

**USING EDUCATIONAL ISSUES WORKSHOPS AS A PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGY TO
EXPLORE THE ARGUMENTATIVE COMPETENCE IN THE EFL CLASSROOM**

ÁNGELA VANESSA DUARTE INFANTE

SANDRA MILENA FONSECA VELANDIA

UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA Y TECNOLÓGICA DE COLOMBIA

FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN

ESCUELA DE IDIOMAS

LICENCIATURA EN LENGUAS EXTRANJERAS

TUNJA

2018

**USING EDUCATIONAL ISSUES WORKSHOPS AS A PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGY TO
EXPLORE THE ARGUMENTATIVE COMPETENCE IN THE EFL CLASSROOM**

ÁNGELA VANESSA DUARTE INFANTE

SANDRA MILENA FONSECA VELANDIA

Directora del Proyecto:

BERTHA RAMOS HOLGUÍN

UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA Y TECNOLÓGICA DE COLOMBIA

FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN

ESCUELA DE IDIOMAS

LICENCIATURA EN LENGUAS EXTRANJERAS

TUNJA

2018

CONTENT

Introduction	4
Rationale	7
Problematic Situation	9
CHAPTER 1	
Literature Review	11
Communication... ..	12
Communicative Competence.....	13
Argumentative Competence.....	16
Argumentation.....	17
Argument.....	19
Characteristics of the argument.....	20
The Debate.....	22
CHAPTER 2	
The State of the Art.....	24
CHAPTER 3	
Instructional design.....	27
Pedagogical Strategy.....	27
The Theory of Language and Language Learning.....	28
Instructional Phases.....	29
Student's Profile.....	29
Topic Selection.....	29
Designing the Debate Workshops.....	29
Teacher's role.....	34
Student's role.....	35
Implementation of the pedagogical strategy.....	35
CHAPTER 4	
Research Design.....	37
Research Approach.....	38
Type of Study.....	38
Setting.....	39
Participants.....	39
Students.....	40
Teacher-Researchers.....	40
Data gathering instruments	40

Field Notes.....	41
Audio Recordings.....	41
Focus Group.....	41

CHAPTER 5

Data analysis.....	43
Main Category: Personal experiences and opinions as the main source to argue.....	45
Sub category: Argument based on personal experiences and on examples.....	45
Sub category: Argument based on partner's opinions.....	49

CHAPTER 6

Conclusions.....	56
------------------	----

CHAPTER 7

Implications.....	58
-------------------	----

CHAPTER 8

Further Research.....	61
-----------------------	----

References.....	63
-----------------	----

ANNEXES

Appendix 1. Transcription of the Recordings.....	70
Appendix 2. Field Notes Format.....	71
Appendix 3. Focus Group.....	72
Appendix 4. Consent Form.....	73
Appendix 5. Workshop.....	74
Appendix 6.Example Field Notes.....	78
Appendix 7.Example Focus Group.....	79

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Modes of Argumentation.....	21
Table 2. Categories for the Main question.....	44

List of Figures

Diagram 1. Main constructs.....	11
---------------------------------	----

INTRODUCTION

This small-scale study is part of a large research project about foreign language pre-service teachers' identities that is being carried out by the research group TONGUE (Teaching on New Grounds Unexplored English Possibilities) from the Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia (UPTC). One of the objectives of this project is to comprehend how pre-service teachers' development takes place. Thus, this small-scale project attempts to explore the argumentative skills used by future teachers. In this way, we can provide some ideas about how specific competences take place in the Foreign Languages program at the UPTC. Based on what was previously mentioned, this study is ascribed to the research line Education and Teachers' Development.

When we think about higher education, argumentative skills play an essential role in knowledge development. This is pertinent because pedagogy has been focused on students, their learning process, and how it can contribute to developing and reinforcing students' critical thinking skills and reasoning capacities (Elder, 2002). In this sense, we carried out a case study in which the population, sixth semester Modern Language students from the UPTC, had the opportunity to utilize their argumentative skills through workshops based on educational issues. The main objective of this study was to analyze what workshops based on educational issues reveal about the participants' argumentative skills.

As researchers and students, we recognize that the Colombian educative system has undergone changes related to how education is perceived. In the documents "Guidelines for Training by Competences in Higher Education" (2008) and "Public Policy on Higher Education" (2010), the Ministry of National Education (MEN) proposed that "the development of competences through social interaction related to knowledge, values, abilities (persuasion,

attitude, change and reasoning), and attitudes such as empathy, earnestly, fervently, exhilaration, skepticism and evenhandedness” (Kuhn, 1992). In terms of social interaction, students need to relate with others and understand the world around them in order to effectively develop the skills mentioned above.

As foreign language teachers, one of the skills we should enhance among our students is communicative competence, which could be achieved by inspiring them to reflect about themselves in critical and analytical ways. Spaces could be generated where students could interact with each other and discuss educational issues, such as in a debate. This would allow students to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses when arguing and defending their points of view.

Regarding this, another purpose of this study was to enhance the language and argumentative skills of the students. We did so by carrying out debate sessions based on educational issues, which offered opportunities for the students to show their argumentative skills, understand the topic better, and build their confidence when having to express their viewpoints in a foreign language. In that sense, students became aware of how they developed their own argumentative competence. Additionally, the implementation of debates is a suitable strategy that encourages students to be active social actors in the classroom. Furthermore, as teachers, we hope that the results of this project will promote awareness on the importance of enhancing argumentative skills among pre-service teachers.

The following paper is organized into five separate chapters. First, we will explain and support our case study based on the following theoretical constructs: communication, communicative competence, argumentative competence, argumentation, argument, debate, issue, and educational issue. Afterwards, we will present the research questions, the objectives, and the type of research that lead our study. Then, we will describe the methodology implemented in the

development of the debate sessions. The analysis and observations of the participants' argumentative skills are provided. Finally, we conclude our findings and illustrate possible lines of research for future investigators.

RATIONALE

Nowadays, education in Colombia represents more than just transmitting knowledge, administering tests and assessing grades (Narve, 2001; Miller, 1996). Throughout the years, research has been conducted related to the current role of the teacher, the challenges that education faces in the country, and government policies that transform paradigms. These studies have allowed language teachers to build a wider picture of what occurs beyond learning and teaching. Thus, any language teacher should consider aspects, such as respect of diversity, critical thinking, personal capacity development, and meaningful knowledge, that favor students' learning. Given the previous information, this study was carried out as a means to analyze students' argumentative skills in workshops based on educational issues. This study is relevant given that the School of Languages of the Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia (UPTC henceforth) emphasizes such traits as: critical thinking, socio-cultural awareness, responsibility and consciousness of being an educator. Throughout their career, students are asked to develop these skills in their classes, especially in subjects like Ethics and Politics, Literature, Pedagogical Project, Research Seminar, and in the various language levels.

This project was carried out with a group of sixth semester students from the Modern Languages program at the UPTC. This population was selected because of their knowledge and ability to express themselves in the foreign language. Given these attributes, it was important to analyze and understand what sixth semester Modern Language students reveal about the construction of their own arguments, as well as the kind of sources they tend to use in defending their points of view. In addition to the previous idea, when students develop argumentative competences, "they are better able to achieve what is expected of them in their graduate professional profile" (Núñez & Téllez, 2012). As mentioned in the vision of the Modern Languages program, students are required to develop deep critical analysis of information using

pertinent, relevant, and factual evidence (UPTC, 2001). In developing critical analysis, reflection, argumentation, criticism, coherence in action, communication, and interaction are fostered among students (Greenspan & Benderly, 1998). On top of that, participants are also able to work with each other cooperatively to achieve these goals.

In addition, this case study contributes to the promotion of the participants' linguistic and discursive competences, listening and oral skills, social interaction and teamwork, the ability to formulate and test hypothesis (ICFES, 2006), reading comprehension, and problem solving. These are indispensable competences in becoming a language professional. When we talk about argumentative skills, we emphasize that this case study could serve as a support for the teaching community, such as that of the university. In such a way, it is possible to implement different types of workshops that could create a suitable environment to debate and express ideas. These environments could then motivate students to participate more in the classroom, which provides the opportunity to strengthen the language learning process regardless of career choice. Additionally, such spaces could also improve communication among the educational community by encouraging acceptability of others' opinions and experiences. Therefore, alternatives to innovate and construct new knowledge are achieved by means of argumentative skills, such as persuasion.

This study has made us aware of the importance of developing argumentative skills in our students and ourselves. In this way, we can reflect and apply new strategies that foster this essential part of communication by promoting critical thinking, reasoning, learning, and improving the construction of discursive and argumentative processes that help students become active social and critical agents of society.

PROBLEMATIC SITUATION

We decided to carry out this study because we, as students, know the different flaws that exist when we are asked to argue and defend our point of view. We have noticed that it is difficult for students in our career, Modern Languages, to give strong opinions and arguments related to the topic, even if they are in more advanced semesters. As mentioned before, future language professionals need to develop their argumentative skills as part of the requirements for the Modern Language program. Given this consideration and our own observations, we found it necessary to understand how students were arguing and defending their points of view, as well as the characteristics that were behind these arguments. In understanding the previous, teachers could have information that would serve as a starting point in developing argumentative skills, which are also part of the requirements and syllabus of the course.

In order to focus on how sixth semester Modern Language students argue and become more aware of their argumentative skills, we proposed the following main research question: What do workshops based on educational issues reveal about sixth semester Modern Language students' argumentative skills?

As part of this study also includes understanding the main characteristics of the students' arguments when they debate, the main research question will aid in answering this aspect. It is important to note that the focus of this study is to understand what type of strategies were implemented by the participants when arguing, as opposed to solving the existing problem. Rather, the idea is that the findings will shed some light on the issue and lead to further exploration that could potentially solve the problem further down the line. Therefore, the main objective is: To understand sixth semester Modern Language students' argumentative skills and their characteristics.

To achieve this objective, we implemented some workshops that would allow students to debate about educational issues. Through these spaces, we collected data using such instruments as: field notes, audio tracks, and focus groups. Thus, we used both elicitation and observation techniques.

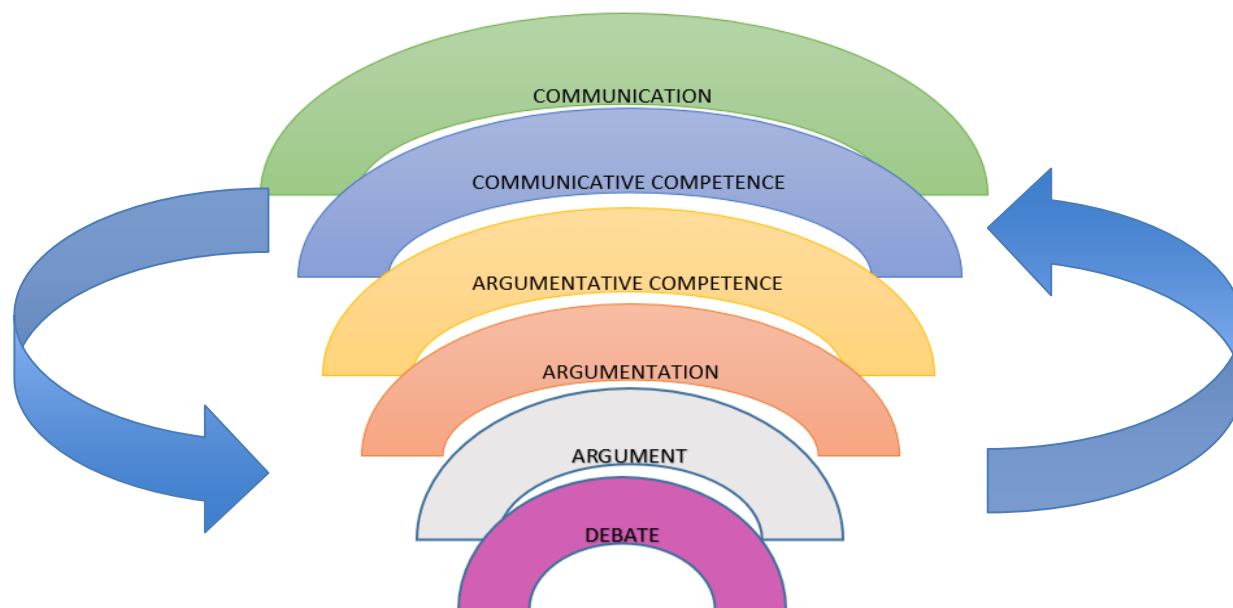
CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW

As mentioned before, the purpose of this case study is to analyze what the Modern Language students' arguments reveal about their argumentative competence skills when they are immersed in different debatable situations. In this chapter, we will explore several constructs that are directly connected with this study, which emerged from the research question. They are: communication, communicative competence, argumentative competence, argumentation, argument and debate. These aspects are presented in the order on how they will be developed in the following chart: t

Diagram 1

Main theories and how they connect with each other



Note. Diagram designed by Sandra Milena Fonseca and Vanessa Duarte Infante.

Communication

Communication has been an important tool for the development of the human being for many reasons. One of them is related to expressing thoughts and feelings, which is also part of being able to argue. For this study, we consider the following perspective on communication provided by Monroy and Buitrago (2003),

Communication is the interaction instrument par excellence that human beings use to approach and recognize each other. In this case human beings are able to share meaning which arises from the individual's experiences, background, education and training, making the communication easier among them.

The previous notion is related with Vygotsky's Social Development Theory (1978), in which he affirmed that

within the sociocultural environment, communication is developed into more sophisticated and effective mental processes/strategies such as: higher mental functions; in other words, communications refers to a mental two-way process that is developed inside a psychosocial background, which goes beyond the transmission of information as people used to think.(p.2).

Thus, communication involves skills that allow for interaction and give meaning to the messages we convey. In this sense, it becomes possible to understand others, which is the purpose of communication. Therefore, it is necessary to consider some elements that are related to successful communication, such as the sender, receiver, message, and medium. In regard to these elements, Keyton (2011) stated that,

The elements previously mentioned in the communication process determine the quality of it. A problem in any one of these elements can reduce communication effectiveness. In this sense, the sender initiates the communication. The receiver is the individual to whom the

message is sent. The message is the outcome of the encoding, which takes the form of verbal, non-verbal, or written language. The medium can be a face-to-face conversation.

According to Núñez and Téllez (2012), communication allows us to express thoughts and points of view in a cohesive manner. This is especially true when one is trying to analyze, criticize, argue, and persuade his/her interlocutor with valid reasons and evidence. In this sense, arguing with people generates more consciousness about the way we express ourselves and how listeners perceive the message. This last idea promotes good understanding of the different standpoints, as well as effective argumentation because it becomes a more conscious process.

The interaction among students as a way of constructing knowledge has an important role. In this case, the language becomes the main source for creating meaning. Communication is seen as a collaborative activity when students are able to respond to each other in order to make their thinking visible. Therefore “effective communication means that the receiver fully understands, comprehends and interprets what the speaker and/or writer has conveyed” (Ho, C 2014). However, communication is not always achieved, and the negotiation of meaning takes place.

Communicative Competence

Communicative competence is defined as the proper use of the language in a specific social context. Abilities related to the knowledge of the structure and meaning that form a unit for spoken and written language are taken into account. Some authors, like Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983), understood communicative competence as a synthesis of an underlying system of knowledge and skill needed for communication. In their words, “communicative competence knowledge refers to the (conscious or unconscious) knowledge of an individual about language and about other aspects of language use. They also make a distinction among three types of knowledge: knowledge of underlying grammatical principles, knowledge of how to

use language in a social context in order to deliver communicative functions and knowledge of how to combine utterances and communicative functions with respect to discourse principles (p.96). In addition, their concept of skill refers to how an individual can use the knowledge in a real situation of communication. According to Canale (1983), “skill requires a further distinction between underlying capacity and its manifestation in real communication, which means, in performance”. (As cited in Mihaljević, 2007)

On the other hand Chomsky (1965), affirms that communicative competence involves two relevant concepts that he proposed and defined; these were competence and performance. These could be part of a communicative view in applied linguistics. However, (e.g. & Savignon, 1972) expressed their strong disapproval at the idea of using the concept of idealized, purely linguistic competence as a theoretical ground of the methodology for learning, teaching and testing languages. They found the alternative to Chomsky’s concept of competence in Hymes communicative competence which is for them a broader and more realistic notion of competence. (As cited in Mihaljević, 2007, p.95)

According to Hymes (1972), communicative competence involves four basic competences: linguistic, pragmatic, discourse and strategic competence. In that sense, we understand linguistic competence as a specific skill that is related to lexical, grammar, pronunciation, syntax, and all the structures that compose the language. In terms of linguistic competence, Chomsky (1965) emphasized on the difference between linguistic competence, the speaker-hearer’s knowledge of the language and performance. In relation to the actual use of language in concrete situations, he points out that,

Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of

attention and interests, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance. (p. 4)

On the other hand, pragmatic competence refers to how the language is employed in a particular context in which conversation takes place in order to properly transmit and interpret the interlocutors' message. According to Núñez and Téllez (2012), Canale and Swain (1980), and Bachman (1990), pragmatic competence deals with comprehension and expression of communicative acts with the particular intention of the speaker/writer in diverse communicative exchanges. Crystal (1985), describes pragmatics as “the study of language based on the perspectives of its users regarding their preferences, the impact of the interactional context and how utterances can influence other participants during or after the communication”. (p.11)

Discourse competence is related to how words, sentences and phrases are arranged in order to structure a speech and/or text that results functional for the social context.

Hymes (1972) defined this competence as the knowledge of how to produce and comprehend oral or written texts in the modes of speaking/writing and listening/reading, respectively. Discourse competence is knowing how to combine language structures into a cohesive and coherent oral or written text of different types.

In terms of strategic competence, it is the ability to recognize and repair communication breakdowns before, during, or after they occur (Hymes, 1972). In this sense, we can say that some students are not completely able to communicate effectively due to the lack of vocabulary, use of grammar, syntax, etc. Thus, they have to overcome those difficulties through different strategies as part of using the strategic competence. For instance, the speaker may not know a certain word, so he or she will either paraphrase or ask what that word is in the target language. During the conversation, background noise or other factors may hinder communication. Thus, the speaker must know how to keep the communication channel open if this occurs.

Argumentative Competence

Recently, the argumentative competence has become one of the most relevant aspects in education. By having a critical mind, one can express one's ideas and viewpoints properly in different situations. In that sense, it is necessary to understand the argumentative competence in order to analyze its implication on cognitive development in students. First of all, competence is defined by Chomsky (1965), as an "idealized capacity that is located as a psychological or mental property or function. It refers to the knowledge of the language and the process of embracing it, which occurs in metalinguistic awareness". On the other hand, Bandura, a social psychologist, summarized that "there is a marked difference between possessing knowledge and skills, and being able to use them well under diverse circumstances, many of which contain ambiguous, unpredictable, stressful elements" (1990, p. 315). Connell, Sheridan, and Gardner (2003) described competence as "realized abilities" (p. 142). According to Hartig, Klieme and Leutner (2007) while intelligence research assesses cognitive achievement constructs that are generalized across a broad scope of situations, competence constructs adhere to specific areas of demand. In other words, competence refers to the use of knowledge acquired in order to achieve an objective, which is argumentation for this case study. (As cited in Richter, Hanft & Bäcker, 2011)

The MEN recognizes the role of higher education in the social context. Additionally, they see learning and making decisions based on arguments as a useful tool for life in understanding different contexts and situations. This is one of the main reasons why the argumentative competence is necessary in facing changes in information and communication technologies, as well as the advancement of knowledge. These are all aspects demanded by society from our future professionals.

Taking into account that the main objective of this case study was to analyze what debatable situations reveal about students' argumentative competence, it is pertinent to define it as a set of cognitive abilities meant to persuade the audience on practical problems. By supporting viewpoints through valid evidence, students help create responsible ways of thinking. Núñez and Téllez (2012) stated that argumentative competence is the ability to elaborate arguments, which is then understood as the capacity to express ideas or thoughts and support them with facts, authority with references, analogies and cause-effect relationships to persuade someone.

According to Augustiniene (2010), argumentative competence creates consensus about controversial issues, advocating proposals, facilitating behavior and commitment, and integrating identities (p. 18). In that sense, argumentative competence and communicative competence work together to develop elaborated production and coherent and cohesive written and oral texts.

Argumentation

After having explained the communicative and argumentative competence, it is necessary to go deeper into the concept of argumentation. In the words of Eemeren (1996), "Argumentation is a verbal and social activity of reason aimed at increasing (or decreasing) the acceptability of a controversial standpoint for the listener or reader, by putting forward a constellation of propositions intended to justify (or refute) the standpoint before a rational judge" (p. 5). The latter means that argumentation happens when propositions need to be explained or defended by, for, or against in order to make decisions and arrive at a conclusion. However, not all reasoning in conversation is necessarily argumentative. The Eemeren's definition shows that only when reasoning is used to decrease or increase the acceptability of a certain standpoint or solution, the participants are engaged in argumentation. (As cited in Hahn & Oaksford, 2012)

The previous information suggests that through the use of certain strategies at the moment of arguing, students can persuade and convince the audience. However, even though the goal of argumentation is often to persuade, this characteristic should not be limited to the inter-personal plane. In this respect, Baker, (2002; 2003) states that “Argumentation is characterized by the fact that different solutions or standpoints, not necessarily humans, compete with each other”. (As cited in Baruch & Schwarz, 2008)

We understand argumentation as an activity of social interaction where people assume a position in facing a controversial issue. A person can determine a perspective in order to persuade the other by constructing a common and strong argument. In this way, argumentation appears as a relevant element which can regulate social interaction. Above all, it is necessary to consider that students are within a determined ideological universe, so their discursive representations depend on reality.

Arguing is necessary in understanding how we think, understanding ourselves, conducting our lives, and interacting with the world in which we live. This affects the way we argue and how we develop those skills. In the words of Widdowson (1978), argumentation skills integrate both the capacity to make use of a linguistic repertoire and the capacity to use language with a communicative purpose. Although a communicative purpose can be achieved without the use of argumentation skills, we hold the view that argumentation must be conceived as a dialogic process in which opposing or similar claims meet. Additionally, people make use of discourse mechanisms, in which the user of the language can demonstrate his/her ability to use knowledge acquired for effective communication.

It is important to emphasize that argumentation is born when a discussion about an issue or a situation emerges. This discussion could be based on agreements and disagreements related

to the topic, in which each person defends his or her own standpoint. According to Eemeren, Grootendorst and Snoeck Henkemans (2006),

a central notion is disagreement or difference of opinion (explicit or implicit), from which argumentation originates; in that sense, a difference of opinion or disagreement always involves two parties: One part puts forward a standpoint and the other one expresses doubts about it or, as often happens, goes a step further and rejects the standpoint. (p. 4)

The main object of argumentation are the standpoints (for and against) that are presented by the participants in a debate. The quality of those arguments depends on the discourse skills that have been developed in the simplest way to convince the audience. According to Houtlosser (2001), the standpoint is defined as a statement that other arguments try to support, rebut, justify or refute. To clarify the role of the standpoint in argumentation, Houtlosser makes a comparison between equivalent terms, such as point of view, thesis, attitude, belief, opinion, conclusion, claim or debate proposition, which are the basis of an argument.

Argument

According to Freely and Steinberg (2009), “an argument is a set of claims in which one or more of them are put forward to offer reasons for another claim”. The culmination of these claims is known as the conclusion”. In that sense, an argument is a set of statements that support a hypothesis. They exposed that an argument may have several premises, or it may have only one; likewise they present six elements that compose an argument: (a) statements: conclusions, that we hope to pursue with the argument; (b) grounds of foundations: ideas or reasons that support or validate statements; (c) guarantees: proof, or evidence to support the foundation or ground; (d) additional proof: to further support the statement; (e) qualifications: to express the degree of

cohesion in a statement; and (f) counter arguments: based on new evidences presented to weaken or destroy the statements presented by the other side.(p. 163)

Characteristics of the argument. A meaningful argument is usually guided by the conscious ways debaters choose to discuss. In this case, facts and explanations are not arguments, rather arguments go deeper than the facts. It is necessary to think critically, analyze the issue, see relationships, and warrant the evidence. Likewise, a valid argument is not just based on reasons and evidence, it is also founded on beliefs and values that are shared with the audience. When arguing, it is necessary to be aware of the issues being discussed. Weston (2004) stated, “Arguments are made to support certain opinions with reasons” (p. 3).

On the other hand, Aristotle explained that in order to affect the audience, a valid argument is composed of: claims, facts, judgments, inferences and evidences. Along the same lines, the Communication’s department of Pittsburgh university (2015, 2018) states that, “claims are statements about what is true or good or about what should be done or believed,Facts refers to statements that are verifiable”. Factual statements refer to what can be counted or measured or confirmed by reasonable observers or trusted experts. Inferences are the conclusions we draw from an analysis of facts, and judgments refer to opinions based on values, beliefs, or philosophical contexts”.

In order to build an argument, Weston (2004) offered some rules to consider as participants of a debate session. First of all, he proposed making a distinction between conclusions and premises or reasons. The latter will explain the conclusion. Secondly, it is necessary to present ideas in a natural order. Next, the premise that you present should be reliable and plausible. Then, in order to express your standpoints in a better way, you have to use

concrete and specific language employing accurate terms consistent with each idea. Finally, the conclusion and premise will be closely connected.

In addition, when the participants are immersed in a debate session, they can express themselves by using different types of arguments. In this case, Weston (2004) classified arguments and presented their main characteristics, which are illustrated in the following chart:

Table 1.

Types of arguments proposed by Weston (2004).

<i>Arguments</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>
	All claims are supported by plausible examples.
Arguments based on examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In order to prove something, it is necessary to use more than one example. - You need to obtain background information and use counterexamples in order to strengthen the argument or disprove someone.
Analogical argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a similarity between two examples, which supports one of the standpoints. - Analogies require a relevant example.
Arguments from authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is an argument supported by a qualified authority or a reliable source. - Sources should be cited and informed. - Sources need to be impartial. - Sources need to be independent, neutral, and objective in their view of the position being argued.
Causal arguments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The relationships between two events are presented, in which one is the effect of the other. - The argument needs to explain how the cause leads to the effect and its correlation. - If there are many possible causes, the most

likely cause must be proposed.

Deductive Argument

- Truthful premises are presented in order to obtain a reliable conclusion
 - Deductive arguments offer an effective way of organizing an argument.
-

The Debate

According to Freely and Steinberg (2009), debate is the process of inquiry and advocacy. It is a way of arriving at a reasoned judgment on a proposition. Individuals may use debate to reach a decision in their own minds. Alternatively, individuals or groups may use it to persuade others to agree with their arguments. Debate provides reasoned arguments for and against a proposition because it requires that listeners and opposing advocates comparatively evaluate competing choices. Additionally, debate demands critical thinking. According to Parcher (1998), “debating develops research, critical thinking, evidence, problem resolution and communicative abilities. Society, like individuals, must have an effective method of making decisions. Debate pervades our society at decision-making levels” (p.2). In other words, we understand debate as a formal and structured discussion about an issue where three parts are involved. The first one supports the main hypothesis. The second one is opposed to the hypothesis, and the last one has the objective of judging the quality of arguments and performance during the debate session.

A good debate is characterized by the presentation of logical and complete information in order to guarantee the understanding of facts. Thus, the audience must be provided with enough evidence to convince them and allow them to learn and contribute to the motion of the debate. It is common for questions to emerge during the debate that lead to the conclusion of the presented

issue. These questions must be clarified, answered, and analyzed. For the purpose of having a dynamic debate, the speeches should be organized in a methodological form considering a maximum time for each speaker. In this sense, these aspects must contribute and respond to the requirements and necessities of the debate.

For this case study, debate was an opportunity for the participants to practice and demonstrate their critical thinking, communicative and persuasive skills. They learned to discuss complicated topics in a composed and competent way. Thus, they were aware of the elements that are indispensable in developing an argument (premises, evidence, claims and warrant), and they were able to utilize convincing words. Debating also allowed participants to become aware of the way they argue and reason, consider both parts of the debate, and improve on their argumentative competence.

In the next chapter, we will analyze some international, national, and local studies and articles that contribute to our case study. We will present what the objective of these studies were, and how these investigative projects are relevant to our case study.

CHAPTER 2

THE STATE OF THE ART

“Using Debate in EFL Classes” is the name of an international qualitative study that is related to our project. It was carried out by Alasmari Ahmed (2012); this researcher observed that “countries that use English as a foreign language need effective activities which help students to practice language properly inside and outside classroom defend their own positions, place counter arguments and conduct researches. They found that debate is a practice that inspires learners to open their mouth, get into discussion, deal on related issues. While debating in English, the debaters get involved in a challenging and thrilling activity. Moreover, they find themselves well-conversant in the aforesaid language.” (p.147) in their project, they presented the relevance of using debates in EFL classes and proposed a few debating modules.

When these modules are put into practice, those can help students to be more confident users of the English in different settings such as: language in academic, social and professional. The project also had into account how students can improve their English language through debates. “The modules are a useful tool to practice debates in EFL classes, English language centers, debating clubs or other formal and informal settings, where teaching-learning of the English language is concerned”. Alasmari Ahmed (2012, p.147).

In terms of national studies, Ubaque and Pinilla Castellanos (2016), two foreign language teachers from Centro Cultural Colombo Americano Bogotá, Colombia, carried out an exploratory action research study based on argumentation skills. This was done through a peer assessment approach, which was also interesting and useful for our case study. The researchers showed that

their students faced difficulties elaborating their own ideas when discussing issues in class. The study emphasized the use of argumentation outlines and peer assessment to support learners' argumentative abilities. "Audio-taped conversations and open-ended interviews were used to understand the impact on the pedagogical intervention. Findings revealed that argumentation outlines and peer assessment can promote learners' awareness and ability to engage in argumentation processes. Moreover, peer assessment appears to be an essential tool for enhancing personal and collaborative learning, as well as for promoting learner reflection and agency". (Ubaque & Pinilla Castellanos, 2016)

Finally, regarding local qualitative research studies, Fonseca, Chia, and Ilba (2016) carried out a study with a group of eleventh students from a public university in a small town in Colombia. The goal of this study was to know to what extent the use of social ads published on the internet helped students develop their critical thinking, writing and speaking foreign language skills. The implementation of social ads in the classroom evidenced a relevant improvement in participants' abilities to interpret and argue about social issues, as well as their awareness of their self-improvement in oral and written production in English. According to Fonseca, Chia, and Ilba (2016,) ,this research report showed how the use of social ads posted on the internet act as an useful tool that contributes to develop the participants' skills that were previously mentioned (critical thinking, speaking and writing skills). The instruments that they implemented to collect data allowed the researchers to answer the question stated at the beginning of the research. This data was analyzed under the principles of grounded theory and triangulation.

To sum up, our educational context has been recently focused on developing argumentative skills. For this reason, researchers have been looking for strategies that allow students to practice and enhance their communicative skills. It has been demonstrated that the

activities related to debates are a suitable tool that have a lot of advantages regarding language and argumentation in learning a foreign language. However, these types of studies have not been developed looking at all of the possible perspectives in our context. Taking into account the studies that have been presented previously, we can conclude that it is necessary not only to focus our attention in the implementation of strategies that enhance argumentative skills. Rather, it is important to consider what the impact of these strategies are in students and what students reveal when they are applied. In the following chapter, we will present the participants of this project, the method, the type of research, and the instruments that we carried out.

CHAPTER 3

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

In this chapter, we explained the instructional phases and pedagogical strategy that was implemented in order to accomplish the main objective of this project. Thus, we presented the relevance and relation of the strategy considering context, participants, argumentative abilities presented by the participants, process of selecting the topics to be discussed, main aspects taken into account in designing the worksheets, and how they were carried out.

Pedagogical Strategy

In our research study, we implemented debates as a pedagogical strategy to promote the active participation in learning environments. Furthermore, it allowed students to take a stand (either in favor or against a position) and develop their own criteria by analyzing and reflecting on the given information. According to Tumposky (2004), debate nurtures students' critical thinking skills and awareness of thought. It also facilitates clinical reasoning and the ability to share viewpoints with others while learning specific content. In this way, this strategy was useful to show how students tend to argue and how they develop their argumentative skills.

During the implementation of this strategy, we meticulously observed the way students built their arguments. Additionally, we looked at the different aspects on which their arguments were based, the topics they were interested in, the interaction between opposing sides, the words they selected to defend their point of view, the position and attitude they took in confronting the issue, the difficulties they faced in expressing their ideas, and if their argumentative skills were improved during the workshops.

As part of the pedagogical proposal, we decided to design four workshops based on current educational issues. Students were aware of the different skills they needed to debate, and they assumed a position. These workshops were each developed in two hours throughout the course of one semester. We designed seven workshops, but it was not possible for us to apply all of them. This was because some days the teacher was unable to do the class due to issues with students or the university. The professor had to later resume the topics or explain new ones to achieve the goals of the syllabus. Therefore, we implemented four workshops that were designed with the objective of exploring students' argumentative skills.

During the debate we asked students to work collaboratively to enhance higher-level thinking, oral communication, self-management, and leadership skills. Collaborative work, in turn, resulted in making decisions and coming to agreements. According to Brown, Collins, and Duguid (1989), learning is highly influenced by the context and activities in which one is immersed. Taking this idea into account, collaborative learning activities challenge students by allowing them to reflect and question others in pursuit of facts and ideas to defend their arguments. This allows students to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills as well.

The Theory of Language and Language Learning

According to Vygotsky, language is highly influenced by social interactions because the language and cognitive development of each person depends on the values and morals of the culture where they come from. He also exposes that the system of meaning is part of larger systems. In this way language is seen as an interaction with others. Due to this, our research is based on students' argumentative skills. We focused on how our participants' interactions facilitate the way they express themselves and how it made them more confident the moment they used the language. Besides, social interaction encouraged students to face different

situations that made them reflect and solve problems. Therefore, improving aspects that favor learning, such as communicative skills and reasoning abilities.

Instructional Phases

Student's Profile. We carried out this study with sixth semester Modern Language students. They participated enthusiastically in the activities proposed in each workshop with maturity and positive attitudes. This allowed the debates to develop through a dynamic approach. Additionally, when they expressed themselves, they showed confidence in their own arguments because of their previous knowledge about the debate topic. They also listened to their partners' opinions with respect considering that they could provide information for their next argument. For this reason, they supported each other and developed a closer relationship. Although they faced some drawbacks in the use of the language, they did as much as they could to make themselves understood.

Topic Selection. To determine the topics on which we based our workshops, we took into account issues which were closer to the pre-service teachers' reality. In this sense, these topics gave them a wide vision of what they will face in the future when they begin to practice their profession. For instance, the topics that were developed in the sessions were related to educational issues. We proposed the following topics: the use of guns at school, homework is harmful, gender stereotypes at school, and whether religion should be taught in public schools. Each workshop that we proposed throughout the semester lasted around two hours. We encouraged students to take a position and participate by providing free interventions during each session.

Designing the Debate Workshops. With the intention of exploring students' argumentative skills, we implemented reliable sources, such as news reports, articles, videos, and pictures. These sources came from experts on these topics and proved to be reliable because they

analyzed educational issues from different perspectives. These sources were not biased and gave students the opportunity to contrast both sides of an idea. It also permitted them to make decisions and express their ideas regarding the topics. In that sense, we designed four workshops where we included steps (pre-reading, during-reading, post-reading, and debate) for students to follow. These steps guided the participants throughout the different procedures in order to build a discussion.

In the second workshop, we gave the participants a picture, video, and a text related to gender stereotypes to help the students develop their arguments. This workshop was organized through steps. In the first step, they had to analyze an image and answer some questions. This was used to identify the previous knowledge of the students regarding gender stereotypes in schools and society. In the second step, the students had to read an article and make inferences of words and statements. According to the critical reading of the text, they chose between true or false questions in order for the students to demonstrate their understanding. In the third step, students had to make inferences of words related to the issue. This helped them have a better understanding of the text. In the fourth step, they had to watch a video in order to complement the inferred information from the text and the picture. Finally, they debated questions presented at the end of the workshop. The workshop and its steps are presented below:

Step 1.

Before reading:

1. Analyze the following picture. What do you think it is about?



2. Answer the following questions according to the information and your own opinions:
 - A. What gender stereotypes are there?
 - B. What do you think about the gender stereotypes at school?
 - C. How could you answer the following questions: Who can wear pink clothes? Who can have long hair? Should men work as babysitters? Why are women working in the army?

Pre-debating process analysis

In this part of the process, we presented the topic to the students by using pictures, text, and videos. This helped them answer questions related to the topic and make an analysis of their previous knowledge. This allowed them to open their minds to other possibilities and make a decision of the possible position they could assume as a main objective of the pre debate.

Step 2: During the reading

Read the text in groups of 3 people and underline some ideas that can be related to your context.

1. Using In-Class Debates to Teach Gender Issues in Psychology

In today's society, gender roles are in a state of transition. Gone are the days when male and female "spheres" were separate and clearly defined. The current philosophy in our society encourages young males and females to set their aspirations high and to "shoot for the stars." Young people growing up in the present era have seen females in powerful social roles and positions that previous generations had not (e.g., National Security Advisor, U.S. Attorney

General, Supreme Court Justice). The expression "you can have it all" describes the seemingly endless opportunities available to today's generation.

However, a closer look at modern society from the social science perspective yields a different outlook. When students enroll in a college course such as Psychology of Women or Sociology of Sex and Gender, they have an opportunity to learn how social forces act upon their lives on a daily basis. Students face challenges to their own personal beliefs and often question their socialization. They learn that achieving their highest aspirations and "having it all" may not be as easy as it sounds. Students learn that, in reality, there continue to be gender inequities and other subtle forms of discrimination in our society and in other societies around the world.

One of the challenges faced by college instructors who teach about gender is dealing with different student attitudes. Despite great social change in male and female roles, many young people cling to traditional attitudes and role expectations, while others have adopted a more liberal outlook. It is this diversity in perspective that sets the stage for a lively exchange of ideas in the classroom.

Instructors should approach a course on gender by acknowledging that we live in an extremely complex world, and gender roles are now defined in numerous ways. Such a course should not be used as a personal soapbox, because students may feel alienated and become less receptive to the course material if it is continuously presented only from the instructor's perspective. For this reason and others, the use of the In-Class Debate in courses on gender is an effective teaching tool that allows exploration of both sides of relatively controversial issues (Elliot, 1993).

Taken from: E-xcellence in Teaching, August 2004, Vol. 6, through PsychTeacher, a moderated discussion list for teachers of psychology owned by the Society for the Teaching of Psychology and hosted by Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw GA.)

During the reading analysis

In this step, students worked in a collaborative way using the text as a guide to identify the main ideas, key words, and their meanings in their own context and the one given. This permitted them to reflect about the issue. In this order of ideas, they were contextualized enough to express their opinions and their thoughts to their partners, as well as recognize their partners ideas as a way of contributing to the construction of their arguments.

Step 3: After reading

a. Make an inference of the following words according to the text.

"spheres"

"shoot for the stars"

“Soapbox”

b. Answer true or false to the following statements.

Statement	True	False
a. Gender roles have not changed through the years. Currently, women don't have the opportunity to carry out powerful social roles.		
b. When students have an opportunity to learn how social forces act upon their lives on a daily basis, they face challenges to their own personal beliefs and often question their socialization.		
c. The teacher has to keep him/her in a traditional role, despite male and female behaviors.		
d. Many pre-teens are ready to actively engage in discussions about respectful relationships, gender roles and stereotypes.		

After reading analysis

In this step, students were allowed to make inferences regarding the topic and compare their standpoints. This helped them solve the different doubts that they had. They based this on their own background and constructed truthful information that was later useful for the next step.

Step 4: Video. Have gender stereotypes changed?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ewOsOtHB-I8>

Analysis: With this video, the students had the opportunity of analyzing another perspective of gender stereotypes with what is currently happening. In this case, a psychologist answers some questions and presents further knowledge related to this topic. It was possible that questions

emerged from the students based on the information and questions. This led them to create a clearer idea of what gender stereotypes means.

Let's debate

Let's Debate:



Remember!

Do Gender stereotypes exist in Colombian schools? Why? Please give some examples.

Is it typical for men to be teachers in your country? Why? Or why not?

An **argument by example** (also known as **argument from example**) is an argument in which a claim is supported by providing example. Background information is fundamental to evaluate them.

Step 5. Let's Debate Analysis

In this step, students continued working in a collaborative way by answering questions that allowed them to change and reinforce their positions on the topic. On the other hand, each workshop presented a part for them to remember and recall. It provided the participants with the essential information that helped them argue in a proper way. This included: the concept, types and parts of an argument, key words, and expressions that corresponded to a suitable argument.

Teacher's role. When the discussions took place, the teachers acted like a guide and moderator. They followed the order and pace of the debate creating a suitable environment (the students participated actively, they showed a positive attitude about the different standpoints,

they were very friendly and discussed the issues without offending others. In fact, they accepted listening to each other with respect and tolerance) during the discussion. They were characterized by having a neutral position and a lot of knowledge about the topic. They handed the workshops over to the participants and intervened in moments of silence. This intensified their participation in the discussion

Students' Role. The students were encouraged to participate in actively in the debate sessions. They worked collaboratively with their partners in order to share their opinions and points of view regarding the different issues proposed. In addition, they were able to analyze and interiorize the information provided by the workshops and their partners. This aided them in building valid and effective arguments in order to defend their position and make decisions about what the most relevant information was. They took into account their background, values, and beliefs to answer the questions proposed by the teacher to come to agreements and conclusions. On the other hand, the debate sessions were developed in an environment of respect and tolerance, where all the opinions were listened to and considered relevant for the discussion.

Implementation of the Pedagogical Strategy. In this stage, students were expected to learn and act when confronting different issues that are not far from their reality. It was possible that they would enhance their critical thinking abilities and logical argumentation in order to draw conclusions from valid evidence. This would in turn increase their confidence and self-assurance at the moment of debating. It was also an opportunity for them to develop and practice speaking skills to help them properly manage the language. In this order of ideas, students became aware of what an argument implies and the value of expressing their opinions, even if they are not accepted.

For the implementation, we carried out a set of workshops that were applied to a group of sixth semester Modern Language students from the UPTC. The workshops were followed by discussions based on educational issues. These workshops established the following topics: gun usage at schools, homework is harmful, gender stereotypes, and whether religion should be taught in public schools. These topics were applied in the order in which they were previously mentioned. Our sources came from newspapers, articles, videos discussing the topics, and pictures that reflected the issue. This made students analyze and go deeper into the issue. Likewise, we added some texts to the workshops where they could find positions that offered ideas to complement their standpoints. After each reading, there was a reading comprehension activity that helped them become more familiar with the issue. The videos we selected for the workshops displayed information from experts on the topic. This acted as a base to start the debate and helped the students assume a stance. On the other hand, the “Let’s Debate” step presented advice and main characteristics of the arguments. It was a guide that the students had in mind at the moment of their debate. Moreover, we implemented guidelines for the debate, such as collaborative activities, questions related to the issue, comparative charts, and a round table, in which the students exposed their arguments and listened to their partners.

For the development of the workshops, we met two to three times per month. One of us ran the workshops and the other took the notes and recorded the debate sessions. Having explained how our pedagogical strategy was carried out, in the next chapter we are going to explain the research design. We included the approach, setting, and population. We will also illustrate the instruments used to gather data.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN

As we explained in the previous chapter, the purpose of this study was to describe debate sessions based on current educational issues and what they reveal about sixth semester Modern Languages students' argumentative competence. Likewise, it was also developed as a way to reinforce their critical thinking skills, logical reasoning, and oral communicative skills in a foreign language.

Research Question

What do workshops, based on current educational issues reveal about sixth semester Modern Languages students' argumentative competence skills?

Main Objective

To analyze what workshops, based on current educational issues, reveal about sixth semester Modern Languages students' argumentative competence skills.

Specific Objective

To determine what type of arguments are produced during the implementation of the workshops based on current educational issues and how the participants express them.

To identify the main characteristics of the arguments presented by the students during the debate session.

Research Approach

This project followed a qualitative approach. Danzig and Lincoln (2005) describe qualitative research as an “involving... and interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world”. This means that qualitative research investigates things in their natural settings. It attempts to make sense of and interpret phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research allows us, as researchers, to focus on the natural settings and participants points of view. Forms of argumentation that were implemented in the debate session also aided in analyzing, interpreting, and understanding how the students assumed different positions (for and against) regarding an issue. Additionally, we were able to identify the main characteristics of the arguments that they used to persuade their partners.

Type of Study

Based on our concern about exploring students’ argumentative skills, we followed a case study design. Cresswell (2014) stated that case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time through detailed data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports) and reports a case description and case-based themes (p. 54). Thus, we explored the argumentative skills of sixth semester students during a specific period of time. This type of study also helped us analyze a specific phenomenon in a natural setting.

In our case, the unit of analysis was a group of students who expressed their consent and interest in participating in this research project. Thus, they were observed in their regular class environment, while engaging in class. Merriam (1998) further asserted that an important aspect

when carrying out a case study research is preparation and planning. In this sense, we planned the implementation and instruments for the collection of data. We designed the workshops, developed them with the students, and collected information during and after the implementation. In fact, we collected information through field notes, focus group, and audios.

Setting

This research study took place at the Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia (UPTC) with sixth semester Modern Language students. The UPTC is a public, higher education institution that has the objective of creating educational environments that favor the implementation of psycho-pedagogical and psychological programs. Regarding its mission, the university's focus is on providing the educational community with freedom, autonomy, self-esteem, self-learning, and fundamental values that promote personal balance and the potential for a better quality of life. Taking into account that society has been in constant evolution, we must recognize that communication plays a key role in the development of multicultural citizens who have the desire of getting to know other cultures and sharing their own. This is the reason why language is not an obstacle in acquiring and reinforcing knowledge. In this sense, this institution aims to teach a foreign language for general and academic purposes in all of its programs. Thus, the development of their argumentative skills is made possible through the adaptation of the Common European Framework.

Participants

Students

We carried out this study with 13 sixth semester Modern Languages students. There were 5 male and 8 female participants. Their ages ranged from twenty-two to twenty-eight years of age. They were in English 6 pursuing a degree in Modern Languages. With the intention of

carrying out this project, we spoke to their English teacher. We were provided with the space to apply the workshops and debates. Likewise, the students signed a consent form that guaranteed that their identity would remain private (Appendix 4).

In relation to their English level, the students were in different levels of proficiency. This was confirmed with a proficiency test that the English teacher applied at the beginning of the semester. According to the results, the students were in an intermediate and upper-intermediate level. Apart from that, the participants evidenced a positive attitude and active participation towards the debate sessions. Although each participant had their own personality (some of them were extroverted, while others were introverted), they were friendly, tolerant, and respectful amongst themselves.

Teacher-Researchers

Our role was to provide the necessary tools to facilitate the discussion and construction of the participants' arguments. In order to answer the research question, we carried out a collection data process by using and analyzing instruments. On the other hand, the teacher coordinated all the debate aspects and was in charge of being the moderator of the discussions.

Data gathering instruments

As we mentioned before, throughout the academic semester, we implemented instruments to collect the information, such as elicitation techniques, observations (Ary et al., 2000, p. 474), field notes, eight audio recordings, and a focus group.

Field Notes

Wood (2006) defined field notes as observing a culture, setting, or social situation. Field notes are created by the researcher to remember and record the behaviors, activities, events, and other features of the setting being observed. (As is cited in Cohen, 2006). During the debate session, this was a practical tool to write down the description of everything that we could remember, see, hear, experience and think. This was the reason why most of the information results were useful and helpful. We as researchers had the possibility of exploring emerging trends and relate to the events first hand. It is also useful to go deeper in the classroom, its climate, and its participant's nonverbal behavior (Appendix 6).

Audio Recordings

Patton stated that "As a good hammer is essential to fine carpentry, a good tape recorder is indispensable to fine fieldwork" (2002, p. 380). It is a useful tool that allows researchers to transcribe and analyze data by recording and observing what people do through the construction of an event. According to Burns (2001), "audio recordings are accurate and reliable sources and have the advantage of capturing observational data verbatim" (as is cited in Casey, 2004) . Through the interpretation of audio-taped data, the researcher can interpret different emotions, such as anger, happiness, sadness, surprise, confidence, lack of confidence and doubt. This proves to be of great use during the data analysis and research (Appendix 1).

Focus Group

According to Freitas, Oliveira, Jenkins and Popjoy (1998), focus groups are a type of in-depth interview accomplished in a group, whose meetings present characteristics concerning the

proposal, size, composition, and interview procedures. The focus and object of analysis are the interactions inside the group. The participants influenced each other through their answers and create ideas and contributions during the discussion. The moderator stimulates the discussion with comments or subjects. The fundamental data produced by this technique are the transcripts of the group discussions and the moderator's reflections and annotations. Indeed, focus group are a useful aid that give us the opportunity of collecting rich data while we have a direct spontaneous and dynamic contact with the participants. Beck, Trombetta, and Share (1986) claimed that focus groups differ from individual interviews in that they can facilitate greater anonymity and help individuals disclose more freely.(as is cited in Smithson.2000) This gives the researcher access to their attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences, and reactions when facing a phenomenon (Appendix 7).

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS

For the analysis, we followed the steps proposed by the grounded approach (Danzin & Lincoln, 1994; Becker, 1993, as cited in Chamberlain, 1999). In that sense, we identified some concepts, categories, and relationships established among them. According to Bourke, Cikoratic, and Mack (n.d.), the grounded approach “is an explanation of the variability in social interactions, the social structural conditions that support the interactions, the consequences of the interactions and the conditions that support changes in interactions over time” (p. 1). It also supports the effectiveness of this approach for qualitative research because it involves the constant comparison of data.

In our study, grounded theory is developed through the coding process to construct categories and subcategories. According to Borgatti, S. (n.d.), open coding is the part of the analysis concerned with identifying, naming, categorizing and describing phenomena. Allen (2017) stated that coding is a qualitative research technique that involves connecting data in order to reveal codes, categories, and subcategories within participants’ voices and within the collected data. In other words, coding is one way to construct links between data. For Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1990), selective coding is the process of choosing one category to be the core category and relating all other categories to that category. The most relevant is to develop a single storyline.

In this sense, we first gathered the information during a semester in which we applied four workshops based on educational issues. Second, we transcribed the sessions. Third, we collected the observations and comments from the field notes and focus groups to make a progressive exploration of issues. Afterwards, we followed selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 7) in

order to highlight and select the suitable information regarding our research question. For this phase, we read the transcripts and underlined pieces of information we considered important to answer the research question. We also read and reread the field notes and its comments, and we also underlined what we considered useful for our study. Finally, we transcribed the focus group and underlined aspects we considered outstanding in terms of what they mentioned about the way the students debated during the sessions. After that, we reviewed the codes and started to find common patterns in all the instruments used. Once we did so, we came up with a main category and two sub-categories.

In the following table, we illustrate the category and the subcategories that emerged.

Table 2

Categories for the Main Question.

Research question	<i>Category</i>	<i>Subcategories</i>
What do workshops based on current educational issues ,reveal about sixth semester Modern Languages students' argumentative competence skills?	Personal experiences and opinions as the main source to argue.	Argument based on personal experiences and on examples. Argument based on partner's opinions.

Main Category: Personal experiences and opinions as the main source to argue

This category receives this name because it is closely related with how the participants argued based on their points of view, their own experiences, examples they obtained from situations in their daily life, and the previous knowledge they had about it. This category shows that students use this kind of knowledge as a strategy to build their arguments and support their claims. It persuaded the listeners to accept the arguments, build clear ideas, and synthesize to be understood at the moment of arguing. It also suggests that students become conscious of what they are saying and how they construct their own opinions through the impact of personal experience, making the argument exceptionally convincing.

Miller (2011) better explains this when he said,

When developing an argument from example, your data is a specific instance of a larger phenomenon. You might use your own personal experience to make your generalization. For example, if you are giving a speech about the need for public libraries, you can use your own personal experience of using the public library to use the internet, check out a book, or have a quiet place to work. Based on your personal experience (your data) of needing to use the library, you generalize (your reasoning) to make the argument that libraries are an important facet of your community (your claim).

Subcategory 1: Arguments based on personal experiences and examples

The category seen above can be clearly evidenced in the first subcategory where the participants became aware of the importance of using truthful examples to construct their arguments and defend their points of view in a debate about educational issues. It had pedagogical benefits that had been observed, such as cognitive skills (reasoning) and critical listening skills that we observed in the final step of the workshops (the debate session). The

previous analysis was evidenced in the third workshop about gender stereotypes. In this argument, the student gave an example of the perceptions that people had of the women in some careers at university. The participant said:

It is the same with the program degree in the university, a woman who is studying engineering. She is seen like a man...or a macho, for example, the same thing happen. For example when a man is studying psycho pedagogy or kindergarten...Or nursery... things like that. [sic] (Participant one, Sixth semester, Second audio track, Second debate session *Gender stereotypes*)

In the argument above, we can observe that the participant perceives the stereotypes from another point of view, in which the educational programs are also categorized. When he said the word “macho”, he criticized the way university students and their culture have been nurturing these stereotypes in which woman and man must act in certain way in order to fit into society’s standards. Otherwise, they would be judged. When the students assume the position as critic on an issue, they are demonstrating their critical thinking skills. This is because this argument requires that the student break down the barriers that society imposes (women and men should follow certain behavior guidelines). According to Basow (1992), most of the differences that do exist are the result of gender roles. Gender is constructed by every socializing agent and force in society. These include parents, teachers, media, and religion. Elliot (1993) also stated that instructors should approach gender by acknowledging that we live in an extremely complex world and gender roles are now defined in numerous ways. Furthermore, when the student said, “for example”, it demonstrated a reference from something that he had probably seen or lived. Therefore, he exposed his disagreement about the issue. This is supported by Weston (2004) when he affirmed that you need to use examples in order to strengthen the arguments.

Another example of this subcategory was taken from the fourth workshop about teaching religion at public schools, where a participant states,

ok I studied in a private and public school, and in private school is more..is more cover that subject, because we have to take into account that before to enter to a primary school we have to make the rules and in the rules are imposed that we have to go to the church. [sic] (Participant two, Sixth semester, Third-audio track, *Must the religion be taught at school*)

In the previous statement, it is possible to see that the student, based on her own experience, talked about the way religion is imposed in schools. No matter the position or beliefs that the students could have, she emphasized on the rules that some schools have which the students should accept in order to be admitted there. In that sense, the student's argument demonstrated a critical and analytical position towards the issue. She demonstrated her disagreement with the educational systems because students must forget their right to freedom of religion if they want to be part of an educative institution. Grootendors and Henkenmas (2002) stated that a central notion of argumentation is disagreement or difference of opinion (explicit or implicit). In this sense, it can be presented as an argument. (As is cited in Drid, 2016).

In the following field note, we described how the students used their own experiences as a strategy to argue in the debate session.

When the students argue, they use to talk by using some simple and complex arguments that are based on their own experiences and the others ones in order to show or reflect about others perspectives. When they argue by using experiences, their arguments are clear and prove the point of view itself. (Sixth semester, Field notes, Second debate session, *Whether homework is harmful*)

The next argument was taken from the audio of the workshop related to gender stereotypes in which the participant gave us an example from experience.

We see how the society influence so much in a children... for example, they come to the world..like clear..like pure, with no prejudices. [sic] (Participant three, Sixth semester, Third audio track, Worksheet 2, *Gender stereotypes*)

In the data above, the participant emphasizes on how society influences children to start building prejudices of the role of men and women. This is evidenced when he says that they come to the world clear, pure, with no prejudices. The participant spoke from his own experience and said that the influence on children is something that all of us can see. He makes a generalization in which we can perceive society's influence as something bad, which he does not agree with. This is supported by Huang (2018) when he affirmed that every child is unique in interacting with the world around them, and what they invoke and receive from others and the environment also shapes how they think and behave. In this way, the participant's claim acts like evidence to support his argument. On the other hand, in this kind of argument, we noticed that there is a claim and reason for that claim. According to Freely and Steinberg (2009), this is proof or evidence to support and validate statements because the participant offers reasons to support his statements, while allowing his partners to go deeper into the issue.

In the following field note, we described how the implementation of experiences help the participants convince their partners at the moment of debating.

During the debate the students were very convincing with their experiences, because the rest of the participants were persuaded by the experiences of their partners when these had something in common. (Sixth semester, Field notes)

It was observed that the participants persuaded their partners through experiences, because as Monroy and Buitrago (2003) stated, communication is the interaction instrument par excellence that human beings used to approach and recognize each other. In this sense, due to communication, participants achieved interaction and understanding of others. The following is an extract of the focus group carried out with the participants of this study. It was done in Spanish because the students felt calmer when answering the questions. It also allowed them to answer more spontaneously.

Además de las experiencias que de pronto hemos tenido, uno también se basa en diversos autores y diversas personas que tengan una posición similar a la que uno tiene, entonces uno no solo es, ¡ah no! Pues yo he vivido esto y lo pienso de esta manera, uno también tiene que ver las otras posiciones y las experiencias o las percepciones de otras personas para complementar su argumento, a mí me parecería conveniente buscar también otras referencias para consolidar más mis argumentos. (Sixth semester, Focus group)

In the previous data, we could confirm that the students based most of their arguments on their experiences. They also recognized that it is important to consider others' positions and authorities that support their own arguments in order to reinforce them. According to Weston (2004), experiences are used as examples to support an argument and disprove someone.

Subcategory 2: Argument based on partner's opinions

According to the LeBeau (1999), "the nice thing about debate is that debates lead towards a more natural discussion. ... First, I give my position and then you give your position, and then I would address each of the points in your position and comment on them. And then you would have the opportunity to address each point in my position and comment on it" In this case, the

data reveals that at the moment of arguing in the debate sessions, the students analyzed their partner's opinion in order to strengthen their own ideas. In that sense, we agree with Turner et al. (2010) when he stated that it is important to prepare students for debating because individuals are more likely to seek information in order to validate their own opinion.

In the example below, the student gives his opinion on the debate about the focus on religion in schools. She suggested it should be taught in our context through example, and she emphasizes that religion is perceived as an imposition of society.

Instead of guiding to religion we can change it to something cultural, for example change that subject about religion like cultural awareness because religion is very close to culture, so in that way for example the teacher could present the characteristics, or maybe the history about, is not guiding the class in order to impose the religion, you have to believe by showing by tasks, by thoughts by books the religion as culture. (Participant four, Sixth semester, Third audio recording, *Religion*)

In this argument, the student suggests a way of teaching religion as something that is closely related to culture. She mentions that religion is something that is imposed in public schools. She proposes that people should believe by tasks and thoughts. When she gave the example, she presented her own ideas about how religion should be taught at school. Those ideas built a personal opinion related to the topic. These ideas could be based on her experiences because she learned religion as something imposed on her. That is why she proposed it as cultural awareness, which she presented as an argument against religion. This is a judgment that places the participant on a particular position in this topic. According to Myers and Blaire (2017), the only way that teaching religion to public school students can be justified is if it has a secular purpose. It must equally address all other religions without promoting or denigrating any of them. As we mentioned previously, the participant presented reasons to support his disagreement. According to Freely and

Steinberg (2009), the counterarguments are based on new evidences presented to weaken or destroy the statements presented by the other side.

I think that the problem is not religion but the way we teach it, because you can see it as a science, not as something that has values... that is the problem, I think that religion is very interesting as a science... you can learn a lot about it, and I think that people is not very literate about why they don't believe in something. [sic] (Participant 6, Sixth semester, Third audio track, *Religion*)

We can observe another perspective on the same topic in this argument. The participant exposes her point of view about how religion should be taught. It is possible to notice that it is an opinion because she uses the expression “I think” to present her ideas. In this case, the participant talks about religion as a science. One of her reasons to support her opinion is, “people is not very literate about why they don't believe in something”. From this statement, the proposal of religion as a science emerges. For the student, there is a problem when religion is related to values. It serves as a fact to support her argument. The Department of Communications of Pittsburgh University explained that facts refer to statements that are verifiable. In this way, that fact needs an analysis to arrive at a conclusion. These reasons alone can result in a debate. On the other hand, this type of argument shows that the participant had an open mind because she perceived religion according to her own experiences regarding this topic. This allowed her to have her own criteria apart from the beliefs of society.

The next argument was taken from the second workshop about homework assignments. In this argument, the student states that the labor of educating a child should not only be the responsibility of the teacher, but also of the parents.

Yes, but education is not only at school, you as a parent you must be concentrating in how your children is developing, not only in the tests because if you want your children would be a singer or an actor you need to reinforce at home some things who the teacher at school didn't do. [sic] (Participant 3, Sixth semester, Fourth audio track, *Homework assignments*)

In the data above, the participant based his argument on a reasoned opinion where he expressed a critical and personal thought based on logical reasoning. Taking into account that the participant (as a pre-service teacher) has certain knowledge that supports his argument, he exposes that the education of students is a joint effort where parents, as well as teachers, must strive to contribute to the development of children. According to Epstein (2009), schools in the future will improve if families, teachers, and parents understand each other's potential for improving the education of the children they share. In relation to this argument, Weston (2004) stated that the premises presented should be reliable and plausible. When the students give an opinion considering their experience, it results in a reliable experience that allows the participant to reach a decision in his or her own mind during the debate.

The argument below was taken from the second workshop about homework assignments. In this argument the student analyzed her partner's opinion in order to employ some of her standpoints to adjust her own arguments.

I agreed with Alejandra, because I think, sometimes extensive homework is unhealthy; I saw many cases. That... parents do their children's homework because sometimes children say... "I don't understand" or "I don't like homework". So they prefer to do their homework. [sic] (Participant 4, Sixth semester, Fourth audio track, *Homework assignments*)

In the previous argument, it is possible to see that the student (based on her partner's opinion) exposed how excessive homework could be harmful for children. The student's argument demonstrates a critical and analytical position towards the educational issue. She, as a future teacher, understands the importance of homework. She also demonstrates her disagreement on the excessive demand of home study. In that sense, she disagrees with the educational system. According to Cooper (2006), there is a limit to how much kids can benefit from home study. Accordingly, the participant states that if there is an excessive requirement of homework from the teacher, the child will get tired. Therefore, the parents will end up doing the homework, which will in turn stunt the child's learning. When the student said that she agreed with someone, it was because communication was effective. In this sense, Núñez and Téllez (2012) explained that communication allows us to express thoughts and points of view in a cohesive manner, especially when one is able to analyze, criticize, argue, and persuade his or her interlocutor with reasons and evidence. This means that the participant most likely went through all of this process. This is probably because the argument presented by her partner was closer to her own way of thinking, and their experiences were similar.

In the following field notes, we describe how the students argued and how the environment of the class favored the debate on the different issues presented, even when the students defended different perspectives on the topic.

“This all raises questions about the way we gather and make sense of evidence and information. In order to confidently articulate – primarily in our own words – the ideas of others, in order to identify and be able to discuss the relevant points of debate, and to accord these ideas relative significance and value” (London Met Students' Union, 2014, p. 15). In other words, the students were able to find the main points of each topic to discuss about them. They began to make agreements in order to arrive to specific knowledge that that they considered a relevant

truth. An advantage for them was that they incorporated solutions and ideas. This was due to the conversation and reflection that changed their opinions. The latter means that there was an effective communication. As Ho (2014) explained, the receiver understands, comprehends, and interprets what the speaker has conveyed.

In the following field note, we describe how the students assume a position considering the different perspectives that they had of the issues discussed in the debates.

The students start to debate according to some questions based on real information, videos and images. Those resources presented different perspectives of a topic, that helps the students to assume a position in order to discuss and complement their knowledge, to strengthen their opinions and turn it into valid arguments (claims, evidence, and conclusions). (Sixth semester, Field notes)

According to Snider (2002), an important characteristic of a debate is its dynamic ability. There are two teams that present opposing views. These views must be responded to by both teams respectively. All important points must be questioned and answered by each team and must directly clash with the points raised by their opponent. It means that without different perspectives, it is impossible to develop a discussion. The resources presented in the workshops allowed the students to reflect on the same issue from different positions. This presented the debate with a dynamic discussion. It could also be supported by Vygotsky's theory (1978), in which he exposed that the interaction within sociocultural environments and communication is developed.

The next field notes that we analyzed exposed what happened with the participants' standpoints during the debate and how the environment influenced the debate sessions.

At the moment of arguing they listened to the others and they made agreements in respect to the different points of view and they analyze themselves if their arguments are enough

strong on in this case they made a critical analysis to identify the weaknesses in their partner's arguments". (Sixth semester, Field notes)

The environment of the class was pleasant; they respected each other's opinions, providing students with collaborative skills. This was evident when they accepted differences in opinion, and the students realized the importance of contrasting and comparing evidence and looking for similarities and differences in the arguments. Diversity of experience offers a lot of alternatives and fosters the creation of new self-understanding as they listen to other experiences. It allows the development of individual and collective knowledge to form opinions about the issues presented. (Sixth semester, Field notes)

The data evidenced that the environment presented in the class influenced the development of the debates in a positive way. According to the International Institution of Debate (2013), "the debate offers a good environment to learn how to listen to people while learning, from what they are saying and at the same time give a reasonable response." As we observed, it made the students more confident with their arguments, the ability to make decisions, respect, tolerate, improve their acceptance of different ways of thinking, and create mutual support. It also improved the different perspectives they had towards the issues, which favored their communication and the debate itself. Moreover, there were some activities proposed in the workshops that allowed the students to work in a collaborative way. They demonstrated an active role at the moment of debating and arrived at a general conclusion in relation to the issue discussed.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

In this final chapter, we illustrate the results of this case study in respect to the research question we proposed. In the debate sessions, the students' argumentative competence skills were made apparent. Their arguments were divided into three modes: examples, experiences and opinions. These modes were used as strategies to express their standpoints in relation to educational issues.

Throughout the workshops, the students demonstrated the steps that they followed in order to argue in the debates. They analyzed and interpreted the educational issues from several perspectives, where it was possible to observe the agreements and disagreements that they had in relation to the issues. Revisiting what Freely and Steinberg stated, there are six elements that compose an argument: (a) statements: conclusions, that we hope to pursue with the argument; (b) grounds of foundations: ideas or reasons that support or validate statements; (c) guarantees: proof, or evidence to support the foundation or ground; (d) additional proof: to further support the statement; (e) qualifications: to express the degree of cohesion in a statement; and (f) counter arguments: based on new evidences presented to weaken or destroy the statements presented by the other side. Regarding the theory, the participants' arguments did not accomplish the main characteristics mentioned above. In this sense, their arguments were unsubstantiated because the participants based their arguments on their own opinions and experiences. Sometimes, they did not present enough evidence to make claims.

Finally, we would like to point out that the participants were motivated to participate in the debate exercises. They used their own personal skills, such as communication, decision making, conflict resolution, logical thinking, tolerance, and reasoning, as well as previous

knowledge, life experiences, background, and analysis. Thus, they utilized both communicative and paralinguistic elements in order to construct their own arguments. These elements were the main tools used to understand and interpret issues, which brought them closer to their own contexts.

CHAPTER 7

IMPLICATIONS

In terms of implications, we saw that the students' argumentative process was influenced by their linguistic development, passive and active role in the discussions, individual reflections, degree of awareness of educational issues, relationships between each other, collaborative work, and mutual support. These acted as positive factors, which helped the participants in developing their arguments. We also realized that a learning environment full of comradeship, tolerance and respect facilitates the communication, self-confidence, and active participation of the students. In turn, this favored the debate sessions and strengthened the participants' speaking skills.

The development of the debate sessions allowed us to notice that this is a strategy that helps students organize their thoughts and become confident when speaking. We realized that throughout the debate sessions, the students talked more than before. We became aware of the wealth of diversity individuals provided in terms of how the participants enriched their arguments, listened to others, and became aware of their own way of arguing. This variety provided the sessions with a positive attitude.

When arguing their points of view, it was necessary to assume a position and defend it. According to the International Institution of Debate (2013), the debate offers a good environment to learn how to listen to people while learning. From what someone might be saying, another must provide a reasonable response. It was seen in the workshops that the participants' demonstrated reasoning and open-mindedness when they discussed their own and their partners' opinions. Additionally, the students had to accept the fact that their opinions were not always the right ones. These are qualities that allowed them to listen to others in order to complement and strengthen their own defense. However, not all of their viewpoints were supported by facts,

which meant that the participants expressed their own perceptions when confronting the issue. In this way, the participants talked from their own experiences and opinions, which could be valid arguments because they were based on reality.

Regarding our profession as teachers, we consider that in order to develop all the communicative abilities in language students, it is necessary to frequently implement debates or other strategies that develop argumentative skills. It is important to take into account that teachers should not pressure or force their students to express themselves, nor demand a high level of communication in the target language. This would be counterproductive to the purpose of the activity. Since students will be motivated to participate, they will improve their level of the language on their own. This is achieved when they listen to their partners, look for new words, and study all of the aspects concerning the language in a desire to express and defend their points of view.

Finally, we consider that this study was an enriching experience for us as researchers and teachers. This is because we had the opportunity to observe how the teaching and learning process is developed in environments where the teacher is a guide. We perceived our participants as the professionals that they would become one day, and not just as the people they are now. In other words, we were able to see the participants in their future roles as promoters of critical thinking and argumentative skills. This is because one of the most important objectives of the teaching program is the development of argumentative skills. The teacher's role is meant to be that of an educator, who will guide his or her students and motivate them to awaken their critical thinking skills. As this is not an easy job, it involves practice and a deep understanding of the concept.

This notion allows us to reflect on new ways of improving students' learning. In regard to enhancing argumentative skills, it was interesting to listen to the participants' arguments and

opinions about the topics we had proposed. As researchers and teachers, we consider that the participants represent a new generation of critical thinkers and teachers who will open their students' minds and guide them in solutions for current issues that affect our context.

CHAPTER 8

FURTHER RESEARCH

As researchers, we consider that this case study was focused on students' argumentative competence, which would allow language teachers and educational institutions to reflect on the learning environment. In doing so, they can become more aware of students' attitudes and emotions when arguing because it can also influence the way they argue. On the other hand, argumentation is highly related with discourse skills and students' interactions (Fischer et al., 2002; Astleitner, 2003). These are some of the factors that could be taken into account when improving speaking skills. Projects based on the factors mentioned before would yield aspects that correspond to the difficulties students faces in communicating in a foreign language.

As a suggestion for future researchers and projects, it is important to consider the implementation of new strategies that allow students to interact in different ways, foster their social abilities, and provide them the tools required to strengthen their speaking skill. As Erlenawati (2005) stated, "some students face serious learning difficulties and lack confidence in speaking and taking a proactive role in classrooms." In that sense, another factor that we consider important and useful to teaching are students' difficulties when expressing themselves in a foreign language and the reasons behind these difficulties.

Another aspect that could be addressed in future research could be related to debate sessions. Particularly, it is worth investigating how students argue based on the questions they come up with, and how do they improve and reinforce their argumentative and critical thinking skills. These types of projects could be carried out not only from current issues, but also from other topics and knowledge areas.

Last but not least, another possible project could be related to the self-reflection process. In this process, students would have the possibility of analyzing their own arguments and identifying factors that are relevant in constructing their own arguments. In this way, they can obtain the knowledge needed in improving and finding strategies to surpass their weaknesses.

REFERENCES

- Allen, M. (Ed.). (2017). *The SAGE encyclopedia of communication research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Bandura, A. (1990). Reflections on notability determinants of competence. In R. J. Sternberg & J. Kolligian, Jr. (Eds.), *Competence considered* (pp. 315-362). New Haven, CT: Yale
- Baruch B, Schwarz & Christa S. (2008). *Argumentation and Reasoning*. K.Littleton, C.Wood, & J, Kleine. (Eds.). Retrieved from https://scholars.huji.ac.il/sites/default/files/christaasterhan/files/argumentationreasoning_elsevierhandbook.pdf
- Braaksma, M.A.H., & Rijlaarsdam, G. (1997). Learning to write and read argumentative texts by observation. An explorative study on effective learning activities in observation tasks. Paper presented at the 7th European Conference for Research on Learning and Instruction, Athens, Greece.
- Borgatti, S. (n.d.). *Introduction to grounded theory*. Retrieved from <http://www.analytictech.com/mb870/introtogt.htm>
- Bullock, M., Gelman, R., & Baillergeon, R. (1982). The development of causal reasoning. In W.J. Friedman (Ed.). *The Developmental Psychology of Time* (pp. 209-254). New York: Academic Press.
- Cahill, A. & Bloch-Schulman, S. (2012). Argumentation step-by-step: Learning critical thinking through deliberate practice. *Teaching Philosophy*, 35(1), 41-62. Retrieved from <https://www.unl.edu/philosophy/Pedagogy-Cahill&Bloch-Schulman.pdf>

- Casey, R. (2004). *Implementation of a cultural diversity program in an urban Catholic male high school*. Retrieved from Rowan University Rowan Digital Works Theses and Dissertations. (1125)
- Casey, D. (2004). Choosing an appropriate method of data collection. Issues in Research.(Eds.).Nurse Researcher. Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/d647/fc7c291f0b1921df82b75fe27e68da09670d.pdf>
- Cooper, H. (2006). Duke study: homework helps students succeed in school, as long as there isn't too much. Duke Today. Retrieved from <https://today.duke.edu/2006/03/homework.html>
- Creswell, J. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Drid, T. (2016). The realm of argumentation: Basics and history. *Kasdi Merbah University*, 101-112. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/298353549_The_Realm_of_Argumentation
- Dillenbourg, P. (1999). What do you mean by 'collaborative learning?' In P. Dillenbou (Ed.), *Collaborative-Learning: Cognitive and Computational Approaches* (pp. 1–19). Oxford: Elsevier.
- Dawson, V., & Venville, G. (2008). Teaching strategies for developing students' argumentation skills About socioscientific issues in high school genetics. *Research in Science Education*, 40(2), 133-148.
- Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Duff, A.P. & Anderson, T. (2016). Case study research. In J.D. Brown & C. Coombe (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to research in language teaching and learning* (pp. 112-118). Cambridge, UK: university Printing House.
- Emeren, F. H., & Grootendorst, R. (2006). Developments in argumentation theory. Retrieved from <http://www.dwc.knaw.nl/DL/publications/PU00010570.pdf>
- Emeren F. H., & Houtlosser, P. (2003). The development of the pragma-dialectical approach to argumentation. *Argumentation*, 17, 387-403.
- Emeren, F.H., Grootendorst, R., & Henkemans, F.S. (1996). *Fundamentals of argumentation theory: A handbook of historical backgrounds and contemporary developments*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Epstain, J. (2009). Home and School connections in schools of the future: implications of research on Parent Involvement. *Peabody Journal of education* (Eds.) 62:2, 18-41, DOI: 10.1080/01619568509538471.
- Freely, A. J. & Steinberg, D. L. (2009). *Argumentation and debate critical thinking for reasoned decision making* (12th ed.). Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Freitas, H, Oliveira,M, Jenkins,M, and Pop , Joy O. (1998).The Focus Group, a qualitative research method. ISRC, Merrick School of Business, University of Baltimore, (pp. 22).
- Fukuda, S. (2003). Attitudes toward argumentation in college EFL classes in Japan. *Proceedings of the First Asia TEFL International Conference* (pp. 417-418). Pusan, Korea.
- Fussel, S. (2014). *The verbal communication of emotions*. London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis group.

- Glassner, A. & Schwarz, B. B. (2005). The antilogos ability to evaluate information supporting arguments. *Learning and Instruction*, 15, 353-375.
- Gordon, J. (2016). *Education for personal development and wel-being*. Retrieved from http://www.lll-interestgroup.eu/pdf/LLLIG_report_1_2016.pdf
- Hahn, U & Oaksford M. (2012). Rational Argument. D. Bourget., D. Chalmers. (Eds.), *Normative Theory of Argument Strength*. (pp. 277-285). Researchgate. Philpapers. doi : 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199734689.013.0015 }
- Huang, C. (2018). How culture influences children's development. *The conversation*. Retrieved from <http://theconversation.com/how-culture-influences-childrens-development-99791>
- Hymes, D.H. (1972). On Communicative Competence. In J.B. Pride and J. Holmes (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics: Selected readings* (pp. 269 -293). Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Ioana A.C., Hopârtean A.M. , Hoelscher C. S., Ileş I:A.& Straub S.K. Argumentation and Advocacy, Volume 51, 2015 - Issue 4.
- Klieme, E., Hartig, J., & Rauch, D. (2008). The concept of competence in educational contexts. In J. Hartig, E. Klieme, & D. Leutner (Eds.), *Assessment of competencies in educational contexts* (pp. 3-22). Ashland, OH, US: Hogrefe & Huber Publishers.
- Krieger, D. (2005). Teaching debate to ESL students: A six-class unit. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 11(2). Retrieved from <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Krieger-Debate.html>
- Kuhn, D., & Crowell, A. (2011). Dialogic argumentation as a vehicle for developing young adolescents' thinking. *Psychological Science*, 22(4), 545-552.

Kuhn, D., & Wadiya, U. (2003). The development of argument skills. *Child Development, 74*(5), 1245-1260.

Instituto Colombiano para el fomento de la educación superior (ICFES). (2006). *¿Qué evalúan las pruebas?* Retrieved from <https://www.scribd.com/doc/4093925/Que-Evaluan-las-pruebas-Icfes-a-partir-de-2006>

London Metropolitan University Students' Union. (2014 - 2015). *Building your argument*. Retrieved from https://www.londonmetsu.org.uk/advice/heroes_villains/argument/

Marttunen, M., Laurinena, L., Litosselitib, L., & Lundc, K. (2005). Argumentation skills as prerequisites for collaborative learning among Finnish, French, and English secondary school students. *Educational Research and Evaluation, 11*(4), 365-384, DOI: 10.1080/13803610500110588

Mcleod, S. (2018). Lev Vigotsky. *Simply Psychology*. Retrieved from <https://www.simplypsychology.org/simplypsychology.org-vygotsky.pdf>

Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Myers, W. & Blaire, S. (2017). Should Religion be taught in Public Schools?. *Northern Express*. Retrieved from <https://www.northernexpress.com/news/opinion/should-religion-be-taught-in-public-schools/>

Ministerio de Educación Nacional. (2008). *Propuesta De Lineamientos Para La Formación Por Competencias En Educación Superior*. Retrieved from https://www.mineduacion.gov.co/1621/articles-261332_archivo_pdf_lineamientos.pdf

- Núñez, A., & Téllez, M. F. (2012). *Using debates in the classroom: A pedagogical strategy for the development of the argumentative competence in the teaching of English as a foreign language*. Bogotá, CO: Publicaciones Universidad Externado de Colombia.
- Parcher, J. (1998). *The value of debate: Adapted from the report of the Philodemic Debate Society, Georgetown University*. Retrieved from <http://www.pbcfl.net/curriculum/coaching/60general/gc01.pdf>
- Pascual, R. (1997). La argumentación: Nociones generales. In D. Romero (Ed.), *Propaganda política: Discurso y argumentación* (pp. 41-49). Buenos Aires: Los Libros del Riel.
- Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluative Methods*. Third Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Schwarz, B.B. & Asterhan, C. (2010). Argumentation and reasoning. In K. Littleton, C. Wood, & J. Kleine Staarman (Eds.), *International Handbook of Psychology in Education* (pp. 137-176). Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283437691_Argumentation_and_reasoning
- Smithson, J. (2000). Using and analysing focus groups: limitations and possibilities. Taylor & Francis (Eds.), *Social Research Methodology*. Vol.3, N°. 2 (pp. 103-119) Retrieved from <http://www.sfu.ca/~palys/Smithson-2000-Using&AnalysingFocusGroups.pdf>
- Song, Y., Deane, P., Graf, E. A., van Rijn, P. (2013). *Using Argumentation Learning Progressions to Support Teaching and Assessments of English Language Arts*. Retrieved from https://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/RD_Connections_22.pdf
- Takkaç Tulgar, A. (2016). The role of pragmatic competence in foreign language education. *Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching (TOJELT)*, 1(1), 10–19.

- Toulmin, S. E. (2003). *The uses of argument*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tukey, J. (1977). *Exploratory data analysis*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Tumposky, N. (2004). The debate debate. Dwight, H. (Eds). Heldref publications. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ708690>
- Tello, Y. (2006). Developing pragmatic competence in a foreign language. *Colombian Applied Linguistics*, (8), 169-182.
- Ubaque, D. F., & Pinilla C. F. S. (2016). Argumentation skills: A peer assessment approach to discussions in the EFL classroom. *PROFILE Issues in teachers' Professional Development*, 18(2), 111-123.
- Widdowson, H. G. (1978). *Teaching language as communication*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Weston. A. (2004). *A rulebook for arguments* (3rd ed.). Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.
- Yanklowitz, S. (2017). *Developing cognitive competence: Learning the skills of argument*. Retrieved from https://www.huffingtonpost.com/rabbi-shmuly-yanklowitz/cognitive-competence_b_3764561.html
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Retrieved from <http://www.madeira-edu.pt/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=Fgm4GJWVTRs%3D&tabid=3004>

ANNEXES

APPENDIX 1

Transcription of the Recordings:

“But at the same time we thought that this idea nowadays that we have to understand equality like something that is not possible at the end, I think that if a children make those questions the thing is...teach them that is not bad to be different...like why do you feel offended if someone says you are doing something that a men do... is like if you are thinking that <<oh being that is something bad>>... you have to teach them that is not something bad about your gender”. [sic] (Seventh semester, Second audio track, Second debate session, *Gender stereotypes*)

“We see how the society influence so much in a children... for example, they come to the world..like clear..like pure, with no prejudices”. [sic] (Seventh semester, Second audio track, Second debate session, *Gender stereotypes*)

“Homework sometimes, sometimes not, always is a way to share or to confirm the relationship between the kid and the parents, is a way not, not not only to do the homework, it’s what is behind to do the homework together and to share together”. [sic] (Seventh semester, Fourth audio track, Homework)

“School is school and home is home, the role of the education is at home, but it can really important, it is important to recognize that here in colombia there are not good build up family and not all the children have the opportunity to share with their parents because most of them are working or have a full time work or they don’t stay at home”. [sic] (Seventh semester, Fourth audio track, Homework)

APPENDIX 2**FIELD NOTES FORMAT****“Using Educational Issues Workshops as a Pedagogical Strategy to Explore the
Argumentative Competence in the EFL Classroom”**

Date: _____ Observation No. _____ Time: _____

Place: _____ No. of students: _____

Activities carried out: _____

Description	Reflection

APPENDIX 3
FOCUS GROUP

DATE: 25 DE MAYO 2018

Questions:

1. ¿Creen ustedes que las problemáticas sociales trabajadas en los talleres ayudan a desarrollar sus habilidades argumentativas?
2. ¿Creen que al momento de desarrollar las habilidades argumentativas favorece más analizar las problemáticas trabajadas o temas más generales o superficiales del contexto?
3. ¿Cuáles son los elementos que ustedes tienen en cuenta para construir sus opiniones y argumentos en un debate?
4. ¿Qué dificultades encontraron ustedes al momento de argumentar?
5. ¿Basado en su experiencia con los talleres realizados, qué podría usted haber organizado mejor para darle más fuerza a sus argumentos?
6. ¿Qué tipo de evidencias creen ustedes que utilizaron cuando estaban argumentando?

APPENDIX 4
CONSENT FORM

Tunja, _____

Estimado Estudiante,

Las estudiantes Vanessa Duarte Infante y Sandra Fonseca Velandia del programa de Lenguas Extranjeras de la Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia, se encuentran adelantando el proyecto **“Using Social Issues Workshops as a Pedagogical Strategy to Develop the Argumentative Competence in the EFL Classroom”**, el cual hace parte de un micro proyecto del grupo de investigación **TONGUE**, que tiene como objetivo principal analizar las competencias argumentativas de los estudiantes de séptimo semestre del programa de Idiomas Modernos, con el fin de identificar las características principales de sus argumentos, al momento de debatir; para ello se requiere de un proceso de observación y análisis de los mismos a través de la implementados talleres basados en problemáticas sociales.

Si usted accede a participar voluntariamente en este estudio, se le pedirá ser partícipe de los talleres y debates, además de participar en un focus group, de responder a preguntas o completar una encuesta, según se requiera. Esto tomará aproximadamente 40 minutos de su tiempo. Lo que conversemos durante estas sesiones será grabado, (solamente la voz) de modo que el investigador pueda transcribir después, las ideas que usted haya expresado. Es preciso aclarar que este proyecto no tendrá incidencia alguna en las evaluaciones y notas parciales o finales de ninguna asignatura del plan de estudios del estudiante, se mantendrá la identidad de los participantes en el anonimato y se brindará la posibilidad de conocer los resultados de

La investigación a los formadores que así lo soliciten. En cualquier caso, el estudiante se puede retirar de la investigación cuando lo desee. Apreciaríamos sinceramente su autorización para poder contar con su participación en este proyecto.

Firma del estudiante.

APPENDIX 5**UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA Y TECNOLÓGICA DE COLOMBIA****WORKSHOP**

Student's name: ----- **Date:** -----

TOPIC: Homework is harmful

Before reading:

1. Watch the video and answer the following questions. You can take your own experiences into account.
 - a. How could you define homework?
 - b. Do you think that homework supports the student's learning process?
 - c. Should homework be done at school?

While reading:

2. Work in groups. Read the following article and reflect on for and against arguments that you find in it. You can underline them if you want.

Is homework a good idea or not?**Why is it a good idea?**

While giving homework to pupils in secondary schools is generally seen as a good idea, some don't think that kids in primary schools should have to do it. For the last 100 years or so, experts have been trying to work out if it is beneficial to give homework to kids in primary schools.

In the UK, the government says it's up to the head teacher to decide whether or not their school will set extra work like this. Many think that giving homework to primary school children is an important part of their learning.

They believe it helps them to practice what that they have learnt in lessons, in order to get better at things like spelling and handwriting.

They say it helps to teach children how to work on their own and be disciplined with themselves - both skills that are useful later in life.

It can also allow parents or guardians to get involved in their children's learning.

Chris told Newsround: "If you like learning, homework helps to support your learning. It's really important to go back afterwards and think about what you're learning in class. Practice makes perfect."

Why is it not a good idea?

Some people think that giving homework to children at primary school is not necessary.

They think it puts too much pressure on them and that the time spent doing homework could be used to do other activities.

"The trouble with homework is that it gets in the way of all of those good things that you could be doing and it doesn't necessarily help you with your school work."

Sometimes parents or guardians try to help with homework and, if they have been taught differently, it can end up being confusing for the child doing the homework. They can also end up doing too much of the work themselves!

"Teachers set homework for you to get better at your learning - that seems like a really good reason. But actually, the evidence isn't clear that even that's true."

Another expert Rosamond McNeil, from a teachers' organization called the NUT, said: "Pupils in Finland are assigned very little homework yet they remain one of the most educationally successful countries in the world."

from: BBC NewsRound

After reading:

3. Take into consideration the following words for the next task.

Homework

Skills

Stress

Discipline

Extra work

Pressure

Activities

Children

Unnecessary

Confusing

Learning

Teacher

Primary School

Practice

Parents

Support

According to the information that you gathered, build your own for or against argument related to homework.

Let's Debate:

...A Systems of Equations Activity to get
Students to Analyze Methods

5. Now you have your own arguments in mind, express them in a debate session.

Remember that all the arguments have an important value, so be respectful at the moment of arguing.

After having exposed your arguments and listened to your partners, think the following question over: How could you change the traditional homework concept at school if you were a teacher?



These are the five parts of an argument: claim, reasons, evidence, warrant, acknowledgement and response

An argument of authority is a form of defeasible argument in which a claimed authority's support is used as evidence for an argument's conclusion. It is well known as a fallacy, though it is used in a cogent form when all sides of a discussion agree on the reliability of the authority in the given context.

What is a claim?	What your argument is based off of and a statement that readers do not already accept and will not accept without good reason.
What are reasons?	Supports your claim and its statements that give readers a basis for accepting your claim.
What is evidence?	Statements that support your reasons and it is statements, numbers, photographs, and other representations of states of affairs that your readers expect without question, at least for the purposes of an argument
What is a warrant?	The general principle usually drawn from background knowledge shared by you and your reader that connects your reasons to your claim.
What is it acknowledgement and response?	When the reader has counterclaims you must acknowledge the readers' skepticism and respond to it.

Note. Information taken from Quizlet (2018). *The five parts of the argument*. Retrieved from <https://quizlet.com/65870528/the-5-parts-of-an-argument-flash-cards>

APPENDIX 6**Example Field Notes****“Using Educational Issues Workshops as a Pedagogical Strategy to Explore the Argumentative Competence in the EFL Classroom”**

Date: _____ Observation No. _____ Time: _____

Place: _____ No. of students: _____

Activities carried out: _____

Description	Reflection

APPENDIX 7

Focus Group Answer

¿Cuáles son los elementos que ustedes tienen en cuenta para construir sus opiniones y argumentos en un debate?

Además de las experiencias que de pronto hemos tenido, uno también se basa en diversos autores y diversas personas que tengan una posición similar a la que uno tiene, entonces uno no solo es, ¡ah no! Pues yo he vivido esto y lo pienso de esta manera, uno también tiene que ver las otras posiciones y las experiencias o las percepciones de otras personas para complementar su argumento, a mi me parecería conveniente buscar también otras referencias para consolidar más mis argumentos » (sixth semester, focus group)