ART AS A MEANS TO TEACH ENGLISH LANGUAGE VOCABULARY TO

ELDERLY PEOPLE FROM THE RETIREMENT HOME: Hogar del Abuelo Divino

Pastor

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ABSTRACT

Vocabulary is part of the linguistic competence in the learning of a second language. This classroom project is focused in the teaching of the English language vocabulary to elderly people from a retirement home located in Pereira. In Colombia there is few evidence of researches about the practice of teaching to elderly people -andragogy-; thus, this classroom project intended to use strategies that allowed the implementers to develop lessons where the participants were asked to complete tasks related to the learning process of the English Language vocabulary as well as to develop artistic techniques required for each session. As such, this classroom project involved 12 elderly learners from the retirement home "*Hogar Del Abuelo Divino Pastor*" and three teachers in development from the Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa program; now, Licenciatura en Bilingüismo con énfasisen inglés at the Universidad tecnológica de Pereira. Moreover, there were 8 implementations for teaching topics such as colors, shapes, farm animals, professions, and family members. Additionally, the implementers took into consideration how the learners used the English language vocabulary taught, having in mind their first language as a means of communication. The results indicated that this type of context and the type of learners helped the practitioners to develop strategies related to the use of artistic materials, the way the class was paced, and the group management during the implementations. This conclusion probably reinforces the approach to be adopted in terms of linguistic outcomes, professional development and students' responses in the next research about teaching vocabulary to elderly people.

RESUMEN

En el aprendizaje de una segunda lengua, el vocabulario hace parte de la competencia lingüística. Este proyecto de aula está enfocado en la enseñanza de vocabulario de la lengua inglesa a adultos mayores de un ancianato ubicado en la ciudad de Pereira. Existe entonces en Colombia poca evidencia de estudios en los que se implementa la andragogía; la enseñanza para adultos mayores. Por lo tanto, este proyecto de aula pretendió el uso de estrategias de enseñanza, las cuales permitieron a los practicantes, el desarrollo de clases en donde se le pedía a los participantes, completar actividades relacionadas con el proceso de aprendizaje del vocabulario del inglés; así como también, desarrollar habilidades artísticas requeridas para cada sesión. Dicho proyecto de aula involucró 12 adultos mayores del ancianato "*Hogar del Abuelo Divino Pastor"* y tres practicantes docentes del programa de Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa, ahora llamado Licenciatura en Bilingüismo con énfasis en inglés, de la Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira. Además, se implementaron 8 sesiones en las que se enseñaron temas como: colores, formas, animales de la granja, ocupaciones, y miembros de la familia. Igualmente, los implementadores del proyecto tuvieron en cuenta la forma en la que los participantes usaban el vocabulario enseñado en inglés, apoyado en el uso del español como forma inmediata de comunicación. Los resultados de este estudio, indicaron que este tipo de población y dicho ambiente, ayudaron a los practicantes a desarrollar estrategias relacionadas al uso de materiales artísticos, la forma en la que la clase era secuenciada y el manejo del grupo durante todas las implementaciones. Esta conclusión probablemente alimenta dicho enfoque en términos de respuesta lingüística, desarrollo profesional y la respuesta de los estudiantes en un próximo estudio sobre la enseñanza del vocabulario a adultos mayores.

1. Justification

In Colombia, the English language teaching and learning have had a progress and a transformation process since in 1997 the Ministry of Education announced the opening of the "*Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo"* so as to foster the initiative of 1994 the Law of education proposed becoming Colombia a bilingual country. Nowadays, there have been several modifications in regards to foreign language education that includes the program "*Colombia Bilingüe 2014-2018*" and "*Plan Nacional de Bilingüismo, Colombia very well*".

This latter, which also shows a panorama of how English language teaching and learning has gone in these last years is still being implemented and works under the scales established by the *"Guía Nº 22; Estándares básicos de competencias en lenguas extranjeras: inglés"*. These standards mark the levels from A1 to B1 according to the CEFR establishing the abilities Colombian students must develop through their school lives. Those abilities are meant to be measured according to the use of the language in terms of linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic communicative competences. Furthermore, there is also a project from the local scale that also seeks for the improvement of the English language teaching and learning to a narrower portion of the country. This project is called "*Risaralda Bilingüe 2032*", which its main purpose is to lead, orientate and guarantee bilingual education on the department. Thus, it is still oriented to the teaching of English in most of the public schools in the department. Notwithstanding, some of these previous programs that are applied to the bilingual education in Colombia are not oriented to the teaching of English to elderly.

In spite of the fact that the bilingual education programs that Colombian government proposes are meant for students in any level of education, it does not exclude the notion of having elderly bilingual training. As Huerta-Macias (2003) stated, training mature population to

become bilinguals is such a great chance for offering them an outstanding opportunity to diminish their memory loss and to have them work with environments they have never been exposed to before. Besides, the author mentioned how good adults see their involvement in language training in order to contribute to their literacy development in L2 which can make them be aware of theirs in L1 as well. On the other side, Halliwell (1992) alludes the willing some adults have towards the learning of English, especially when it is adapted to some pedagogy useful for leading adults' learning styles. She also recommends most of the strategies she has applied with children to help adults learn better a foreign language. Those strategies may include the teaching of content words through images, the use of puzzles, mazes and crosswords to make them gather some English language key words.

Likewise, there is no evidence of studies or implementations of English language curriculums oriented to teaching adults in Colombia. Nonetheless, there is an international study that was carried out in Spain as an exploratory research conducted by students enrolled in a research methods course from university of Toledo with different friends and family members where some older adults were involved. The purpose of the study was to see how some adults define certain group of words and if they were able to give synonyms to them. Henceforth, the researchers concluded that based on some of the good responses given by some adults, it was feasible to train them in a foreign language by implementing a very special strategy to do so.

Consequently, by having in mind the poor contribution that our local context has had in terms of teaching adults English, this project is aiming at implementing eight English language lessons to be taught through arts in a retirement home in Pereira called "*Hogar del abuelo divino pastor*". Thus, it is planned to use artistic activities that are intended to take advantage of older people's free time by providing strategies to introduce English language so as to expose them to

a social-interactional atmosphere, the strengthening of physical skills for stimulating their imaginative, creative and sensorial capacities. By the time the project finishes its implementation, it will be expected to see how well they did in terms of linguistic outcomes and students' responses.

2. Objectives

2.1. Teaching Objectives

2.1.1. General Aim

To implement artistic techniques to teach English language vocabulary to elderly

2.1.2. Specific Objectives

- To provide artistic elements to facilitate the learning process of the participants

- To support elderly to acquire new English language vocabulary through the use of artistic techniques.

2.2. Learning Objectives

2.2.1. General Aim

To recognize the strategies applied to teach English language vocabulary during the implementations.

2.2.2. Specific Objectives

- To identify the strengths and weaknesses related to the professional growth.

- To use the strategies identified in order to enhance English language vocabulary learning.

3. Conceptual Framework

Teaching elderly has had different perspectives that have varied from many decades. Currently, experts in the area of teaching elderly establish concepts and theories in order to be taken into account during the implementation of the classes to provide suitable conditions for teaching them. This chapter has as a purpose to highlight three concepts provided by specialists that are essential for carrying out this project. Therefore, this section will emphasize on the Andragogy theory, arts and teaching elderly provided by experts in the field to accomplish different points of view which will be provided in order to develop and understand how the project will be implemented.

3.1 Andragogy

3.1.1. History of Andragogy

This section will highlight one of the most important concepts that mention adult education process known as Andragogy. The term andragogy was mentioned for the first time by the German educator Kapp (1833) to describe the teaching and learning adults' education as "the lifelong necessity to learn". He claimed that in education, self-reflection is a relevant worth in human life, it means, learners require not only the educators training, but also the self –reflection and life experience more than teaching to elder population. Moreover, Smith (2002) remarks that Knowles focused on the individual learning process in order to identify their learning needs and goals, use the appropriate resources, select and implement learning strategies, and assess the learning outcomes so as to obtain positive results. Nonetheless, Henschke (2013) to contribute to Kapp's (1833) assumption argues that the term andragogy was inactive for many decades; perhaps elderly education was being directed without an explicit label to designate what it was.

He also emphasizes that studies have been using the andragogy as a theory and practice to develop and increase the older learners' value of lives. Additionally, there are many authors that mention andragogy method as a relevant concept for the adult education development, and some of them provide us important definitions that will be mentioned in the next section.

3.1.2. Definition of Andragogy

Knowles (1970) provides the difference among andragogy and pedagogy to indicate the purpose of teaching theories, explaining that andragogy is "the art and science of helping adults learn" and Pedagogy as "the art and science of teaching children*"* (p. 43). In addition, Knowles (1980) argues that andragogy is assumed on four features of mature learners such as being a self-directed human being, the experience that starts an increasing resource for learning, the orientation of the social development tasks and the perception of the time vary according to the application of the knowledge (p. 39). Then, Johnson (2000) contributes to Knowles's (1980) statement by explaining that andragogy is a method for engaging learners to find out the meaning of their personal and professional lives increasing the stimulus of the elderly learners.

Merriam (2001) states that andragogy is one of the principal methods in teaching adults that is focused on the practice of elderly education. Supporting Knowles study, Merriam (2001) highlights andragogy as a support of adult learning theory that will continue stimulating the debate, discussion, and research so as to enhance the understanding of adult learning process. Thus, the next chapter will be focused on the andragogical training model to improve the learning process for the implementation of this project.

3.1.3. Andragogical Training

One of the most evident issues in adult education is the requirement of training of adult educators. Knowles (1989) explains the andragogical model in terms of attitudes and believes

such as the fundamental goodness of human beings, the right to self-determination, the hidden ability to self- represent, and the innate ability to learn as well as the environmental conditions that influence the implementation of activities of adult educators. Additionally, Zmayov (1998) claims "The obvious contradiction in present-day education is that the andragogical principles and elements of adult learning technology are widely utilized in adult and much non-adult education all over the world, but the training of adult educators has seen very little development (except in isolated cases such as Canada, Slovenia, the United States and Yugoslavia)" (p. 5). Furthermore, he establishes a standard of andragogical training, which represents a set of specified skills, knowledge, abilities and qualities necessary from an adult educator, and at least a lowest training required to develop appropriation of the functions of an adult educator.

Knowles, et all (1998) postulated the pedagogical and andragogical model that have different assumptions about learners. These embrace the learner's need to know, self-concept, experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation. Knowles et al. (1998) explain that for the pedagogical model, the educator decides what students need to know and they are reliant on the educator. On the contrary, in the andragogical model adults must know why it is important to be aware and feel responsible for their own learning process (p. 62-65). This allows us to identify the importance of the age in terms of teaching strategies giving the fact that adults are more aware of the content and the backgrounds they have for what they have already learned. Thus, it is important to include other area such as arts for teaching English language vocabulary as a strategy for engage the participants to the content by using artistic techniques.

3.2 Arts

3.2.1. Definition of Arts

During the history of the human being, there has been evidence of art since thousands years ago; beginning with drawings of animals painted in the caverns' walls. The concept of arts was a topic discussed by many experts in the field. Experts such as Kant (1790) proposed that arts are a representation that is purposive in itself, it means that artistic representations have the intention to show what the artist wants to express. Furthermore, Anderson (2003) argued that art is a search for a meaning which must be looked for in a specific context. In other words, in order to understand any piece of art, we must be connected to the context in which it was developed. Additionally, Silverstein and Layne (2010) settled that the integration of arts is an approach in which the learner construct and demonstrate understanding through an art form such as music, painting, or theatre. It is important to highlight Silverstein and Layne (2010) work since it is a contribution for this project due to the focused on the implementation of arts to teach English language vocabulary to elder population. Thus, the next chapter will be focused on the integration of arts with other subjects.

3.2.2. Arts Integration

Arts Integration is a notion that was born during the decade of the 1960 and 1970. To start with, Bresler (1995) argued that arts can be taught in an interdisciplinary way as part of an extended curriculum and can make huge contributions to the teaching of other disciplines; It means, the integration of arts has been a process in which the curriculum includes the conventional areas such as science, English, and chemistry instead of being limited by only one subject. Moreover, Sokol (2013) defined the term as the practice of teaching one or more

subjects through the use of arts in a way that implies the development of all subjects involved in the process. For example, by creating a sketch using play dough and learning English vocabulary at the same time. Finally, Silverstein and Layne (2010) establish that arts integration provide several ways for students to increase the learner awareness in what they learn and make the learning evident. Therefore, integrating arts with English vocabulary will be the way in which the learner will learn the second language vocabulary through a creative process related to some artistic techniques.

3.2.3. Integrating Arts in Education

In the XXI century, the necessities of thinking about new methodologies and approaches in terms of education have changed the way in which experts from the last century thought. The California Alliance for Arts Education argued that implementing the integrated arts in the process of learning must be motivated and increases the critical and creative thinking skills. Additionally, Fowler (2001) stated "The arts support qualities that are desirable in students including creativity, originality and expression". That is to say, including arts in teaching English develop in the students' capacities to create and express their thoughts as a 'sub-ability'. Lastly, Boyd (2002) presents a list of advantages that arts contribute to education through developing the full variety of human intelligence, developing the ability for creative thought and action, the education of feeling and sensibility, the exploration of values, enhancing understanding of cultural changes and differences, and developing physical and perceptual skills.

We consider the implementation of arts as a useful approach in the teaching field since there are several advantages stated by Boyd (2010) in which the learner not only develops skills in the subject that is pretending to learn –English in this case-, but also develops artistic abilities

using different techniques and material provided by the teachers in development. This strategy will be used taking into account the participants' age and their different vulnerable conditions.

3.3 Elderly Learning

3.3.1. The process of ageing

It is on the own essence of human cycle born, go through childhood, adolescence and adulthood, and a certain point in life, begins to age. This last process of becoming older is an inevitable and irreversible part of this world. According to Formiga (2016) "the ageing process does not start at the same time for everyone, and all the organs age in a different rate", this means that each person becomes elder in different ages depending on physical, social, and even psychological factors. Bastable and Dart (2010) describe these factors as physiological changes that are universal, progressive, detrimental, and intrinsic; that is to say, ageing is an ongoing period that affects physical and cognitive development which all the humans experiment sooner or later. Moreover, Glisky (2007) notes that age-related changes according to the structure and function of the brain are different in terms of cognitive processes of all people". These two definitions and authors' perspectives provide relevant information to take into account for the implementations of this project giving the fact that they present the changes in elderly cognition and the aspects that must be considered so as to take advantage of the understanding capacities of participants.

3.3.2. Sensory perceptive abilities

The elders' mind, as it also happens with their body, goes through neurons deterioration which declines the individuals' cognition or their capacity to learn. In Bastable and Dart (2010) words, "Cognitive ability changes with age as permanent cellular alterations invariably occur in

the brain itself, resulting in an actual loss of neurons, which have no regenerative powers" (p.35). These physiological changes result in secondary changes that affect the individual learning skills. Generally, the senses are the first area that starts to be altered (Bastable and Dart, 2010); therefore, as the sensory perceptive abilities diminish, the learning capacity decreases as well. However, these changes vary from person to person, and Schmall (2000) affirms that until their mid-80s older adults are free of having sensory problems. On the other hand, Best (2001) establishes that it is relevant to create an appropriate environment for learning that reflects main changes in learners in terms of physical, cognitive, and psychosocial functioning, in that way, learners will be motivated to learn and progress in the learning process.

3.3.3. Elders motivation

In his eighth and final stage theory of psychological development, Erikson (1963) refers to that period after the 65s as "ego integrity versus depression". The key conflict in this phase focuses on questioning whether or not the individual has led a meaningful and satisfying life. People are able to look back at their life with a sense of contentment and face the end of life with a sense of wisdom and no regrets. Those who feel proud of their accomplishments will feel a sense of integrity, looking back with few regrets and a general feeling of satisfaction. Those who are unsuccessful during this phase will feel that their life has been wasted and will experience many regrets, so the individual will be left with feelings of bitterness and despair. Together with this psychological conflict, elders lose autonomy, independence, and decision making, that later on result in isolation, financial insecurity, diminished copying mechanism and a decreased sense of identity, personal value, and societal worth (Bastable et al, 2010). Considering the factors that can affect the participants' psychology, it is necessary to look for appropriate teaching strategies that motivate them and help overcome those obstacles.

To conclude, elderly learning is a complex factor that concerns a lot of issues such as physical, social, cognitive, and psychological aspects that have to be considered during the implementations of this project. In this paper, the most appropriate theories about the learning characteristics and considerations of the target population have been presented. Then, this project will be based on taking into account the use of arts as a tool to learn the English language vocabulary; senses' abilities, motivation, attention and memory will be factors that will determine the design of this project implementation and will affect the final results and findings. The search of strategies to facilitate the elders learning process and materials that motivate them to develop the activities is a key analysis to take into account when planning lessons to teach them English as a foreign language.

4.   Literature Review

Part of what we know about adult learning is basically what we ourselves have experienced in our adulthood lives. Adults are more attentive, sort of receptive to learning and we decide what to learn and when to do so. However, there is a stage in our lives where our capability for learning is attached to a different view of apprehension. Elderly is therefore, a different moment in which our desires for learning rely on the conditions and willingness that our age offers us; then, relying on our actual, factual and current disposition for any kind of new knowledge apprehension. Hence, Andragogy is a term that Wang (2004) considers to be an approach to lead elderly teaching and learning processes. He also states that in contrast to pedagogy, andragogy is most likely to be used in adult learning as it offers special pros for elder adults to be taught.

Andragogy establishes different means through which adults can learn. The sequencing of a class planned specially for them may bring content variation that can be adapted for engaging

or motivating them. Thus, we can argue that teaching adults through andragogy should be a must since content may be introduced only for adult-learning purposes contrasting then, the reason why pedagogy would not be suitable in this case. Due to the fact that elderly's teaching and learning needs are, in fact, quite different, we must use andragogy by introducing TPR (Total Physical Response) activities, arts, or songs instead of using pedagogy. Hereafter, we will present factual theory in which Andragogy is mentioned presenting forward, three different sources that might broaden the theoretical frame that has been introduced before.

The first study was conducted by Wang (2004) in California with some teachers taking a course on Principles for Adult Education where he concludes that implementing Andragogy may bring about a successful progress on the teaching exercise. The next study was carried out by Cassell (2011) in Florida in non-formal library settings with some adults' population. She points out that implementing second language learning with adults can benefit and motivate them in these specific settings; and, the last study was implemented by Roberson (2004) in a different rural setting in Georgia where he states that self-directed learning might be of positive impact for elderly who learn by using this method.

The study carried out by Wang (2004) points out the term Andragogy as the main concept to determine the appropriate method so as to facilitate the teaching and learning adults' process as well as to create ways for knowing elderly students' needs. Additionally, it is important to highlight that this research is focused on the Andragogical model developed by Knowles due to the importance of the role of adult educator he provided. Wang (2004) directed a research called Full Time Adult Credential Students' Instructional Preferences at California State University, Long Beach: Pedagogy or Andragogy? The main purpose of this study was to identify the educational inclination of the educators who have been teaching elderly students and those who

are working on credentials to turn into trainers of elderly by giving relevance to the implementation of Andragogy method. This study involved 30 adult credential students from 30 to 63 years old that were registered in a course called Principles of Adult Education through the Occupational Studies Department at CSULB in the fall semester of 2002.

The collected data of the study was developed through a questionnaire which contains 44 items using a Likert scale from five to zero with five being the highest and zero the lowest. "The questionnaire represents the basic assumptions that make up the philosophical foundation of the andragogical model and the collaborative mode of instruction" (Wang, 2004). The researcher presents the findings through seven factors: 1. Learner-Centered Activities asked the adult educators to rate their instructional preferences. 2. Asked respondents to rate Personalizing Instruction. 3. Required respondents to rate relating to experience. 4. Asked respondents to rate Assessing Student Needs. 5. Required respondents to rate Climate Building. 6. Asked respondents to rate Participation in the Learning Process. 7. Required respondents to rate Flexibility for Personal Development. These factors increased a philosophical issue related to the implementation of the andragogy model so as to achieve an effective progress in training elderly students. The next research also provides aspects concerning teaching English to elderly population by implementing Andragogy theory.

Cassell (2011) mentions the implementation of Andragogy model taking as a main object teaching English to elderly population. Based on this understanding, we are focusing on this study in order to develop our classroom project taking into account the relevant aspects the author provide to support the adult education. Consequently, Cassell (2011) emerges a research called "Third age adult English Language Learners in non-formal library settings" located in Florida. The purpose of the study was to analyze aspects such as motivation, learning supports,

learning barriers, and program change recommendations of adult learners according to the acquisition of a second language of elderly population. This is a qualitative study that obtain the data collection using in-depth, opened interviews, classroom observations, and essays involving 11 elder learners aged between 56 to 65 years old and 10 teachers in a library adult ESOL program. The older population was selected taking into account their background and ethnicity (Hispanic learners). In addition, the author provides the following three research questions to carry out the study; the first question is about what motivates third age learners in advance and while they go to the English languages classes; the second one is what supporting aspects experience the elder learners obtain in the classes; and the last one is about the barriers to learn and attend elders learners experience in the lessons.

Hence, both teachers and learners established a set of perceptions such as to understand people at work; to find or expand employment; to meet and get to know people; to practice conversation, pronunciation, listening, and language rules; assiduous teaching; self-directed learning strategies support second language success; and lack of family and community support. To conclude the author (2011) presents the benefits of motivation of elder population learning a second language so as to promote the social interaction among them as well as the implementation of the andragogy model including the self-directed method. Indeed, the self-directed method concept will be developed in the next study.

To end with, the last research carried out by Roberson (2004) proposes in his study called "The nature of self-directed learning in older rural adults" the importance of the implementation of the Self-Directed Learning (SDL) method in teaching English to Elderly in rural settings in the state of Georgia. "Similar to a physician who dispenses medicine and counseling, various writers have declared that SDL can empower older adults as well as help to prevent premature

decline" (Roberson, 2004). This qualitative research had as a main purpose to understand how older, rural adults use self-directed learning in the changes of the adulthood. The author emphasize on the importance of the research since it addresses elderly rural population. Thus, the in-depth interviews examples and practical knowledge were the collected data this study took in order to analyze the SDL process of adult learners. The author selected ten of 20 interviews of elderly population aged between 75 to 87 years old that provide detailed description of their learning process. So as to carry out this study the author establishes the following three questions; firstly, he asks about what the nature of SDL of these elderly is; in the second place, the author inquires for the way these elder population learn; and finally, what the influence of others in the community is. So as to present the results, the author uses the comparative method relating to the nature of SDL. Furthermore, the SDL method allows participants to engage with a variety of subjects as well as in activities avoiding weaknesses of aging. "self-directed learning is a natural part of active older adults, and it may be utilized to negate some of the debilitating aspects of aging" (Roberson, 2004).

As a conclusion of this literature review, these studies contribute with this project since the authors provide a variety of concepts and aspects used in teaching English to Elderly population in order to engage the participants in the implementation of ours. Moreover, Wang (2004) and Casell (2011) determined the Andragogy theory as the appropriate method to teach adults since it provides different strategies to implement with them such as the effective progress and the motivation to get social interactions with others. On the other hand, Roberson (2004) contributes with the implementation of self-directed learning method as a positive approach because of the highly engaging factor of the learning process was describe for the participants (elderly) as enjoyment, excitement, and fun. It means that through a subject, Arts in the case of

our study, teachers in development can involve and motivate participants to develop the activities

proposed with the possibility to desire the learning process.

5. Methodology

The present study corresponds to a descriptive analysis that aims to identify the appropriate

strategies used to teach English language vocabulary through artistic techniques to elderly

population from a retirement home taking into consideration the andragogy method. The

instruments used to collect the data of this classroom project will be observations and journals.

The description of the participants, settings, and information related to the implementation are

presented below.

5.1 Context

The World Health Organization considers the third age as the last stage in human life

which begins around of 65 years old. In countries such as Colombia, the elderly is considered to

start about the 60s (Ley 1276 de 2008). Even though the care of the elderly in Colombia has been

a topic that has showed few results, the Colombian government launched a program in 2013

called "Colombia Mayor"; the purpose of the program was to increase the protection of the

elderly in Colombia, and it consists on a bimonthly subsidization in order to pay elders basic

needs of those who belong to a retirement home. In Pereira, there are about 70,000 elderly, and

only 10,500 of them are part of the program. Also, there are 46 "Centros de Bienestar del

Anciano" in the city; most of them are sponsored by the local government though there are some

that are paid by the citizens' contributions such as "Hogar del Abuelo Divino Pastor". In this

latter, there is going to be held the implementation of English class sessions where some students

from Licenciatura en Bilingüismo con énfasis en Inglés and some old adults from the previously

mentioned retirement home are going to be involved. The implementations are going to be held in the retirements' facilities with a frequency of two hours a week and an average of 14 to 16 class implementations.

5.2 Setting

This project will be implemented in a retirement home for elderly people in Pereira called Hogar Del Abuelo Divino Pastor. This place has the capacity for 45 people; nevertheless, there are approximately 55 people living in the home. Since this is an adult care institution, there are not normally English class implementations. There is zero exposure to a foreign language and therefore, there is not such curriculum to be followed. Thence, there will be implemented two hours a week through the implementation of arts. Further, this project will attempt to orient its classes to the elder adults' needs so as to achieve the linguistic outcomes and responses proposed. What is more, in the home, there is always an auxiliary nurse available for any kind of need as part of the care staff and there is a monthly visit carried out by a doctor. In the administrative area, the institution counts with one person in charge of nursing home. Having mentioned this, just three people from the Licenciatura and the adults from the institution are being involved as implementers, observers, designers and partakers.

5.3. Participants

Since there are going to be several English language class implementations, there are two different populations involved in this project. An adult population from the retirement home "Hogar del abuelo divino pastor" is acting as students or class receptors, and there are also three student-teachers acting either as implementers, designers or observers.

5.3.1. Elderly (Adult partakers)

The implementations of this classroom project will be carried out with about 7 to 12 adults from and average age of 50-80 years old. They are adults from about 1 to 3 social stratums as they are receiving a beneficial support from the retirement home where they belong. Moreover, the education level in English of elders is, probably, lower considering that most of them are involved in a vulnerable situation of abandon, taking into account the participants' conditions since some of them were desolated by their families, and do not have an andragogy based instruction and thus, they are not receiving any educational classes.

5.3.2. Practitioners

The pre-service teachers that are carrying out this project's implementations are three students from ninth semester of the Licenciatura en Bilingüismo con énfasis en Inglés from Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira. They are working as implementers, designers and observers. The functions of each teacher in development may vary according to each class implementation. The first session will be part of the observation of the participants in order to allow the teachers to know the participants' level of knowledge and to take into account the planning for the next sessions.

5.4. Design

In order to carry out this project, practitioners will be focused on andragogy's method and practice, and the implementation of self-directed learning methodology. Brockett and Hiemstra, (1991) state that andragogy contemplates learners as the learning process drivers. They add that self-directed learning, as an instructional method, has been positively related to higher satisfaction of life in elderly due to the fact that learner is the principal performer. The authors

also emphasize the importance of learners assuming personal responsibility for their thoughts and actions. Additionally, considering the contribution of Lamdin's (1997) study, which exposed self-directed learning, provides more impact in the elder adults' health care and lifestyle. Lamdin's outcomes also indicated the most popular subject of elderly learners is arts and crafts. Based on this, the implementations will cover artistic techniques as a strategy for teaching English vocabulary to elder participants.

5.5. Development and implementation

This classroom project will aim at emphasizing on the use of arts and crafts for teaching English as a second language in a group of elder people from the aforementioned retirement home. The project will be implemented through artistic techniques in the English lessons so as to allow them to discover points of view such as motivation, entertaining, thinking development and emotional reactions. Different viewpoints at the level of approach may be reflected both in the use of different kinds of arts and crafts activities and in different uses for particular activity types.

Ovando, Collier and Combs (2003) describe arts as a human expression in a widespread way, and it is a necessary component of learning to be merged into the lessons. They also provide that artistic expression in the form of drawing, painting, weaving, crafts, pasted paper, origami, among others, induces in learners strong emotional and cognitive responses (p. 104). Based on this, some of the mentioned techniques will be implemented during the sessions with the collaborative work of the teachers in development, the elders, and the working group of the retirement home. Therefore, the project will have approximately 8 sessions divided in one hour

and half per week, in which we will place in order to collect the data on the participants' learning process.

5.6. Resources and materials

The main focus of this project is to teach English through arts to elderly people, in this way the resources that are going to be used in the implementation of this project are the following: Colors, temperas, colored chalks, paper, cardboards, corrugated board, markers, play dough, shoe polish, among others. The purpose of the teachers in development is to engage the participants by using those kinds of materials, and thus, it is expected to have a major interest from the learners at the moment of implementation and produce artworks that will demonstrate the knowledge acquired during the lessons.

5.7. Assessment

Giving the conditions which elderly from the retirement home have, it is inappropriate to assess them in a quantitative way. As Wlodkowski (1999) claims, grades are usually worthless, and the threat of adults receiving a low grade can actually make them lose the interest of learning. That is why, we considered including the assessment as a way to show the learners their strengths, progressions, and flaws through the classes. The assessment must be a process in which the elderly feel comfortable with what they have learned in the English lessons. The practitioners will raise the participant's awareness in the lessons' objectives, in other words, it will be the aim that they will accomplish at the end of the process. Furthermore, the learning outcomes expected will be in terms of vocabulary, pronunciation, and the understanding of the basic language implemented in relation to their capabilities.

Additionally, the practitioners will use some strategies proposed by Wlodkowski such as; providing effective feedback, using authentic performance tasks to deepen new learning and help learners proficiently apply this learning to their context; and, provide opportunities for adults to demonstrate their learning progress in ways that reflect their strengths and multiple sources of knowledge. To exemplify this, pre-service teachers will guide the learners' tasks so as to encourage themselves to use the vocabulary learned as well as to recognize it in the environment.

5.8. Instruments and reflection

In order to collect the information about the students' linguistic outcomes, students' responses, and the teachers' professional growth, the practitioners will implement the data collection instruments such as journals and observations to collect the information which implies a deep analysis of the elderly context in order to determine the correct way to evidence the learners and practitioners progress.

5.8.1. Observations

During the implementations, one of the practitioners will be doing the observation and will be focus on the behavior, development of the participants and the responses during the art classes. Also, during the observation process the role of observer in every lesson will change since according to Wallace (1998) this is called "reciprocal observation or peer observation" (pg. 106) giving that the roles are going to be switched in every session, this will provide us different points of view and complements in the analysis of the information collected.

5.8.2. Journals

Another instrument for reflecting upon each implementation is teachers' journals. These journals are going to have a relevant role in the project, since it will show the point of view of

each member of the group during the implementations. According to Wallace (1998) the main advantage of the journals is that they can be analyzed by others. On the other hand, the disadvantage the author declares is the fact that the journals can be a limitation for the writer to express emotions, feelings and a variety of aspects that may affect the learners during the implementations.

6.   Results

6.1 Linguistic Outcomes

In this chapter, we are going to report the learning process of elderly learners by classifying their progress in terms of strengths and weaknesses students presented in oral and written production in the second language learning process.

6.1.1.   Strengths

To start with, participants were involved in this classroom project throughout a model PPP (presentation, practice, and production) in which they demonstrated their linguistic abilities developed during eight sessions related to topics such as colors, shapes, fruits, animals, family members, professions, and clothes. Therefore, we used the presentation stage to elicit information that learners already knew about the topics and to introduce them to the new vocabulary by implementing artistic activities. It is important to highlight that three of the learners were involved in a research project receiving English classes focused on vocabulary during three months before this classroom project implementations. Even though the practice and production are two different stages, for this population and during implementations, we had to integrate both practice and production. In the language production learners were focused on speaking and writing skills. To exemplify this, learners were participating by repeating the new

vocabulary presented as a strategy for learners to memorize it. "Repetitions is one recourse speakers may use to indicate how they frame the events they take part in; hence, the importance of the examination of repetitions in educational settings" (Silva & Santos, 2006). One of the strategies used was repetition since teachers repeat the vocabulary so as to help them to remember the words taught.

Another important information evidenced was that learners were able to use the vocabulary learnt during the sessions to ask for the material they required for the activity, an example of this was, one of the sessions we were teaching the animals and we told the learners to say the word pig that was the vocabulary taught in that moment. Even though students were not able to say a complete sentence, they are able to use one or two words from the vocabulary taught in the sessions in a combination with their sentences so as to make a request or to say a comment. "Code-switching is defined as the shifting that occurs between two or more languages simultaneously or interchangeably within one conversation" (Grosjean, 1982, p. 145). In this case, learners are able to use code switching between languages to make a request, - "*teacher me presta el color green*"- thus, they are able to contextualize and identify objects by recognizing it or mentioning it. Sert (2005) states that second language teachers supporting bilingual education in the form of code-switching consider it relevant to be used with beginner students for a better understanding of the topic. This learning process made us consider the strengths learners developed during the implementations as well as the weaknesses they encountered. We will discuss the weaknesses learners presented along the process.

6.1.2. Weaknesses

Considering that participants are elders, we contemplated the fact that it was not possible to teach second language writing when they do not know how to write in their first language, and

as English words are written differently as they are pronounced. After implementing all the session with the learners, we noticed that although participants were always motivated to learn a second language, the pronunciation of some words was a fact that seemed to be complicated to them giving the reason that some learners have hearing problems. To exemplify this, when three of the learners were asked to pronounce any of the words taught, they nodded their head agreeing to what the teachers said. "After passing the critical period, age of acquisition is not believed to have an effect, and native-like performance is no longer supposed to be achievable" (Birdsong & Molis, 2005). Although they could recognize the vocabulary by the representation and the word itself, it was difficult to them to pronounce it correctly since they already passed the critical period.

Finally, during the implementations we were developing artistic activities such as coloring drawings and making sketch with clay; by these means, the participants were engaged with the learning process despite that they were not able to remember the vocabulary taught in the previous sessions as they only practice the second language during the time of the implementations, one session per week. As a conclusion, the implementation helped us to identify learners' weaknesses and strengths when the eight sessions were concluded. Based on this, we could improve our teaching strategies and to use creativity to support participants' learning processes. Additionally, we were aware about our role as teachers and we realized what we needed to improve our teaching strategies.

6.2 Professional Development

In this result, we are going to discuss the most relevant aspects we found in terms of professional development based on the eight implementations carried out in the abovementioned retirement home. During this process, we raised awareness about the importance of the

professional growth in the process of teaching mainly of the elderly. Although the pre-service training for teachers was well supported with theories, it does not prepare teachers for all the challenges we faced during implementations; in consequence, we are going to expand this reflection presenting the strengths and weaknesses based on our experiences and our role as future language teachers.

6.2.1. Strengths

To start with, one of the most relevant aspects identified after implementations was the need for effective professional development in classroom management. As Oliver, (2007) argues the capacity of teachers to organize classrooms and manage the students' behavior is essential to achieve positive educational outcomes for students. The positive aspects found were in terms of room arrangement, ground rules established, and procedures carried out by teachers. To illustrate this point, we usually organized the tables and the chairs in such way learners can work in a cooperative and collaborative method. Also, at the beginning of the process, we stablished some ground rules such as raising hands to ask for extra materials, after the first session, they were asked to use the vocabulary taught during the sessions such as colors, numbers and shapes. Additionally, when the learners were asked to work in groups, they were curious by their peer's work and they started to work as a group helping each other to develop the tasks. A relevant point to emphasize was the fact that we needed to create and design the materials according to their language level and their cognitive stage. Bearing in mind this statement, we evidenced that our teaching styles have been improved due to the fact that we realized that lessons are based on the learners' capacities and needs. Also, it is important to highlight the strategies used during the implementations of this classroom project; further, we explored new terms such as andragogy and modeling. Firstly, the term andragogy was used given the fact that this term has defined the

way suggested to teach adults. Knowles (1984) suggested 5 assumptions about the characteristics of learning adults. The most relevant assumptions were the use of the experience as a strategy to learn.

One strategy used was that learners were aware of the knowledge based on their experiences in their lives. An example of this was when they connected their experiences with the second language lessons. Likewise, as they are adults, they have the readiness to learn any topic proposed during the lessons. To illustrate this point, one of the learners mentioned during the farm animals' session that he lived in a farm when he was a child and then he mentioned the farm animals his family had. Another aspect was that elders had self-determination to learn and this impacted their learning process directly. Based on this, we noticed that learners worked motivated during the lessons and they were willing to finish the tasks.

6.2.2. Weaknesses

After all the process of planning and implementing the eight lessons in the retirement home, we noticed some difficulties after analyzing the journals and observations. To begin with, we needed to plan the activities taking into consideration elder people ages. We were aware of how challenging the activities would be for their level. The process of learning can be analyzed as a constant process of changing the methods and strategies to implement and adult learning can exemplify this. "Adult learning theory helps faculty to understand their students and to design more meaningful learning experiences for them. There is not one adult learning theory that successfully applies to all adult learning environments" (Frey & Alman, 2003, p. 8). That is to say, based on the learners' experiences we had to plan the sessions, design the materials and the topics to learn. Furthermore, as each learner had specific limitations -physical and psychological- it was necessary to adapt all the activities to the learner's capacities in order to develop all the

tasks proposed in a proper way without affecting the students' motivation and self-esteem. Another aspect that we faced was time management during the implementations given the fact that as elders, it was necessary to give them extra time to finish and cover all the activities proposed; yet, there were interruptions during the classes by the home's staff and the snack they gave to the learners at 4pm during all the implementations. Additionally, the affective factor influenced the time planned for the activities and lessons since many times learners were expecting the implementers' company to talk and share aspects of the daily life. To exemplify this, two of the participants expected us to share their life experiences more than being interested in the session's activities planned.

To conclude, we consider that teaching to elder people is a process that requires constant changes to improve the learning experience so as to motivate learners to keep their enthusiasm for the learning processes. Although we faced situations like the ones mentioned before that regular teachers do not face, the experience of implementing this classroom project in a retirement home improved our professional growth; this, in the way that we raised awareness about the importance of having strategies that truly helped us at the moment of planning and preparing challenging tasks. We also had in mind the limitation between the affective pattern with the students and the professional aspect that required students to produce the outcomes from each task.

6.3 Students' Responses

The intention of this chapter is to provide a general view related to the evidence we collected throughout the implementations of this classroom project highlighting the reaction of the students based on the strategies, materials, and topics we took into account for participants'

language development. Thus, the influence of these strategies allowed the practitioners and learners to be aware of the strengths and weaknesses developed during their participation in this classroom project. These aspects mentioned will be pointed out in this chapter.

6.3.1. Strengths

In terms of participants' reactions, we evidenced that students showed a positive attitude towards the topics such as colors, shapes, fruits, animals, professions, and family members carried out during the eight implementations of this classroom project. It was observed during the sessions a positive impact on the content taught in terms of awareness since learners were familiar with the topics in Spanish allowing them to be engaged with the activities. For instance, in the fourth implementation participants already knew in Spanish the vocabulary taught about farm animals such as pig, horse, cow, rooster, and duck, thus, they were willing to make the artistic representation of those animals by using play dough and taking into account the images presented by teachers. Moreover, some of the materials provided to participants so as to develop the lesson activities, specifically, shoe polish, play dough, or temperas showed a positive result within the class inasmuch as the learners were questioning about how to use these material to develop the tasks proposed for each session. Based on this, one of the tasks asked was about creating a chart with family members by using shoe polish in which they were surprised by this type of material; e.g. one of the participants said: "*uy! Teacher me tiene cabezón que vamos a hacer con esto*". This kind of comment evidenced the interest of the participants for the activities in which they were involved. Echevarria, et all (2008) state that employing learning materials is important for English language learners as it contributes to the participants to connect mental perceptions with real life experiences. During the implementation students were exposed to

different kind of material as play dough, shoe polish, tempera, among others as a strategy to encourage themselves to do the activities proposed.

6.3.2. Weaknesses

After analyzing all the information collected from journals and observations, we grasped that there were two negative aspects evidenced in this classroom project in terms of students' performances. To start with, one of the main issues we noticed was students' lack of self-confidence as they consider themselves unable to do the activities and tasks proposed in terms of language and arts since the teachers constantly encourage the learners to do a better job. As an example, one of the learners sometimes started to do the activity; however, he did not finish the tasks proposed. Another example of this had to do when they were asked to work with play dough, there was a learner who expressed that he was unable to use such material, "*Teacher, no me ponga a hacer eso que yo no soy capaz*". In these cases we also fostered students to work as much as they could and as a result learners were working actively. It demonstrates how this population has been underestimated because of their conditions. However, as Pintrich et all (1993) highlight, learning is not only "cold and isolated cognition". Instead, motivational aspects are crucial for cognitive advancement. "Individuals who underestimate their abilities might hold themselves back from engaging in critical conditions for development and thence, often fail to live up to their potential" (Elliot & Church, 2003).

Moreover, the length of the implementations was restricted for different reasons, thus, the participants did not have time enough to complete their artistic representations we asked to do. Considering their age, it was necessary to extend the lesson's length during the practice stage of each class. To illustrate this point, one of the learners told us to give him a week to finish the visual representation as he liked to work at his own pace.

To conclude, after implementing this classroom project throughout 8 sessions, we found strengths and weaknesses in terms of the students' responses. The positive results evidenced during this project showed that although elders could feel insecure and unable to develop some of the tasks, it was necessary for us as teachers to help and encourage the learners to develop and finish the activities proposed and convince them that they were able to complete all the tasks. Finally, even though the time was a fact that affected the development of the lessons, all the tasks proposed by the teachers were successfully done by the participants.

7. Pedagogical Implications

This classroom project made us aware of the lack of researches in the teaching English to elderly in Colombia as well as to reflect on the development of processes carried out during the sessions implemented. Throughout this chapter we will explore the teaching implications, and the way we addressed the students' needs in terms of language proficiency and students' capacities throughout the implementation of this classroom project. It was developed taking into account the reflections, journals, observations and implementations done during all this process. The awareness of this implications allowed us not only to improve the process of teaching and planning, but also the idea of implementing future studies with this kind of population.

To start with, it is important to highlight that at the moment of teaching the English vocabulary to this population it is necessary to teach directly the vocabulary pretended to teach as they do not have a range of words in English. That is to say, as the students' vocabulary is limited to certain common words, the process of teaching must be focused only to the specific vocabulary to be taught. Also, it was ineffective to give them long and complex instructions as it is always necessary to keep in mind how much input they can receive and understand taking into consideration their process of aging, their cognitive stage and the fact that some of the learners

had physical –limited movement- and psychological issues –loneliness and depression-. For this reasons, the integration of visual arts as the mean of teaching the vocabulary is an aspect to consider given the fact that some of the learners presented those limitations mentioned before. Additionally, it is strictly important to consider the way in which you help and guide the students to develop the tasks in order not to affect the students' confidence and self-stem.

Finally, the development of this classroom project evidenced that although teachers had a positive attitude being involved in the project and in contact with this kind of vulnerable population, it revealed that there were some factor that needed attention and improvement in order to successfully carry out this project. The process of getting the information (journals, observations, etc) helped us to raise awareness in the implications this type of project would have. To conclude, even though elderly people present issues in terms of physical and psychological aspects, the fact of being aware of those aspects allowed the implementers to improve the way in which the lessons were developed, the kind of artistic representation to be created, and the way in which teachers helped the learners to successfully accomplish the lessons' aims.

8. Conclusions

After implementing this classroom project about teaching English vocabulary to elderly people in a non-English speaking town and where the studies in terms of teaching to elderly are limited, we concluded several aspects in terms of language production and implementers' professional growth. Initially, the strategies to teach a second language to elder demonstrated that although elderly people cannot learn a second language as fast as children, they showed understanding of different topics vocabulary such as colors, professions and animals. Besides, the learners are able to recognize and use the words learned in the second language supported by

their first language. Additionally, the experience of teaching elders was meaningful in the way that this process made us be aware about the importance of knowing the students' needs and abilities in order to prepare the lessons according to their capacities. Also, we concluded that not only the fact of aging influences directly in the process of learning but also, we determines the experience as a crucial aspect that helped the learners to understand and getting familiar with the weekly classes and tasks. Finally, being in touch with this population raised our awareness about how the physical limitations, psychological aspects, the process of aging and the loneliness of the learners affect the motivation and the attitude of the students at the moment of a class.

9. Limitations

When implementing the classroom project in the retirement home, we faced different situations that affected directly the development of the sessions. Although a big part of the participants was always able and willing to receive the class, there were some extra factors that influenced negatively the development of the implementations.

To begin with, the number of students varied during the sessions. For instance, we started the first class of the implementations with 12 students. However, at the end of the implementations there were only 8 participants who completed all the sessions of the project. Additionally, the participants were not the same during all the process given the fact that some of them had medical appointments in the hour of the sessions. Even though the participants were not the same ones during the entire process of implementing, the minimum number of students were 8 per class including other elders that wanted to participate in certain classes.

Another aspect was the interruptions by the stuff members of the retirement home since sometimes the stuff programmed other activities during the time we have planned to implement. For example, during the fourth implementation the stuff in charge of cutting their hair were at the same hour of the implementation. In addition, during the production stage of the implementations, the stuff of the retirement home gave them a snack while they were working, and the activities we did were interrupted.

Finally, another aspect that affected indirectly the development of the sessions was the fact that somehow, we as practitioners overprotected the participants, as they are part of a vulnerable population in several aspects such as, loneliness, stress and other mental illness that required special attention. Moreover, this made us reconsider the activities and the time planned in the activities. In other words, we needed to restructure the classes to aid them in the development of the activities to achieve the aim.

To conclude, although there were different facts that influenced negatively in the implementations such as the number of students, the staff members' activities, the affective and psychological aspect, the sessions were developed satisfactory. It is important to highlight that the participants were interested in the sessions. Finally, even though all the sessions took more than an hour, the topics and the aim of the lessons were successfully developed.

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