. Learners engaged in activities such as translation of texts as well as dialogue recitation and verb list memorization. Furthermore, materials used during classes,

such as written verbs flashcards and grammar explanation videos, focused mostly on vocabulary retention and systematic sentence learning, which required attention and pattern identification for exercises to be solved. Learners rarely used the target language to interact both with each other and with the CT. They also spent a significant amount of time practicing accuracy by solving grammar exercises hardly linked to their context or interests. Students resorted to translators to understand and solve activities, or waited until other classmates finished the exercises to copy the answers.

For the second semester of my practicum, I observed how students worked on reading comprehension exercises and readings presentations about the American culture. Students usually relied on their written notes to present text content. Team members also used drawings to represent information from the readings and included posters with unknown vocabulary to facilitate content comprehension. Classmates often asked the presenters to repeat their parts up to four times in order to take notes. Additionally, students were in charge of creating a game after every presentation to assess peer's comprehension. Later, the CT implemented a summative assessment with open-ended questions about the presentations. Students often asked about unknown words and claimed not to understand the presentations' content.

Although a greater degree of interaction was evident in the activities of the second semester, students still presented difficulties with L2 comprehension and the spaces to exchange their own thoughts and ideas were limited. Moreover, learners were unaware of the actual use of English in different contexts and therefore, were unable to use the target language in a purposeful way. Considering that "learners of English as a second language (ESL) not only learn English as a subject in itself, but also learn through it" (Gibbons, 2003, p. 247), it became critical for me to include resources and strategies beyond translation, memorization, grammar-oriented activities,

product-based activities, and grade-oriented activities, thus promoting more meaningful classroom interactions. In an effort to provide the necessary assistance for students, this study proposed the incorporation of scaffolding strategies, meaningful materials, and the genre of information reports to promote classroom interactions in English.

Theoretical Background

Considering the problem described from the observations, students' needs, and their English level, a literature review was conducted to find relevant and pertinent theory to guide this study. Hence, the concepts of *scaffolding*, *classroom interaction*, *oral production*, the *genre of information report* are described below.

Scaffolding

Scaffolding takes place within the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which Vygotsky (1978) has defined as the space between a child's "actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving" and their "potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). Building on Vygotsky's work, Bruner (1983) later defined scaffolding and its relevance as "a process of setting up the situation to make the child's entry easy and successful and then gradually pulling back and handing the role to the child as he becomes skilled enough to manage it" (p. 60).

Educational researchers have identified the main factors of scaffolding in order for situation setup within formal learning environments. Wells (1999, p. 127), for instance, mentions three characteristics of educational scaffolding:

- 1) The essentially dialogic nature of the discourse in which knowledge is co-constructed.
- 2) The significance of the kind of activity in which knowing is embedded.

3) The role of artifacts that mediate knowing.

These characteristics enunciate the importance of classroom discourse, learning activities, and learning artifacts. In fact, the framework of the characteristics described above deems necessary for teachers to find suitable strategies and materials fit for the learning context as well as the knowing and knowledge levels of students.

Moreover, Buitrago (2018) claims that scaffolding provides context for lessons, while giving learners reassurance and support for their use of the language (p. 22). In this token, Gibbons (2015, pp. 24-29) proposes a set of scaffolding strategies that correspond to students' needs at different points in language learning.

Table 1 Scaffolding strategies for language learning

(Based on Gibbons, 2015)

Learners' needs	Scaffolding strategies	Author
Understanding talk and written texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - simple-to-complex discourse, - mother tongue use, - background knowledge and experience talk, - visual aids - graphic representation, - reformulation, - drawing attention to key content (textual and visual) 	Krashen (1982) Comprehensible input
Language use by students themselves	Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - barrier games, 	Swain (2000, 2005) Language use as

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - paired problem solving, - solving context-based problems, - dictogloss, - reporting learnings, - jigsaw reading 	<p>comprehensible output</p>
	<p>Interaction contexts created through activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - teamwork, - confidence build-up, - affirmative comprehension, - language processing, - word choice and correctness, - risk-taking encouragement, - supportive feedback, - wait time (Rowe) 	
<p>New language models (registers)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -explicit subject-based language teaching, - spoken and written specific language planning, -build on, extend, and reword students' utterances, - mention language variation according to context, - include written joint constructions, - develop criteria for effective writing, -display writing frameworks for different 	<p>Schleppegrell (2012)</p>

	genres	
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Interaction

Brown (2007) defines interaction as a “collaboration of thought, feeling, or ideas between two people, resulting in a reciprocal effect on each other” (p. 212). Additionally, he places interaction as the foundation of second language learning because it enables learners to improve their communication skills and to construct their identities socially through collaboration and negotiation (Brown, 2015, p. 80).

Moreover, in his view on interaction, Long (1983) has stated that considering form during negotiation in interaction benefits language learning. One of the reasons that supports this view is the belief in which learners have opportunities to modify oral production when receiving feedback during such negotiations (Long, 1996, as cited in Herazo, 2010). Bearing in mind that classrooms are artificial contexts and, therefore, classroom talk might be seen as “unnatural”, it is relevant to differentiate the interaction types present in the classroom.

Classroom interaction refers to the various ways in which teachers and students communicate amongst themselves. One of the most common interaction patterns in the English Language Teaching ELT classroom is the initiation-response-feedback exchange. As proposed by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), teacher initiates a conversation by asking students a question. After students provide a response to the question, the teacher gives feedback to what the students said. This sequence may accomplish different purposes during classroom activities, such as: assessing students’ understanding, engaging students in classroom discussions, encouraging communication skills, promoting student teacher interaction, and guiding the learning progression.

Furthermore, various interaction patterns emerge based on the circulation of speech. Dagarin (2004, p.129) identifies four modes of communication within the classroom environment: teacher-learners, teacher-group of learners, learner-learner, and learners-learners. These patterns of interaction can significantly impact language development, communication skills, and overall learning outcomes.

Oral production

Hymes (1972) has defined oral skill as “the capacity to communicate effectively within a particular speech community that wants to accomplish its purposes”. In order to achieve communication, speakers need to integrate different psycholinguistic processes for both comprehension and production during conversations. Hence, in response to Krashen's (1982) comprehensible input hypothesis, Swain (1985, as cited in Nunan, 2004) proposes the output hypothesis, where after analysing the effects of immersion programs in which, despite being exposed to considerable amounts of input, learners did not acquire fluency levels in the target language as stated in the input hypothesis. As a result, Swain concluded that not only do learners require input comprehension, but also opportunities to produce the target language to accomplish acquisition (p. 80).

Additionally, Hatch (1978, as cited in Nunan, 2004, p. 79) affirms that we learn how to communicate within conversations, instead of deploying grammatical instructions learnt beforehand to then use them in conversation. This perspective invites teachers to focus on meaning rather than accuracy when teaching oral skills. Furthermore, Celce-Murcia (2001) explains that since spoken English is achieved through interaction with at least another speaker, several simultaneous demands such as “monitoring and understanding the other speaker(s),

thinking about one's own contribution, producing that contribution, monitoring its effect, and so on" (p. 103), which makes speaking a challenging task for language learners.

Pastás (2014, as cited in López, 2019, p. 23) offers examples of oral interactions amongst students, and with the teacher in the classroom, such "as making comments, speaking in class, asking and answering questions, talking about real life, and taking part in discussions".

Littlewood (1981, as cited in Peña and Onatra, p. 13) suggests that "learners must develop skills and strategies for using the language to communicate meanings as effectively as possible in concrete situations".

The genre of information report

When selecting a vehicle for implementing my action plan, the institution's goals and objectives were considered. The school required students to comprehend and produce simple texts describing past events using vocabulary related to social phenomena (English syllabus, 9th grade, 2022). After evaluating my teaching method, it was determined that using textual genres would fulfill both the institution's objectives and the objectives for this action research. Genre, defined by Knapp and Watkins as "the language processes involved in doing things with language" (2005, p. 21), comprehends five social processes: description, explanation, instruction, argumentation, and narration (p. 27). The genre of information reports, in the form of news reports, was chosen to facilitate language learning, as they align with the social process of description, which was an objective set by the institution, and foster discussion and interaction in the classroom. This study supported its action plan on the 3-stage teaching-learning cycle (TLC) for the teaching and learning of oral genres inspired by Herazo (2010).

Research Question

How do scaffolding strategies, meaningful materials, and the genre of information report contribute to interaction in English of a ninth-grade classroom?

General Objective

Promote classroom interaction with 9th grade students in English through scaffolding strategies, meaningful materials, and the genre of information report.

Specific Objectives

1. Employ scaffolding strategies, meaningful materials, and the genre of information report to facilitate effective classroom interaction among students in English.
2. Assess the influence of scaffolding strategies, meaningful materials, and genres on classroom interaction in English.
3. Outline the dynamics of classroom interactions after the AP implementation.

Action Plan

A four-week long action plan (AP) and its design were oriented by a teaching learning cycle, a sequence proposed by Burns (2010) and Callaghan and Rothery (1988), which takes learners through three stages: deconstruction, joint construction, and independent construction. During the AP's first three weeks, students engaged in activities to become familiar with the social purpose, structure, and features of a news report. Actions in this regard included brainstorming activities that reflected students' previous knowledge with the field of the news reports, reading and analyzing information reports, creating timelines to organize a sequence of events, and direct

instruction. During the following three weeks, the PST provided students with graphic organizers for them to elaborate oral information reports about different news sections. The PST also guided students in the formulation of interview questions to gather information about the school community, which later served as input for independent work on their own information reports. In the last two weeks of the AP, students described a place in their school and interviewed their classmates to create a video reporting how students used and perceived these spaces.

Data was collected through a PST multi-modal journal, classroom video-recordings, focus group interviews, and personal communications. These instruments aimed at accounting for students' reactions towards classroom activities and materials, outlining interactions resulting from scaffolding strategies and meaningful materials deployment, and describing students' oral interactions in English. ([Annex 1](#))

Development of Actions

As an initial step of the action plan, a thorough exploration of the students' prior knowledge of information reports was undertaken. To accomplish this, the PST created discussion spaces where she explored with students how they obtained information about everyday events and which sources of information they frequently relied upon. The classroom's blackboard played a crucial role, acting as a mediating material for gathering students' contributions and facilitating visual representations of their ideas. Additionally, students worked in groups to create a scale where they classified sources of information from the least to the most reliable.

As the second action of the plan, students were immersed in reading information reports specifically linked to the Colombian context. Here, the PST adopted a guiding role providing

students with support in the analysis and identification of essential generic features of information reports. Students were guided to create charts in which they organized structural elements commonly found in information reports into four categories: participants, facts, adjectives, and circumstances, which later enabled them to answer questions regarding the described events. Additionally, graphic organizers were employed to assist students in understanding and differentiating main ideas from supporting details in short and simple texts ([Annex 2](#)).

In the latest stages of the action plan, the students engaged in the elaboration of their own information reports about the school community. To achieve this purpose, the PST used a PPT with school pictures for students to describe the space and the elements that one could find there. Then, students were divided into small groups to formulate questions concerning the use that their classmates gave to those spaces, and their perceptions about them. After formulating three questions, students interviewed five classmates and took notes of their responses to later report the information they had gathered. Finally, students recorded a short video describing the chosen school space and reporting relevant information about how their classmates used and perceived those spaces. At the end of each report, students presented a brief conclusion of the information obtained from the interviews.

Data analysis

The qualitative data analysis for this action research followed the recommended steps outlined by Creswell (2012, pp. 182-187). First, data were organized chronologically and labelled according to the data collection instruments. Journals were written weekly after every lesson and spoken data from classroom video-recordings and focus group interviews were

transcribed in digital text files. Conversation transcriptions from classroom recordings followed the conventions proposed by Hepburn and Bolden (2017). Then, an exploration of the data was carried out to get an overall idea of what was collected. Subsequently, two Excel tables were prepared for the coding of classroom interaction sequences and the comparison of students answers during focus group interviews. The broader themes resulting from the coding process were arranged in hierarchical order according to this study's research objectives. Lastly, data were triangulated in order to identify patterns that would lead to the validation of the findings presented here.

Findings and Interpretations

This study aimed to promote classroom interactions with EFL students through scaffolding strategies, meaningful materials, and the genre of information reports. Findings to this study have revealed that scaffolding strategies presented an overall impact on students' lexicon to interact, pronunciation skills, motivation to use English, and classroom interactions. Moreover, it was evinced that using the blackboard and pictures served as mediation resources for meaningful learning. Lastly, information reports helped students to build interpersonal links with students' own context and daily life situations.

The impact of scaffolding on lexical development

Students interacted with their peers and the PST in favor of word meanings during brainstorming activities, joint writing, socializations, and oral presentations. Learners provided lexical assistance to their classmates. For instance, the following sequence shows three scaffolding strategies aiming at lexis and meaning:

[...]

01 PST: qui[én me da un ejemplo de un adjetivo?

02 ORI: de un objetivo?
 03 CAS: [cualidades (0.5) son cualidades
 04 PST: de un adjetivo
 05 ORI: ay, espere (.) qué- qué era un adjetivo?
 06 CAS: ((To ORI)) son cualidades
 07 ORI: ah cualidades... pere
 08 JUL: que yo soy muy lindo
 09 CAS: mentiras!
 10 JUL: I am... I am beautiful.
 (Classroom video recording, March 16th, 2023)

In this given sequence, scaffolding facilitated students' understanding and language production through clarification, explanation, and exemplification. In line 02, Ori expresses a need for clarification for understanding the word class 'adjective'. This need is addressed by the PST in line 04 when she repeats the word "adjective." Then, in line 05 Ori asks for the definition of the term, which means that she did not hear Cas's turn in line 03. In line 06, Cas rephrases the definition in Spanish, this time addressing Ori directly and intending an explanation. In the next turn, Ori manifests recognising the term using the expression "ah" and repeated Cas's definition. Next, she shows a need for time to think of an example. In the subsequent exchange, a different student, Jul joins the conversation in line 08 to provide a response using L1 that he later translates to English in line 10 to accomplish the PST's request of providing an example for an adjective.

During interactions, some students were identified as more proficient than others. These students often scaffolded peers using translated words, sample sentences, or full texts into Spanish in order for their peers to solve questions and facilitate understanding texts' global meaning.

01 PST: what information does the title of the news give you?
 (1.0)
 02 PST: ¿qué información les da el título de la noticia?

- ((Headline in the text: Dilan Cruz, Colombian teenager injured by police projectile, dies.))
- 03 MIA: ehm que Dilan Cruz ehm murió producto de... de un proyectil policial
- 04 PST: can you- can you try saying that in English?
- 05 MIA: es que no sé qué sig- no sé cómo se lee esta palabra ((points at word on the text))
- 06 PST: teenager
- 07 MIA: ah?
- 08 PST: teenager?
- 09 MIA: por eso, ¿qué es eso?
- 10 PST: Adolescente
- 11 MIA: Bueno, Dilan Cruz es un adolescen-adolescente colombiano que murió por un proyectil policial
(Classroom video recording, March 15th, 2023)

This sequence starts with a PST display question in line 01 where the aim is to identify the information given in the headline of a news report. The PST provided little wait time for students to respond and switched to Spanish in line 02 to encourage understanding. In line 03, Mia provides an expected response using L1. However, to encourage L2 use, the PST asked Mia if she could respond in English in line 04.

In turn 05, Mia starts explaining that she does not know the meaning of a word in the title, but she interrupts the word meaning from her first idea in Spanish to introduce a different difficulty: “I don’t know how to read this word.”

The PST provided pronunciation assistance in after Mia’s turn. Hence, in line 06 the PST pronounces the word “teenager”. However, Mia’s next turn shows that confusion persist by stating “ah?” in line 07. Then, the PST repeats the pronunciation of the word with rising intonation in line 08, as if verifying whether she provided pronunciation assistance in the word Mia needed. Mia’s need becomes clearer in line 09, where she asked for the meaning of the word, which was the utterance that she cut off in line 05. The PST provides the Spanish translation in turn 10. In line 11, Mia incorporates the new word to her previous answer in L1. The evidence above leads to describe how a sequenced interaction of comprehension questions

and progressive answers promoted the understanding of a text, while mutually supporting understanding.

The improvement of pronunciation skills through scaffolding

Scaffolding also improved students' pronunciation and created opportunities for students to practice it during lessons. Data collected from the students' focus group interviews and interaction transcripts show that students enhanced their pronunciation through modelling and feedback.

When asked how they had used oral English during classroom activities, one student pointed out that he used it to “aprender a pronunciar, pa uno, pues sí, pa uno aprender la pronunciación, para uno ir aprendiendo a hablar oralmente en inglés”. A second student added: “para hablar, comunicarme, realizar los trabajos y el inglés pues, al uno escucharlo pues también aprende” (Focus group interview 2, March, 23rd, 2023). Additionally, when asked about what helped their pronunciation learning, two students stated: “cuando usted preguntaba y uno como que respondía”. This shows a positive impact of scaffolding. A different student added to their classmate's previous response: “entonces tú corriges” and a third student says: “o cuando usted simplemente habla en inglés acerca de lo que ya estamos hablando.” (Focus group interview 3, March 30th, 2023)

It was also evinced through classroom interaction sequences that students often asked their peers or the PST how to pronounce words, and immediately after they were provided with the pronunciation, they would incorporate the feedback received into their responses:

- 01 TIM: enga yo lo leo pues ehm Chat GPT app- cómo se dice esto?
 02 ODI: apAred ((as in Spanish))
 03 TIM: "apAred" ((adopting the same stress from classmate's pronunciation)) [in November
 04 SAM: [Apperd
 05 TIM: two- dos mil veintidos?

(Classroom video-recording, March 22nd, 2023)

Moreover, there were instances where students stressed words on a different syllable, to which classmates or the PST reacted by providing corrective feedback, as shown below:

01 MIS: ¿qué es A-mong?
02 PST: ¿cómo?
03 MIS: A-mong
04 PST: a-MONG (.) entre (.) entre varios ((drawing a circle in the air with her arm)) yes?
05 PST: por ejemplo (.) Mis (.) si yo digo 'Odi is between Mis and Sam' (.) significa que él está entre dos personas; pero si digo Odi is amo:ng students (.) es que está entre varios estudiantes (.) esa es la diferencia.

(Classroom video recording, March 30th, 2023)

Peer scaffolding and teamwork for encouraging interaction.

A factor that motivated students' L2 (second language) use during class was their classmates' need for assistance. This means that when some students observed their peers struggling with certain aspects of the language, such as vocabulary or pronunciation, they felt compelled to assist. Even if a specific student was directly asked for help, neighbouring classmates would intervene favourably to solve their peers' difficulties. The following interaction instances demonstrate students' willingness to assist and support their classmates:

FIRST INSTANCE

01 TIM: enga yo lo leo pues ehm Chat GPT app- cómo se dice esto?
02 ODI: apAred
03 TIM: apAred ((as in Spanish)) [in November
04 SAM: [Apperd
05 TIM: two- dos mil veintidos?
(Classroom video-recording, March 22nd, 2023)

SECOND INSTANCE

01 JUL: Cas ayúdeme ¿cómo se dice luna?
02 CAS: moon
03 ELE: ((from far away)) /mon/

04 CAS: ((makes hand gestures to spell the word))
05 CAS: M_O_O_N ((Spelled in Spanish))
(Classroom video-recordings, March 29th, 2023)

THIRD INSTANCE

01 TOM: ¿qué es after (.) Leo?
(1.0)
02 ODI: después
03 LEO: después de
04 PST: after that
05 LEO: después de eso
(Classroom video-recordings, April 12th, 2023)

These instances highlight the active involvement of classmates in assisting each other with language learning. In the first instance, Tim asked for help in translating a word, and Sam corrected the pronunciation without being asked directly, thus showcasing proactive engagement. In the second instance, Jul sought translation assistance, and Cas provided the correct translation while Ele contributed an alternative pronunciation. The classmates collaborated through gestures and spelling to reinforce understanding. In the third instance, Tom asked for the meaning of a word, and Odi provided a translation, but Leo and the PST elaborated on its usage and context.

These examples align with the results found by Buitrago 2018, where the author found that "sharing personal opinions, feelings, and ideas" increased class participation, risk-taking, confidence, and motivation in L2 use (p. 25). Moreover, the collaborative environment fostered a supportive and interactive language learning experience, where students felt comfortable seeking and receiving help from their peers.

Furthermore, findings show that teamwork embodied a scaffolding strategy that encouraged classroom interaction, meaning negotiation, and risk taking from students during the teaching-learning cycle. Teamwork increased students' motivation to use English in the classroom. For instance, as students worked with peers during field deconstruction of the genre, it was evidenced that they initiated conversation sequences through questions or statements,

followed up their classmates' contributions, while providing repair and corrective feedback when needed. Also, in joint and independent construction, data showed that when students shared lexicon understanding, they would go a little further so as to negotiate meaning to decide on which words best reflected their ideas, or to discuss what sequence of events best described a situation during a joint writing activity:

01 MIS: ¿cómo se pone?
 02 SAM: Argentina (.) winner
 03 TIM: no (.) así (.) Argentina champion world cup
 (6.0)
 04 TIM: Argentina
 05 MIS: ((unclear)) por eso::
 06 SAM: ponga Argentina
 07 TOM: no (.) Argentina campeón del mundo
 08 SAM: winner (.) winner
 09 TOM: no: champion
 10 TIM: champion es mejor
 11 TOM: champion the world
 12 TIM: champion the world
 (Classroom video recording, March 23rd, 2023)

Lastly, working in teams boosted students' confidence when using English, even when they were not certain about pronunciation or vocabulary, teammates support and guidance allowed their classmates to complete their contributions during class, prioritizing meaning over accuracy:

[...]
 01 TIM: ehm the ehm ((To Cas)) ¿cómo se dice país?
 02 LUX: ha! dejarnos en la pobreza
 03 PST: one by one
 04 CAS: country country
 05 TIM: ehmm mandar? mandar?
 06 CAS: no sé
 07 ((Tim, Ele and Cas laugh))
 08 TIM: profe profe (.) lideraishon the country
 09 PST: ((The PST starts writing the sentence on the board as it was given))
 10 TIM: ESO ES TODO::!
 11 (1.0)
 12 TIM: AY SI!! SI ERA! SI ERA!

13 ELE: SI ERA LIDERAISHON ((claps and points at the
blackboard))
14 ((SC, Emm and Mik laugh and celebrate))
15 PST: it's not lideraishon
16 TIM: [a:::::h
17 ELE: [a:::::h] ((seemingly disappointed))
18 ST1: y entonces?
19 PST: lead
20 TIM: ah pero-pero más o menos
(Classroom video recording, March 29th, 2023)

Students demonstrated their willingness to interact during classroom activities through the creation of conditions that allowed for active listening, meaning making, and peer-supported oral practice.

Blackboard as a learning mediation resource

The board was a mediation resource for students, providing a physical platform for students to contribute with content ideas and language knowledge. It also contributed to collaborative and interactive learning environments. Since students' contributions were registered on the board during tasks, they were able to return to them as a reference to guide and complete their work. During the focus group interviews, one student provided her perception about the use of the blackboard:

Las actividades pues, sí, son muy divertidas; ya lo había dicho antes porque...estar uno dando como ideas pa' que la profesora copie en el tablero, es chévere recordar y eso... Entretenido, o sea hace que la clase no sea sólo estar copiando y leyendo el inglés, sino que también recordar y reforzar nuestro vocabulario. (Focus group interview 3, March 23rd, 2023).

A different student also stated:

Con las diapositivas uno como que se apoya más también en el tablero, por lo que usted digamos va como paso por paso, o sea, cada que uno dice algo usted lo escribe y pues uno ya se iba guiando y todo eso. (Focus group interview 6, April 13th, 2023).

These instances seem to display a students' preference for the blackboard's function as means to showcase their existing knowledge and opinions, rather than merely a surface of which they should write. These instances also seem to address the teacher's relevance to mediate students' interactions and learnings with the board, so that they gain autonomy in task development.

Classroom recordings illustrate ways in which students used the blackboard as a learning resource and collaborative tool. For example, during a genre deconstruction activity in which students were working on identifying sequence of events and genre features, one student asked the PST whether she could write on the board to expand on a classmate's previous answer, showcasing the blackboard's accessibility and the students' active engagement. Then, another student took the initiative to write on the blackboard, using it as a visual representation of their understanding of the topic, thus fostering a collaborative learning environment. Next, a third student requested permission to contribute with their ideas on the blackboard. This sequence of events highlights the students' appropriation gains of their learning in the presence of the board and its guidance potential (PST journal, March 16th, 2023). Lastly, a student's gesture of pointing at the blackboard to guide their classmates on spelling demonstrated the board's function as a focal point for attention that facilitated class discussion and comprehension (classroom-video recordings March 23rd, 2023).

Overall, these instances demonstrate that the blackboard played a crucial role as a learning appropriation instrument for students. It provided a platform for students to actively participate, contribute their thoughts, and visually represent their understanding.

Meaningful Materials with Topics of Interest

Digital pictures used during the classes promoted a dialogic exchange of cultural and social knowledge. During joint and independent construction, students were shown pictures of events and places linked to their interests and context. Students' familiarity with the displayed situations allowed them to interact with their peers and the PST, as well as to set their posture regarding the subject being discussed. The following interaction sequence shows how students provided details about a picture displaying celebrities:

01 PST: guys, please, look at the picture, look at the picture (.) what is that picture about?
 02 SEP: infidelity
 03 TIM: infidelity
 04 ORI: ((laughing)) infidelity
 05 TIM: ehm (0.5) ferrari fo:r twingo ((classmates laugh))
 06 TIM: ehm rolex for casio
 07 ELE: perdón que te salpique
 08 CAS: claramente (6.0)
 09 CAS: no pero es que en inglés no: CLEarly (Classroom video-recordings, March 23rd, 2023)

The given sequence shows four different students who contributed to the reconstruction of the story behind a picture. In line 02, Sep mentioned the reason connecting the three people appearing on screen. Then, Tim added the lyrics in English of a song that one of the celebrities in the picture sings to her ex-couple. Ele referred to the same song, specifically to the part where the singer mentions her ex-husbands' name. Finally, Cas continued to the part of the song that mentions who the husband cheated the singer on, while also trying to translate this part into English.

During focus group interviews, students remarked that connecting the class and its materials with already-known topics made them feel more at ease during activities:

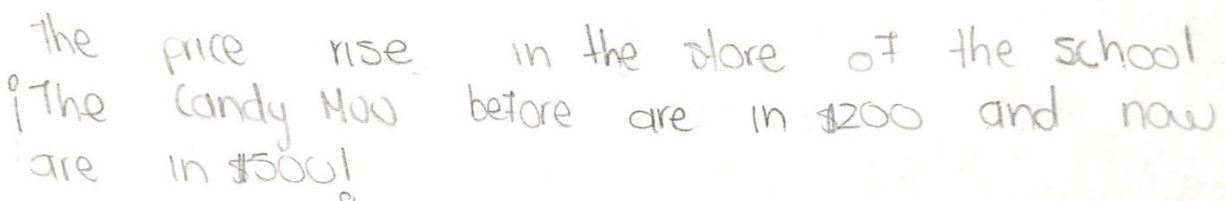
“Me pareció una clase super entretenida ya que uno nunca esperaría que en una clase de inglés hablar sobre temas así actuales, conocidos y uno se la pasa muy cómodo ya que uno ya sabe de eso”(Focus group interview 3, March 23rd, 2023).

Additionally, when asked about their perceptions on the materials used during the AP, three students commented: *“a mí en lo personal me ha gustado mucho.”* A different student added to the previous answer: *“porque tiene que ver con lo que nos gusta a nosotros, la música, los chismes, pues, lo de las noticias.”* And the third student concludes by adding: *“si porque... porque muchas cosas de las que usted trae pues son noticias de Colombia”* (Focus group interview 4, March 30th, 2023). These statements reflect that materials were meaningful in the sense that they were connected to current events and students knew about them, so they felt confident when sharing their thoughts on the topic. These instances also support Krashen's (1982) assertions regarding the importance of providing extra-linguistic support, such as pictures and realia, to encourage language acquisition as well as using students' knowledge of the world to facilitate comprehension (p. 66).

Information reports: bridging students' context and daily life situations

Using the genre of information reports in class allowed students to learn how to describe situations that occur daily in the school context. During a deconstruction activity, students were asked to create a headline about economy. The following picture of a team's headline displays the use of genre-related vocabulary to inform about a situation from their context:

Image #1 Student artifact sample: News report headline (March 22nd, 2023)



The price rise in the store of the school
The Candy Max before are in \$200 and now
are in \$500!

This instance contains descriptive features such as the notation of circumstance over a period of time (e.g. “before” and “now”). It also exemplifies the variation in the price of a candy, which is based on facts, i.e., the description of the phenomenon is based on a technical point of view (Knapp and Watkins, 2005, p. 98). After writing the headline on the board, the PST asked students if they would read an information report about this topic, to which most students replied affirmatively, which means that the headline achieved the purpose described in class, which was to quickly capture the readers' attention (Journal, March 22nd, 2023).

Concerning the independent construction stage, students choose to describe several places from the school, such as the classroom, the store, the computer room, the court, the gym, the restaurant, the teacher's lounge, and the library. Then, students wrote three questions about what their classmates thought of these places and what they used them for. Students took notes of their classmates answers in order to report the information they have gathered. Finally, students recorded a short video describing the place, reporting classmates' responses, and providing a brief conclusion of the report. For instance, a student reported about the school store, and at the end, raised a valid concern regarding the time students have to wait in line at the school's store to buy their breakfast:

“The shop is small is orange with white, the products are sold, the drinks are sold, the women selling. All students going to buy there, it's in the school yard. So, we do three questions to five students. The first question are: what are things you buy most in the store? The students answered: the students buy most in the store are soda and they usually accompanied with candies, mangos, popsicles, water, hot dogs, cookies, arepa and trident. The two- the second question are the: how often do you go to the store? Some students answered go to the store every day and other go three times of the week or once

time of the week. Ehm the three question are... how long does it take of queue to enter to the store? The students answered that take between five to 15 minutes to enter to the store. Ehm, conclusions, we can conclusion that the main problem is the line, or the queue are so long, we can take between in the 10 – 15 minutes, we are suggest to open other store, or hire more personal and not sneak into the line”. (Final product transcript: Video recording, April 4th, 2023)

This news report transcript reflects a use of the general qualities of the social process of description present in information reports (Knapp and Watkins, 2005). The student uses the present tense to talk about factual phenomena. Moreover, adjectives are used to describe the store and the student also mentions the frequency with which classmates buy products there through the use of adverbs. The roles of the people who frequent the space are also evident: the women who sell and the students who buy and wait in line. Additionally, the student makes an initial classification of what can be bought: products and beverages to later give examples of the edibles and drinks that classmates consume most frequently.

After analyzing the students' products, the most salient achievements in producing information reports had to do with structuring the information and the development of problem-solving skills. The reports show the use of introductory sentences, the ability to ask and answer questions, report information, and conclude ideas. Additionally, students were able to amplify their statements through supporting details and examples. Finally, the evidence suggests that working on information reports raises self-awareness about common problems found in the school context and encourage students' problem-solving skills. Nevertheless, despite being taught explicit grammar to talk about present and past events, students still struggle with tense

agreement, pronunciation of certain words and the dependency on written scripts to support oral production.

Conclusions and Implications

This action research aimed to promote classroom interaction through scaffolding strategies, meaningful materials, and information reports. Findings suggest that using scaffolding strategies might benefit lexical development, pronunciation skills, students' motivation, and boost students' confidence when using L2. Regarding materials, switching the blackboard's role as a platform to display students' voices favored a collaborative learning environment, and the use of visual aids linked to students' prior knowledge increased the opportunities for classroom interaction. Lastly, the use of information reports favored students' abilities to describe their surroundings and raise awareness about contextual issues.

Data analysis also corroborated that scaffolding supported students in comprehending and producing language through the use of clarification, explanation, and exemplification. Additionally, the structured exchange of comprehension questions and progressive answers fostered text comprehension and enhanced mutual understanding. Scaffolding also had a positive impact on students' pronunciation, mostly through modelling and feedback. Furthermore, evidence showed that peer scaffolding and teamwork created classroom interaction opportunities where students negotiated meaning, took pronunciation risks, overcame them, and boosted their confidence when speaking in English.

Regarding the use of materials to promote classroom interaction, data revealed the importance of the blackboard for students as an instrument from which they can take ideas, but also share their own. Moreover, pictures in news reports proved to be a meaningful resource in the sense that when these are linked to the interests and previous experiences of the students,

cultural and social knowledge exchanges emerge. Lastly, the use of the genre of information reports enabled students to describe school spaces, to explore how some of their classmates perceived and used these spaces, and to create awareness about potential issues they might encounter in the school community.

When engaging in a study of this nature, some implications should be considered. First, when working with a numerous group, one might be unable to address all students' needs. It would be necessary to think about turn-taking strategies and the creation of a collaborative network to increase the scope of assistance during classroom activities. Second, whenever one collects data with audio or video-recordings, it is crucial to remember that the analysis of spoken data is a time-consuming process. Therefore, transcribing and analyzing data as soon as possible is advised. Finally, focusing on interaction should not mean to neglect the other language skills, students might benefit from using several input sources to strengthen their language learning.

Concerning the limitations encountered in the study, there are two constraints that must be mentioned. On the one hand, the scope of the study was restricted in the sense that it only addresses the genre of information reports. So, this study does not provide any insights into other types of genres, or their impact on classroom interactions.

On the other hand, the scope of the study does not explore how interactions differ from one stage of the teaching learning cycle to another. Hence, findings might not be representative of the evolution of interaction patterns throughout the TLC. With regards to the significance of this study, it upholds relevant weight in the field of scaffolding and classroom interaction.

For future studies, it is advisable to explore how interactions variate when using different genres. For instance, it could be very enriching to explore the outcomes of using the genre of arguing to promote classroom spoken interactions as in debates.

Reflection

It is interesting to look back to when I started this bachelor's degree. I idealized many things about language teaching; I still do. However, this practicum experience offered me significant insights into the actual teaching world. I became more aware of the relevance of lesson planning, sequencing of activities, prompts and materials design, pacing, classroom management, and how to deal with school contingencies.

Concerning research, it amazes me how there is an ocean of possibilities that can influence teaching practices and language learning. I am thrilled to continue exploring scaffolding strategies, materials, and genres in my future classes, and evaluate their potential effects in classroom interaction, and other language skills. I also loved that I had the opportunity to practice audio-visual transcriptions since it is a skill that I would like to get better at. So, maybe in the future, I am going get to do conversation analysis, which is a subject I am deeply interested in.

This action research meant a challenge for me because during the whole degree, we had been working in teams, and this was the first time being in charge of a big project by myself. At first, it was overwhelming, but fortunately I was not alone. My advisor, my cooperating teacher, my practicum classmates, and my students were there to guide my teaching and research practices. Thanks to them, I learned that every action should have a purpose, but even with the most meticulous planning, I will never be able to predict the outcomes of my own choices. Therefore, a chance for improvement will always be there. I leave the university with the joy of having met wonderful people and having acquired all the necessary tools to continue writing my story as a foreign language teacher.

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Annexes

Annex 1

Lessons	Scaffolding Strategies	Author
1. Building the field	Mother Tongue - Background Knowledge - Drawing attention to key content	Krashen (1982)
2. The Story Behind the Headline	Drawing attention to key content - Simple to complex discourse	Krashen (1982)
3. The structure of a News Report	Reporting learnings - Teamwork - Supportive feedback - Modeling	Swain (2000,2005)
4. Information questions	Problem solving - Barrier game - Supportive feedback	Swain (2000,2005)
5. Main ideas and supporting details	Visual aids - Teamwork - Word choice - Modeling	Krashen (1982) & Swain (2000,2005)
6. Interview your classmates	Drawin attention to key content - Visual aids - Teamwork - Background Knowledge - Modeling	Krashen (1982) & Swain (2000,2005)
7. Information report about the school community	Spoken and written specific language planning - visual aids - teamwork	Krashen (1982), Swain (2000,2005) & Schleppegrell (2012)

Annex 2.

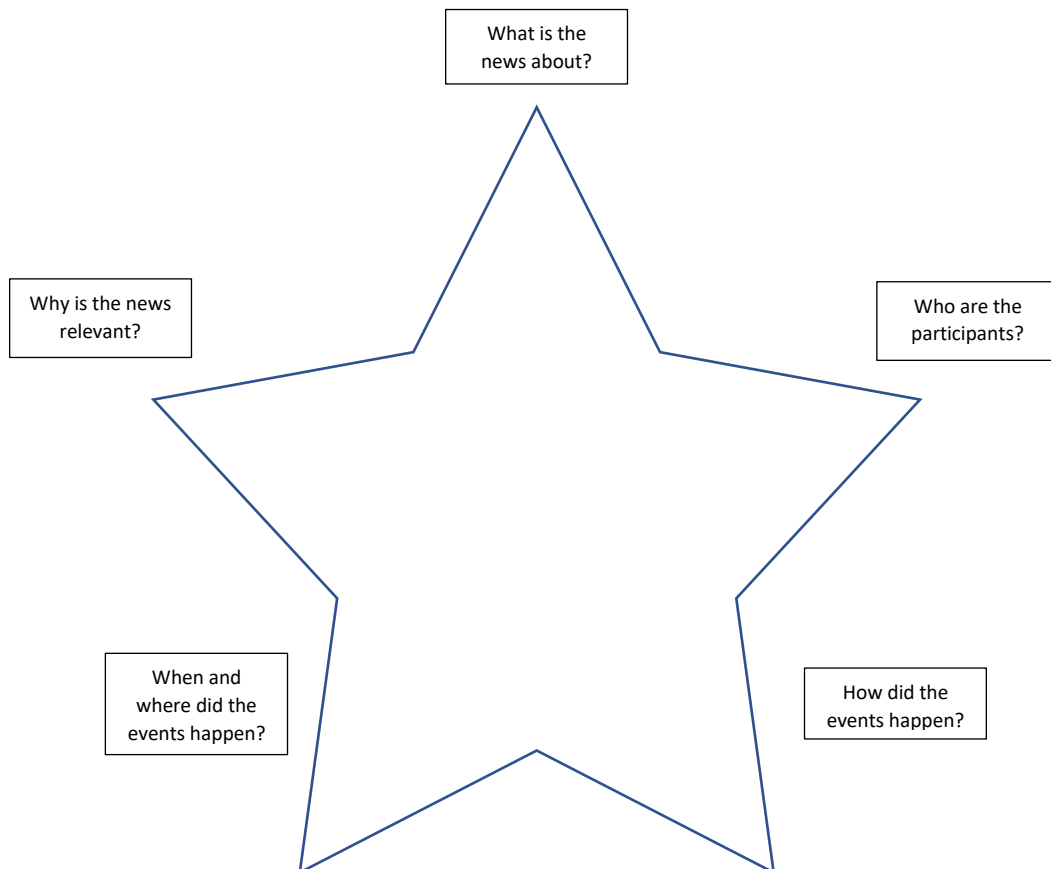
Colombian judge uses Chat GPT for his ruling



Chat GPT appeared in November 2022 as a technological tool created by Open AI, a Californian company. It is a new AI system that can have a discussion and create written work, produce images and video, all based on a database of digital books and other media. It is free and user-friendly. Humans maintain written conversations using questions, and Chat GPT provides answers.

One judge in Colombia used Chat GPT about a month ago to decide on the coverage of all the costs of the medical treatment of an autistic child. Juan Manuel Padilla, a judge in the Caribbean city of Cartagena, defended that an autistic minor’s medical and transport expenses must be covered. The parents could not pay for them. Padilla asked a question to the AI tool: Is an autistic minor exonerated from paying fees for their therapies? Chat GPT’s response corresponded with the judge’s final decision: “Yes, this is correct. According to the regulations in Colombia, minors diagnosed with autism are exempt from paying fees for their therapies.”

The use of Chat GPT seems questionable and has raised a discussion about its use in law. The AI tool generates different answers to the same question. It fabricates information on occasion to make inventive and convincing lies. Judge Padilla defended his use of technology, suggesting it could make Colombia’s legal system more efficient.



Dilan Cruz, Colombian teenager injured by police projectile, dies.

- Published 26 November 2019

A Colombian teenager who took part in a protest march to demand better access to education has died, two days after he was hit on the head by a projectile fired by riot police.

The death of Dilan Cruz has caused outrage and sparked fresh marches by protesters denouncing what they said was a heavy-handed police response. President Iván Duque said he deeply regretted Dilan Cruz's death. Mr. Duque is due to meet leaders of the protests later on Tuesday.

Who was Dilan Cruz?

Dilan Cruz was an 18-year-old pupil who was due to graduate from high school in Bogotá on Monday. Friends said he wanted to study business administration but was in need of a grant to do so. He joined a protest march in the capital on Saturday to highlight the difficulties students like him had accessing higher education, according to his friends.

What happened?

Video taken at the march shows the moment Dilan Cruz was hit. A member of the riot squad marching down the road parallel to the demonstrators can be seen firing his weapon towards those protesting. Seconds later, Dilan Cruz can be seen collapsed on the tarmac after being hit in the head by a projectile. People can be heard screaming "they hit him, they hit him" while others shout, "no violence".

There have been conflicting reports on whether the projectile was a stun grenade, a tear-gas canister or a rubber bullet. Paramedics managed to resuscitate Dilan Cruz at the scene before he was taken to hospital where Dr Juan Martínez diagnosed a traumatic brain injury caused by a "penetrating object".

His death was announced on Monday evening.