

Analyzing the Incidence of the Contextual Teaching and Learning Approach of English regarding the Writing and Speaking Skills in 11th grade Students from a Public School and A1 level students in a language center in Colombia.

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Abstract

This paper represents action research that explored the implementation of a pedagogical intervention using CTL to improve students' production skills in 11th grade students of a public school and A1 language center students. The primary focus of this approach includes linking to practical scenarios, proactive learning, introspection, teamwork, genuine evaluation, and ongoing enhancement. These foster an engaged, significant, and learner-focused educational setting that encourages students to comprehend their own learning journey and enables them to relate it to real-world circumstances. This qualitative action research study was carried out in two different contexts: a school and a language center. Data were gathered through field notes (observations), questionnaires and pre- / post-intervention spoken-written artifacts. The results indicated that the implementation of CTL improves students' production skills by showing good performance and achievement of criteria set for the tasks proposed. Moreover, it was found that CTL fosters students' learning process as it increases their engagement in the English lessons and promotes collaborative work; this creates a safe environment where students are eager to learn and actively participate.

Keywords: *Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL), speaking and writing skills, engagement, improvement.*

Resumen

Este documento representa una investigación acción que exploró la implementación de una intervención pedagógica utilizando CTL para mejorar las habilidades de producción de los estudiantes de 11° grado de una escuela pública y estudiantes del centro de idiomas A1. El enfoque principal de este enfoque incluye la vinculación con escenarios prácticos, el aprendizaje proactivo, la introspección, el trabajo en equipo, la evaluación genuina y la mejora continua. Estos fomentan un entorno educativo comprometido, significativo y centrado en el estudiante que anima a los alumnos a comprender su propio proceso de aprendizaje y les permite relacionarlo con circunstancias del mundo real. Este estudio de investigación-acción cualitativa se llevó a cabo en dos contextos diferentes: una escuela y un centro de idiomas. Los datos se recopilaban a través de notas de campo (observaciones), cuestionarios y artefactos hablados y escritos pre/postintervención. Los resultados indicaron que la implementación de CTL mejora las habilidades de producción de los estudiantes al mostrar un buen desempeño y lograr los criterios establecidos para las tareas propuestas. Además, se encontró que CTL fomenta el proceso de aprendizaje de los estudiantes al aumentar su participación en las clases de inglés y promover el trabajo colaborativo; esto crea un ambiente seguro donde los estudiantes están ansiosos por aprender y participar activamente.

Palabras clave: *Enseñanza y Aprendizaje Contextualizado (CTL), habilidades de expresión oral y escrita, mejoramiento y compromiso.*

Introduction

According to Graham (2018), writers use writing skills to learn new ideas, persuade others, record information, create imaginary worlds, express feelings, heal psychological wounds, chronicle experiences, and explore the meaning of events and situations. Through class observations in different settings, it is evident that students are not immersed in a real context when in contact with a foreign language, they usually do not feel motivated to learn the English language even if they are exposed all the time to learning it; the situation is even more complicated when they are asked to share written and spoken ideas about specific topics in class because the English language is shown in a separate way.

According to Kellogg and van de Ven (2020), students' writing motivations can be influenced by various factors, such as their personal interests, the expectations of their teachers, and their perceived ability to succeed in writing tasks. The authors also note that students may be motivated to write and speak by a desire for self-expression, to communicate with others, or to achieve personal or academic goals. When students read and analyze short descriptions about someone's family member, neighborhood, and themselves, they feel motivated to tell their own stories using their mother tongue instead of the second language; this is due to the lack of vocabulary and ability to use the grammar topics learned in class to talk or write about familiar topics.

As a fundamental principle of education, one of the primary general objectives is to broaden logical and analytical thinking to interpret and solve scientific, technological, and daily problems. Education not only needs students to know by heart a particular sort of information we usually find on the internet or new sources in five seconds or more.

Otherwise, education in general attempts to keep students in a place they enjoy what they are doing understanding and reflecting upon their role in society and family; based on this it is found a reason to foster this research, the importance of writing and speaking as parts of an integrated children education in order to allow students the chance to communicate their needs and desires while comprehend themselves by learning school and life subjects and finding pleasure in learning, not only for the school time but the rest of their lives.

In this way, the main interest in this project is the use of contextualization or Contextual Teaching and Learning approach (CTL) and the effect of The Writing Process and Speaking Tasks on eleventh graders from a public school on its way to becoming a bilingual institution in Medellín and young - adult students from a well-known language center in Bogotá. As Berns and Erickson (2001) mentioned and later on Fadillah et al (2017) revisited, the main principles of CTL approach are the connection to real-world contexts, active learning, reflection, collaboration, authentic assessment, and continuous improvement. All of these principles work together to have engaged, meaningful, and student-centered learning environments that promote students' understanding of their own learning process and let them be able to make connections with real-life situations.

Considering the arguments above, where we explained that this study rooted in the works of Graham (2018) and Kellogg and Van de Ven (2020), underscores the integral role of writing in learning and expression and that through our observations we identified a significant disconnect for students interacting with English as a foreign language, often lacking motivation due to its decontextualized presentation, the core of the research

revolves around the (CTL) and its potential influence on eleventh graders in a transitioning bilingual school in Medellín and adult learners in a language center in Bogotá. This research study aims to answer the following question: How does the strategy of using the Contextual Teaching and Learning Approach improve the writing and speaking skills in students' English learning process?

Being the general objective:

To establish the incidence of the contextual teaching and learning approach on enhancing L2 learners' writing and speaking skills.

And the steps that will be followed to achieve that are:

1. To identify the L2 learners' proficiency in regard to their writing and speaking skills.
2. To assess the acceptance of the implementation of a contextual-based pedagogical intervention
3. To analyze the influence of the CTL on the development of L2 writing and speaking skills.

1. Literature Review

As an attempt to provide the reader with a complete background leading to the understanding of terms and focus given in this study, it is mandatory to define the main concepts that are set and co-related, as well as directly connected to foreign language teaching and learning. These concepts are The Contextual Teaching and Learning Approach (CTL), The Writing Process, and the Speaking skill.

Contextual Teaching and Learning (Contextualization)

Based on the observations we have done and considering our own experience as students, we decided, after a careful exploration, to work with Contextual Teaching and Learning. CTL or Contextualization, helped us guide students to learn from the real situation or lesson context. Johnson (2002) defined CTL as an approach whose main objective is to make students aware of the relevance of the academic subjects with the context of their daily lives. The CTL approach has gained attention in the field of education due to its potential to enhance various language skills, including writing and speaking abilities. Dewi and Suarni (2021) conducted a study that investigated the effect of CTL on EFL writing ability. Their findings suggested that CTL positively influenced students' writing skills by providing meaningful contexts and engaging them in authentic writing tasks. This supports the idea that integrating contextual elements in the writing process can lead to improved outcomes.

In the field of second language writing, Rilling and Ortmeier-Hooper (2015) explored the social dimension of second language writing. Although their study did not

specifically focus on CTL, it emphasized the importance of creating a sociocultural context that promotes interaction and collaboration among learners. This aligns with the principles of CTL, which focus attention on connecting learning to real-world contexts and fostering active participation. As explained before, our project aims to establish a strong connection between the sociocultural context of our students with the teaching and learning process they must improve their writing and speaking ability.

When it comes to speaking ability, Zarandi and Rahbar (2016) investigated the enhancement of speaking skills through intervening scaffolding strategies. Their study highlighted the significance of scaffolding, which is a key element of the CTL approach. Scaffolding involves providing support and guidance to learners as they engage in challenging tasks. The findings indicated that scaffolding strategies positively influenced students' speaking abilities, suggesting that incorporating similar strategies within a CTL framework could be beneficial. Additionally, another relevant construct in our project is the writing process, in which nature provides students with a scaffolded method to improve their writing skills. Furthermore, Wulandari et al. (2020) developed English-speaking materials based on the CTL approach for junior high school students. Their study focused on the design and implementation of speaking tasks that incorporated real-life contexts and encouraged student engagement. The results demonstrated the effectiveness of the CTL approach in enhancing students' speaking skills.

After navigating through the different studies, we mentioned above, and their results, we identified that the Contextual Teaching and Learning approach has shown promising results in improving writing and speaking competencies. By integrating

meaningful contexts, sociocultural interactions, scaffolding, and engaging tasks, CTL provides a framework that promotes active learning and facilitates language skill development, which is totally related to our main objective.

The Writing Process

The writing process is integral to language learning and development, thereby it is the second main construct of this research. This, after being in contact with several studies, and examining various factors related to the writing process and its influence on students' attitudes, self-efficacy, and performance. These identified skills are not only the focal point for enhancement during the application of the project but are also intended to be sustainable, fostering continued development in students beyond the duration of the project.

One of the instruments we have already described in our introduction is the use of questionnaires, where we gathered students' opinions about their writing exercises and where we identified the possible issues students were facing. Gadd et al. (2019) conducted a survey to explore students' attitudes toward writing and self-efficacy as writers. The findings highlighted the importance of students' attitudes and beliefs in shaping their writing experiences. Positive attitudes and self-efficacy were associated with higher levels of engagement and better writing outcomes.

In a systematic review of writing attitudes, Ekholm et al. (2018) aimed to clarify this construct. They identified various factors that influence students' attitudes toward writing, including teacher feedback, self-regulation, and social support. The study emphasized the need to understand and address students' attitudes to foster a positive writing environment. On the other hand, Rilling and Ortmeier-Hooper (2015) explored the social dimension of

second-language writing. Their work emphasized the importance of creating a supportive and collaborative writing community, where students can engage in social interactions and receive constructive feedback. The social dimension contributes to the development of writing skills and enhances students' motivation and engagement.

Based on these studies, we have a positive and enthusiastic position about the impact of CTL in the writing process and how both approaches could improve writing composition teaching and learning. Guapacha Chamorro and Chaves Varón (2023) conducted a qualitative research synthesis on EFL writing studies in Colombia between 1990 and 2020. Their study shed light on the contextual factors influencing writing instruction in the Colombian context. Understanding the historical and cultural perspectives can provide insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with the writing process in a specific educational context.

Graham (2018) proposed a revised writer(s)-the within-community model of writing, highlighting the interconnectedness between individual writers and their writing communities. The model emphasizes the importance of social support, collaboration, and feedback in the writing process. Creating a supportive writing community can foster growth and improvement in writing skills.

Kellogg and van de Ven (2020) introduced the psychology of writing, examining cognitive processes, motivation, and individual differences in writing. Understanding the psychological aspects of writing can inform instructional practices and interventions to support students' writing development.

De Smedt et al. (2018) investigated the cognitive and motivational challenges in writing across students' gender and achievement levels. The study highlighted the relationship between cognitive factors, such as working memory and planning, and students' writing performance. Motivational factors, including self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation, were also found to play a significant role in students' writing outcomes.

Therefore, the characteristics of the curriculum that are consistent in the description of human learning. In this case the communicative actions or processes performed in specific contexts by people who use their knowledge in their daily or professional life when acting as learners or as experts for life purposes. For this reason, the curriculum just indicates starting points for work on specific communicative performances, but not ending points. After a communicative performance and its associated language are introduced, they appear and re-appear repeatedly in different contexts. As a result, the same or very similar performances also appear in different grades, to be done in increasingly complex ways according to the age of the students and their accumulated language repertoire, which is maintained in permanent use also, Spanish, and English teachers have to work together in planning and design instruction. Starting from the students' interests with innovative activities that they can practice with writing and speaking on informal activities, that experience is the most important part to students practice all the things to learn in a natural conversation.

Engaging students in communicative activities places a strong emphasis on using language in authentic, real-life situations. This not only helps learners develop their speaking skills but also enhances overall language proficiency. Through interactive

communication, students are exposed to diverse vocabulary, expressions, and linguistic nuances that contribute to a more comprehensive language acquisition. According to García Sierra (2016), all of the above implies promoting transformations in the same structures and institutions of the state and socially; with this we mean to say that it is an art to learn another language, understand its entire culture and be a participant in it, thus initiating a stage of new terms and knowing each accentuation, to support all the work that is reinforced with the series of vocabulary that is proposed to initiate a first approach to a second language.

Speaking

Being bilingual has lately become one of the cornerstones of this globalized world. In this sense, it is commonly known that a master in speaking skills is the most popular sign of proficient bilinguals. A lot of studies have been carried out on the importance of communication, specifically using speaking production skills. In a study carried out by Royani et al. (2023) revisit the influential article written by Kayi (2006), where it was noticed that ESL teachers give great importance to interactive activities where students can use language structures in order to communicate in real-life situations.

Moreover, the environment where these activities took place plays an important role, since it makes the setting suitable for the development of authentic activities and considering collaborative work.

In addition, the study on strategies used to work on the communicative approach is essential. It was found that EFL learners' overall speaking ability was significantly improved after they had been trained to use scaffolding strategies. The present study filled a

gap in the effectiveness of two instructional strategies of scaffolding in speaking. This interactive pedagogy allows EFL learners to practice and engage language forms within a more communicative setting. To sum up, interactive and intervening strategies of scaffolding are identified as the major vehicles to help EFL learners enhance their speaking ability (Zarandi & Rahbar, 2016). Likewise, in another research conducted by Derakhshan et al., (2016), the objective was mainly to find out accurate strategies to develop student's accuracy and fluency when communicating in a second language. This research states the vital role of the teacher in the selection of activities and the establishment of an environment suitable for children and adults to carry out communicative tasks and do so outside the classroom in real contexts. Optimizing classroom time with appropriate learning activities can be a better choice. Practical activities such as dialogue, surveys, picture descriptions, picture differences, role plays, story completion, and storytelling can be fun and formative to promote students' speaking skills. It is the teacher's authority to decide which activity to perform based on students' language proficiency level, learning goals, and resource availability, so the chosen activity is useful. In the study carried out by Suban (2021), it is clear that to improve and promote speaking skills, the teacher has to do a thorough analysis in order to choose adequate activities for the target population. The activities must match the learning goals that are mainly communicative and related to their real-life situations.

Oral production helps learners develop effective communication skills. Language is not just about memorizing vocabulary and grammar rules; it's about using language to

convey ideas, express thoughts, and interact with others. Oral production enhances speaking and writing skills, vital for real-life communication.

In question, and of all the structures of English, morphology is the most studied. Which allows you to always have a direct connection with writing and other skills. The extensive research tradition, global dominance, educational importance, and practical implications of the study of English make it a focal point for investigating the Natural Order Hypothesis, especially with regard to morphological structures and their connection to writing and other linguistic skills, which allows us to work indirectly or directly and generally have a positive result in the student's learning.

2. Research Design

In this chapter, the research design that will guide this project will be presented, which is divided into three main components: first, the methodological approach, then, the participants, and finally, the instruments for data collection.

Method

This project arises from the observation of a problem and the idea of developing a pedagogical strategy that can contribute to its improvement, the methodology is guided by action research, which is a step-by-step process to improve the teaching and learning of different contexts, allowing the implementation of strategies that allow researchers to integrate reflections and actions for analysis into practical research experiences. “The first use of this term begins with Kurt Lewis, a psychologist and educator who embraced the idea that research can be given in conjunction with the action necessary to solve a specific

problem, given from the observation of the context” (McFarland & Stansell, 1993, p. 14).

Lewis developed this idea in his study in 1940 and defined it as a cycle where the results of practice are observed, acted upon, and evaluated.

Likewise, this methodology has been presented as a strategy to explore and understand educational problems so that it can be measurable to develop a strategy that can contribute to change the situation in the investigated contexts. According to Kemmis and MacTaggart, (1992) this strategy is given from the practical action and observation, the purpose that looks for the improvement of the practice throughout the understanding and transformation of it, as well as the participation of the subjects to build and coordinate the stages of the research, bearing in mind that this process would imply the use of a critical analysis of the situations that are being observed in the context.

Action research offers to create knowledge related to different concepts, ideas, or topics, allowing educators to learn through their actions with the purpose of developing educational skills. Due to this, the process of action research provides many models that help to recognize the stages or cycles of action research based on educational change.

Language center:

The language center has 3 branches, located in the city of Bogota, each one offers a spacious area of 2 floors and many classrooms to offer excellent service. The location to the 3 branches it's distributed in the north, south and oriental of the city. It has 2 types of programs for adults, teenagers, and children. These are divided by the time intensity in which one wants to take the course, considering the different levels from A1 to C1. Where digital resources are enabled, such as platforms, online teaching materials, libraries, and

various materials that contribute to learning. The language center offers different study modalities, face to face and virtual, allowing reception at different economic levels and accessibility from anywhere. The infrastructure is in optimal conditions, providing pleasant, clean, organized spaces to provide an adequate learning environment at each branch. The mission corresponds to create opportunities for the community through teaching in the English language, to fulfil their dreams and contribute to the development of the country, through processes that encourage academic and cultural exchange, a bilingual library and services that guarantee continuous learning in English, with a trained human team and committed that generates value in each of its actions.

School:

The second institution is situated in Medellín and operates as a public school. It consists of three buildings. The campus features courtyards, libraries, ICT classrooms, labs, and auditoriums. However, the school's infrastructure has seen deterioration due to moisture-related issues, and a significant part of the computers in the ICT rooms are currently non-functional. Located in an area with low socioeconomic status (2) and highly affected by the violence in the past, the school is in proximity to popular tourist destinations and key sites within the neighborhood that are looking forward to overcoming the adversities experienced by the community. The main intention of the Institutional Educational Project at I.E La Independencia, considering its social pedagogical model, seeks not to develop a higher degree of quality in education, but to make it a deeply inclusive, continuous, and community part way of education that allows for the development of something new and never achieved by everyone.

Participants:

In this study, eight students were randomly selected for detailed observation, analysis, and description of their feelings, thoughts, and ideas regarding their immediate context. Qualitative research, focusing on a smaller group, allows for a deeper exploration of individual experiences, providing richer insights often overlooked in larger samples. This approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of each student's context in the classroom, grounding the research in genuine student experiences. The selected students, both boys and girls aged 14 to 16, are beginners in the English language, progressing at a measured pace. Lightbown and Spada (2013) stress the importance of a paced approach in second language acquisition, aligning with our observations of language intricacies at this age and proficiency level.

A second sample group, consisting of eight students aged 15 to 18, also comes into focus. Despite being beginners in English, this group demonstrates intrinsic motivation, holding steady enthusiasm despite facing non-linear language acquisition progression. Dörnyei (2005) suggests that such motivation significantly influences language learning outcomes, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and supporting this excitement in learning.

Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

The main instruments to collect data were selected and applied: field notes, questionnaires, and written texts and recordings (artifacts).

Field notes

The field journal is a tool used by researchers to document what occurs during an investigation. Recording observations and different impressions provides researchers with the ability to think and analyze the results. This documental process provides the opportunity for the investigator to understand the physical and social contexts of different groups. According to Bonilla and Rodriguez (1997, as cited in Martínez, 2007), "the field diary should allow the researcher a permanent monitoring of the observation process. It can be especially useful [...] to the researcher, who takes note of aspects that he considers important to organize, analyze and interpret the information he is collecting" (p.77).

In this project, all observations were written in a descriptive way about the behaviors, attitudes, and disposition of each student regarding each intervention, also keeping in mind the students' environment. you write them as notes and details of time, date, activities, settings, observations, behavior, and conversations in the field. According to Schwandt (2015), descriptive information is your "attempt to accurately document factual data, e.g., date and time, and the settings, actions, behaviors, and conversations that you observe". In addition, this instrument is crucial given that it allows us to acquire extra detailed information regarding students' perceptions of their lessons, activities developed, skills improvement, and assessment procedures. Regarding the validity of field notes as an instrument, (Hinds et al., 1997, as cited in Phillippi and Lauderdale, 2018) asserted that "field notes contextualize the study and provide perspective on participants' lives that can be useful when looking at the data in the future or examining perceptions across time" (p. 383). We used field notes in every English class, jotting down what we saw immediately.

We used this tool by means of a chart, which had three cells describing the principal aspects we were going to focus on the sessions. The aspects chosen to design the instruments were: Class description which is an illustration of the activities carried out during the session; Observer insights which are the observations the researchers make regarding what is happening during the implementation of the strategies in the class; and finally, the Task description with the criteria which is the report of the parameters that students are required to take into account when carrying out their spoken or written tasks.

Questionnaires

Another instrument used was a questionnaire. Brown (2001) indicates that “Questionnaires are any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers.” This is a valuable tool for qualitative research because it offers a variety of answers from the target sample regarding the subject of research. The questionnaires used in this research have a set of open-ended questions that enrich the process of data collection, since it aims to get to know students' opinions on the strategy applied. Dornyei (2022) revisits Brown’s study and affirms that questionnaires can provide a wide range of data on people’s opinions, attitudes, and beliefs; this allows for an in-depth exploration of individual experiences and perspectives, enabling researchers to gain detailed insights from the participants. At the end of each main topic (About me, My Family, My Neighborhood), we conducted a questionnaire. The general dynamic in every questionnaire was the following: the students were gathered in the library of the school or

language center. In this place, we provided the format with some questions in order to have a deep understanding of their perceptions.

Written texts and recordings

Written texts and recordings are the evidence of the student's work. According to Gee, (2014), tools for analyzing language, including tangible and digital artifacts, play a significant role in discourse analysis, emphasizing the systematic examination of language in use, advocating for portfolio assessments to capture holistic views of student capabilities. In this case, the saved works were writings that the students did in every class because they showed in the texts their writing process. In every class, we collected the students' work that was done according to the topics seen in the instruments mentioned above. Then, thanks to it, we could follow the students' process to explore their ideas of context.

Based on the detailed research design provided, we want to summarize that the study aims to investigate the students' ability to communicate effectively in context by examining sentence lengths in their written and spoken tasks. The study delves into the students' attitudes, ideas, thoughts, feelings, and expressions when they contextualize a topic in the class through theme-based activities. This exploration hopes to contribute to understanding the writing and speaking skills processes of the students in their classroom setting.

Table 1*Data collection instruments*

General Objective	Specific objectives	Application	Techniques	Instruments
To establish the incidence of the contextual teaching and learning approach on enhancing L2 learners' writing and speaking skills.	To identify the L2 learners' proficiency in regard to their writing and speaking skills.	Used in every English class, with notes taken immediately based on observations. Organized through a chart detailing learners' characteristics.	Observation	Field Notes
	To assess the acceptance of the implementation of a contextual-based pedagogical intervention.	Conducted at the end of each main topic (My Family, My Neighborhood) informally. The questionnaires involve predetermined questions, but with the flexibility to adjust and explore additional topics based on the participant's input.	Survey	Questionnaire
To analyze the influence of the CTL on the development of L2 writing and speaking skills.		Collection of student works done in each class, focusing on writings, and speaking that showcase their evolving ideas of context and their progression in writing and speaking skills.	Observation	Written Texts and Recordings (Artifacts)

Source: Researcher's design

3. Pedagogical Intervention

Looking for a way of exploring students' language learning, researchers and teachers have exposed different ideas of what language implies. Authors such as Gee, (2014), define language from a social perspective, and that entails that the learning of a language establishes the existence of a social interaction, and depending on that, its use is allowed.

Instructional Design

Teacher's and Student's Role

Willis (2011) carried out a study with TBLT whose definition and methodology is a base to our research project; These aspects involve employing Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) to encourage language use, enhance integrated skills, monitor learning progress, and develop interaction skills. Taking this into consideration, we decided to follow three three-stage process by Willis (2011) for this pedagogical Intervention.

First stage: Pre-task

Teacher's role: Introduces and defines the topic, uses activities to help students learn useful words and phrases, ensures students understand task instructions, models the activity.

Student's role: Notes down useful words and phrases from pre-task activity.

Second stage: Task cycle

Teacher's role: Monitors and encourages students, ensures the purpose of the task is clear, acts as a language adviser, helps students organize written reports and oral performances, ensures students, assesses artifacts, and gives feedback.

Student's role: Starts the task, and drafts a written version for the class.

Third stage: Language Focus

Teacher's role: Bring other useful words, phrases, and patterns to students, and conduct practice activities to build confidence.

Student's role: Practice words, phrases, and patterns, and enter useful language items in their tasks.

The general process to get students involved in writing was structured as a common pattern in the writing process:

Brainstorming: At this step, students listed all the information they wanted to share through their composition. They also decided on the order of these ideas.

Drafting: At this step, students write freely, they consider the sequence of events by including a clear beginning, middle and end to the topic.

Revising: At this stage, there was a teacher intervention. The teacher was in charge of revising the first draft with the students and giving them feedback, in that way, they would be ready to edit and improve their draft.

Editing: At this step, the teacher monitored students to focus their attention on capitalization, punctuation, correct spelling and subject-verb agreement. Then they rewrite the text, applying the changes suggested.

Publishing: For our project, publishing means sharing the final product with the class.

The main idea of this instructional design was to know in which way the students' writing and speaking could evidence their ideas. It was done using guided activities by the teacher during the class development. Three main topics were proposed: About me, My family, and My neighborhood. These topics were chosen to involve the students in contexts

where they were direct participants. In this way, we observed what they felt when expressing what happened in their real life. Therefore, some activities, workshops, and visual aids were implemented for the students to create the context into the classroom.

The student's process was observed and assessed, it means, the evolution of the writing and speaking abilities that the students were carrying out through the classes was tracked. The development of the class activities to get to the final product was also followed.

Along this short scale project, the students will develop some different writing and speaking tasks about their personal information, their families, and their neighborhood.

Instructional Objectives

Through this pedagogical intervention, we wanted to propose a series of tasks that motivated students to develop their EFL writing and speaking skills. For that reason, we established a set of goals that students are expected to achieve at the end of the intervention:

- To foster students' writing and speaking through the development of meaningful learning.
- To provide students with new vocabulary based on three principal topics: About me, My family, My neighborhood.
- To encourage students to express their ideas about their context.
- To promote meaningful learning through contextualized written and spoken activities in class.
- To promote writing and speaking through tasks.

**Table 2***About me***ABOUT ME**

Topic	Grammar & Vocabulary	Tasks	Functions	Skills
My personal Information	Verb to be and personal information.	1. About me.	Saying hello and giving personal information.	Writing: Write down about personal information. Speaking: Introduce yourself.
My Family	Family members Adjectives of personality Adjectives of physical appearance. Verb to be Present Simple	2. My Family. 3. What's your ____ like?	Introducing family members. Describing people's personality. Describing people's physical appearance.	Writing/Speaking: Write down the vocabulary of the family in a family tree. Describe your family members, their appearance, and personalities.

My Neighborhood	Vocabulary of places in the city. Location expressions. There is and There are. Can and Can't.	5. This is my Neighborhood. 6. My ideal neighborhood.	Describing my neighborhood. Talking about different activities we can do in my neighborhood. Designing my ideal place to live.	Writing/Speaking: Write down a description of the place where you live. Make suggestions about activities in your neighborhood. Describe your ideal neighborhood.
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Source: Researchers' design

Description of the Lessons

The first step was vocabulary brainstorming. It was made to inquire and to make students aware of the new vocabulary by listing new words on the board. Then a vocabulary activity was carried out to create new concepts with the new vocabulary. When students were done with these two steps, they continued with the task.

Additionally, the CTL strategies (REACT) were part of the process in order to involve the use of the chosen approach along the sessions. In table 3, there are some examples of activities implemented throughout our pedagogical intervention:

Table 3*CTL Strategies*

CTL Strategies	Examples of activities applied along the intervention
Relating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher proposes activities where students connect the target vocabulary with their previous knowledge: online games, brainstorming and think-pair-share are some of the activities applied.
Experiencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are encouraged to connect the target vocabulary (family members) with their context; for example, who they live with. • Students explore texts where they can extract useful vocabulary and even identify grammar structures that will be useful in later stages of the task.
Applying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students use the target language to carry out practice activities such as having a role play getting to know personal information about each other. • The teacher provides a model of the expected outcome (text) using the language studied in the neighborhood lessons. Students read the model and identify vocabulary, grammar and useful expressions for their further practice.
Cooperating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students work in pairs or groups to participate in a trivia quiz game. In this game they will have to complete sentences with the target vocabulary of places or activities that can be carried out in their neighborhoods. • Students will work in a collaborative activity where they have to describe their classmates' personality traits in a piece of paper. The papers will be randomly switched. Each student



will write a sentence entry in the paper they are assigned.

The teacher monitors and guides students while carrying out the activity and then encourages them to read the comments received out loud.

Transferring

- The final task is presented; students have to write a text describing their ideal neighborhood. Students are encouraged to use the target language and expressions used along the sessions.
- Feedback is provided by the teacher to the groups that need it during their writing process steps.

Source: Researchers' design

The strategies described above were applied in the sessions designed for the project ([Lesson plans](#)), in here there is the example of the plan carried out on the session in

Microcycle 2 My Family:

My Family:

Warm up: Students will review the personality traits vocabulary in an unscramble exercise with letters cards. Students will see a picture depicting a personality trait and by groups they organize the word using the letters provided by the teacher. (Relating)

Pre-task: The students will be presented a video to review the structures to talk about personality traits (Verb to be) on the board. They will give examples describing some teacher's personality traits (Experiencing). The examples will be written on the board and feedback will be given if necessary (Applying). To put the target language in practice, students will participate in a collaborative exercise where they will write their perceptions

on their classmates' personality traits. The language elicited will be: _____ is outgoing or I think _____ is outgoing. This activity will be carried out in pieces of papers with the students' names and the papers will be switched so different people could write their perceptions on different classmates. (Cooperating)

Task: The students will be presented with the task of the session where they have to share who they live with and the outstanding personality traits of one of those members. Students will be encouraged to use the target vocabulary and structures to share their ideas. They will organize their speeches and feedback will be provided by the teacher. (Transferring). There will be a focus on pronunciation moments in the session to review pronunciation on words students have been showing struggle: live, outgoing, lazy, kind.

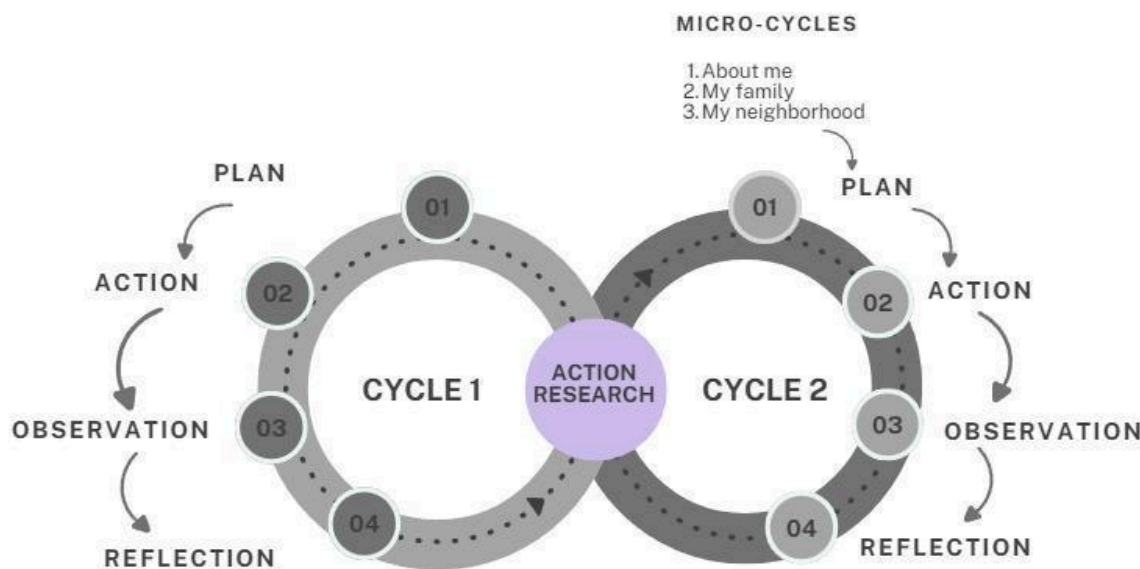
Final product: Students will record their audios using the target vocabulary and structures. They will share their recordings with their classmates and teacher and receive feedback from them. They will have the opportunity to record one more time if they want to improve their final product.

Action Research

This research was guided by two main cycles, which were given based on the time of observation and application of the intervention in the language center - school and the proposed topics that were distributed in the design of the pedagogical intervention. The phases that will support this action research will follow the following order: Plan, Action, Observation and Reflection.

Figure 1

Action Research Cycles



Source: Researcher's design

Cycle 1°

Plan

In the first step, the plan is developed to fulfill the specified objective for this research cycle: To identify the L2 learners' proficiency in regard to their writing and speaking skills, a questionnaire and the observation of a diagnostic session are proposed as the instrument for data collection. The preliminary questionnaire and diagnostic session are administered to learners in both participating contexts. The main purpose of these is to make an initial diagnosis of the students' level of competence in writing and speaking skills. The selected questions aim to provide information about students' perceptions of their English classes, their preferences and what are the activities which represent a challenge or are not interesting for them. The questions proposed to collect this data are the following:

- ¿Qué piensas de tus clases de inglés?

- ¿Cómo es una clase de inglés en tu salón?
- ¿Cuáles son tus actividades favoritas y menos favoritas?
- Teniendo en cuenta las 4 habilidades: Habla, escritura, escucha y lectura, ¿En cuales presentan más dificultad para realizar las tareas?

The information gathered through the preliminary questionnaire and the experience of the teacher researchers will be used as a basis for the further development of the project. Specifically, this information will be crucial for the analysis of the knowledge acquired by the students throughout the project. This analysis will evaluate the influence of the activities developed during the project on the students' knowledge and written and oral skills.

Action

This step was based on the observed situation, following the outlined plan and ensuring that it was fully developed in accordance with the guidelines that contribute to enriching information for the project.

During this phase, the diagnostic questionnaire was implemented, distributed to all students, and sufficient time was provided for completion to facilitate comprehensive responses. It was imperative to create a supportive environment where students felt comfortable expressing their thoughts candidly. Open communication channels were established to encourage students to share their perceptions of their English learning experience, preferences, and challenges.

Observation

In accordance with the outlined plan, the initial step of this research cycle involved the development of a questionnaire to achieve the specified objective. The selected questions aimed to gather insights into students' perceptions of their English classes, their preferences, and the activities that they find challenging or uninteresting. The questions were designed to elicit comprehensive responses regarding various aspects of their learning experience, including their thoughts on class dynamics, favorite and least favorite activities, and areas of difficulty in language skills. The diagnostic session was also developed. Students engaged in the activities and participated in the proposed activities. However, some of them showed reluctance to record the proposed audio or participate orally. Teacher insights were registered in the diagnostic session field notes which will be later the sample for analysis.

During the execution phase, the diagnostic questionnaire and session were administered to all students, allowing ample time for completion to ensure thorough responses. It was essential to foster a supportive atmosphere conducive to honest expression of thoughts and opinions. Open channels of communication were established to encourage students to share their perspectives, thereby enriching the information gathered for the project.

Reflection

After collecting the students' responses, the observation of the diagnostic session and analyzing the artifacts produced in the session, we conducted an analysis to extract valuable information in order to follow up on the research objective. Overall, our analysis of the results provides the basis for decision-making when planning our next research cycle. The students' responses indicate that they generally enjoy their English classes, but they

also reveal frustrations regarding their perceived inability to improve. Many students express a lack of confidence in their English skills and struggle with various aspects of language learning. This highlights the importance of addressing students' self-perception and building their confidence in their ability to learn and improve their English proficiency. The artifacts and observations from the diagnostic session demonstrate that students have a low competence in the language. It is noticed students struggle to organize their ideas in written or spoken activities since they do not know how to properly use the basic structures of the language and there is a lack of vocabulary to carry out the proposed activities. Moreover, it is noticed that students feel afraid to participate in oral activities because they are afraid of making mistakes in organization of sentences and pronunciation.

Cycle 2°

Plan

For Cycle 2, we will organize 3 micro-cycles, ensuring structured guidance and ample practice opportunities.

Micro-Cycle 1: Personal Information

Topic: Grammar & Vocabulary

Tasks: About Me: Students will learn and practice the verb "to be" and basic personal information vocabulary. They will write sentences about themselves and introduce

themselves in speaking activities. Saying hello and giving personal information: Students will practice greeting others and giving personal information in speaking activities.

Functions:

- Introducing oneself.
- Writing about personal information.
- Speaking: Introducing yourself.

Skills:

- Writing: Students will write sentences about themselves.
- Speaking: Students will practice speaking skills by introducing themselves.

Micro-Cycle 2: My Family

Topic: Family Members, Adjectives of Personality & Physical Appearance

Tasks: My Family: Students will learn and use vocabulary related to family members and practice describing their personalities and physical appearances using the verb "to be".

They will write descriptions and discuss them in speaking activities. What's your _____ like?: Students will describe family members' personalities using adjectives in speaking and writing activities.

Functions: Introducing family members and describing people's personalities and physical appearances.

Skills: Writing: Students will write descriptions of family members. And speaking: Students will practice speaking skills by describing family members.

Micro-Cycle 3: My Neighborhood

Topic: Vocabulary of Places in the City, Location Expressions

Tasks: This is My Neighborhood: Students will learn vocabulary related to places in the city and practice using "there is/are" to describe their neighborhood. They will write descriptions and discuss them in speaking activities. And my Ideal Neighborhood: Students will design and describe an ideal neighborhood, suggesting activities using "can" and "can't".

Functions: Describing the neighborhood, and talking about activities in the neighborhood.

Skills: Writing: Students will write descriptions of their neighborhood and ideal neighborhood. Speaking: Students will practice speaking skills by discussing activities that can be done in their ideal neighborhoods.

These micro-cycles focus on integrating speaking and writing skills while addressing different topics related to personal information, family, and neighborhood. Each micro-cycle includes specific tasks, functions, and skills aimed at reinforcing grammar, vocabulary, and communication abilities in English.

Action:

In this part, three microcycles were developed. Each of which comprised four 100-minute sessions. In the first microcycle (About me), the goal was to familiarize students with basic personal information vocabulary and sentence structures, improving their writing and speaking skills. Subsequently, four 100-minute sessions were assigned to the "My Family" and four more to "My Neighborhood" microcycles. These microcycles aimed to deepen students' understanding of family relationships, personalities, and physical appearances, as well as vocabulary related to city places and location expressions. Each microcycle incorporated various activities, including writing tasks and speaking activities, to provide students with opportunities to practice the language in context.

Micro-Cycle 1: Personal Information

During this micro-cycle, the teacher began by introducing the topic of personal information through interactive discussions and multimedia presentations. The teacher used visuals and real-life examples to illustrate the vocabulary related to personal information, such as name, age, and interests. The students were then given various writing tasks, including filling out personal information sheets and creating short biographies about themselves. These writing tasks were scaffolded to help students construct sentences using the verb "to be" and the newly acquired vocabulary. Additionally, the teacher organized speaking activities where students practiced introducing themselves to their classmates, using the language they had learned. Through pair and group work, students engaged in dialogues, practicing greetings, and exchanging personal information.

Micro-Cycle 2: My Family

In the second micro-cycle, the teacher facilitated learning about family members by using a variety of instructional strategies. The teacher employed visual aids, such as family trees and photographs, to introduce vocabulary related to family members. Students participated in interactive activities where they described their own families, using adjectives to talk about personalities and physical appearances. Writing tasks included creating family profiles and writing short paragraphs about family members. During speaking activities, students shared their family descriptions with their peers, practicing pronunciation and fluency. The teacher provided feedback and correction as needed to support students' language development.

Micro-Cycle 3: My Neighborhood

For the third micro-cycle, the teacher focused on vocabulary related to places in the city and location expressions. The teacher utilized maps, images, and virtual tours to introduce students to different places in a neighborhood, such as parks, schools, and stores. Writing tasks involved describing their own neighborhoods, including what can be found there and what activities are available. Speaking activities encouraged students to discuss their neighborhoods, share information about their favorite places, and make suggestions for activities to do together. The teacher facilitated group discussions, allowing students to practice using the target language in context and providing opportunities for peer interaction and feedback. Throughout this micro-cycle, the teacher emphasized the use of

language functions related to describing locations and activities, guiding students to express themselves accurately and confidently.

Each micro-cycle was implemented sequentially, allowing students to progressively build upon their language skills and knowledge. Activities were designed to engage students actively in both written and spoken communication, fostering a comprehensive understanding of the topics covered. Additionally, regular feedback and assessment was incorporated to monitor student progress and address any areas of difficulty effectively.

Observation

Aligned with the planned micro-cycles, the implementation phase focused on providing structured guidance and ample practice opportunities for students across various language skills and topics. Each micro-cycle effectively addressed specific linguistic objectives while engaging students in meaningful tasks to reinforce their learning.

During Micro-Cycle 1, centered on Personal Information, students actively participated in activities targeting grammar and vocabulary related to self-introduction. Through writing exercises and speaking activities, they demonstrated an understanding of the verb "to be" and basic personal information vocabulary, effectively introducing themselves in spoken interactions.

Micro-Cycle 2, dedicated to My Family, facilitated the exploration of family-related vocabulary and the description of personalities and physical appearances. Students engaged in writing descriptions of family members and confidently shared their insights through

speaking exercises, showcasing their ability to use adjectives and the verb "to be" accurately.

In Micro-Cycle 3, focusing on My Neighborhood, students expanded their vocabulary related to city locations and practiced expressing descriptions using "there is/are". Furthermore, they creatively designed and described ideal neighborhoods, demonstrating proficiency in suggesting activities using modal verbs like "can" and "can't".

Throughout the implementation of these micro-cycles, students actively participated in both written and spoken activities, displaying increasing confidence and proficiency in their language skills. The structured approach provided them with clear objectives and ample opportunities for practice, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the targeted linguistic concepts.

Additionally, regular feedback and assessment mechanisms were employed to monitor student progress and address any areas of difficulty effectively. This ensured that learning remained adaptive and responsive to individual student needs, further enhancing the overall effectiveness of the instructional approach.

Reflection

The integration of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) into the English language classroom proved effective in improving writing and speaking skills among 11th-grade students in a public school and A1 level students at a language center. Students showed increased engagement and motivation when writing and speaking about personally relevant topics. Although initially viewing writing and speaking tasks as uninteresting and

challenging, students' perceptions shifted positively over the course of the project, with many expressing increased confidence in their abilities. The use of the writing process and speaking models facilitated learning new vocabulary and structures, leading to satisfaction with improved skills by the project's end. These findings highlight the importance of providing comprehensive support in language learning and the potential of CTL to enhance language education in contexts where resources and qualified instructors are limited.

4. Data Analysis

Following the completion of data collection, during which the instruments were considered, the process of analysis started. To examine the students' written and spoken language in use, a comprehensive approach will be adopted. This examination will involve analyzing both written and verbal communication across various contexts and activities within the classroom setting.

According to Creswell (2014): the data collection process involves careful planning and implementation to ensure that the right information is gathered in a systematic and rigorous manner. By setting boundaries, selecting appropriate methods, conducting observations and questionnaires, collecting documents and visual materials, and establishing data recording protocols, researchers can effectively gather the necessary data to address their research objectives.

To unravel the effects of employing the L2 learner's context as a strategy to enhance writing and speaking skills, a comprehensive data analysis approach was undertaken. The research primarily aimed to address the question: "How does the strategy of using the

Contextual Teaching and Learning Approach improve the writing and speaking skills in their English learning process?"

The data collection process started with the administration of a questionnaire at the beginning of the project. These questionnaires captured the initial perceptions of the students, providing a base for their attitudes and expectations and challenges. Subsequently, a pedagogical intervention was introduced, applying the wherein Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) strategy within the learning environment. Throughout this phase, students actively engaged in the creation and production of diverse written and spoken artifacts.

Besides, there are products per session that allow students to organize and spread their knowledge about the development of each product as previously planned. Each product gives us a result in the class proposals. An important aspect to highlight is how the result of each session with respect to the contents in the teaching of a second language shows different variables.

To record the details of the intervention and capture the changing dynamics, detailed field notes were meticulously maintained. These notes served as a valuable record, enabling a qualitative understanding of the process and the students' reactions. This multifaceted data collection approach ensured a holistic view of the influence of the contextualized strategy on the learners' writing and speaking competencies.

After this, an open data analysis was made. Data analysis summarizes collected data. It involves the interpretation of data gathered through the use of analytical and logical reasoning to determine patterns, relationships or trends. In this phase, NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software, was employed.

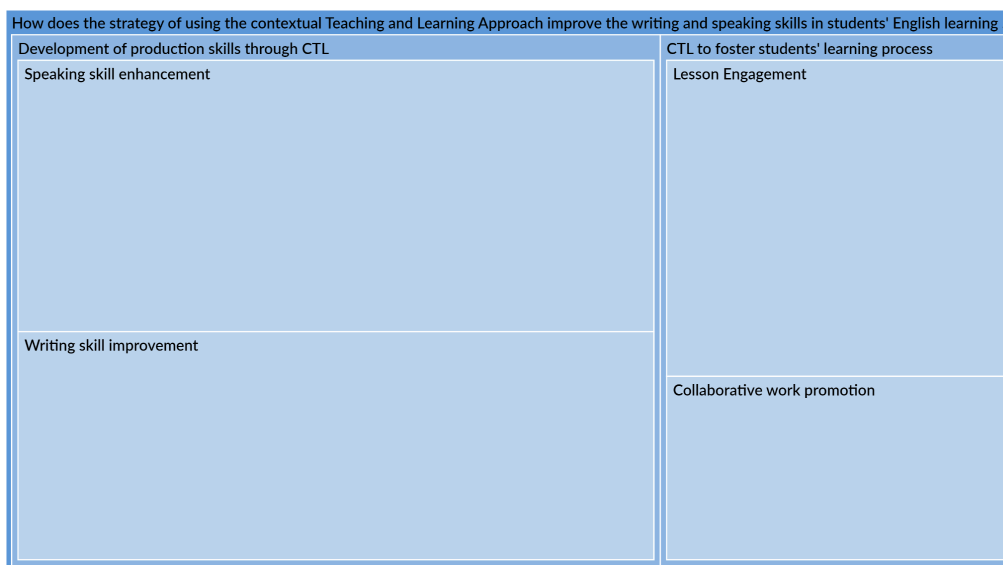
Analysis and Findings

From this analysis, two different categories emerged to answer the research question (see figure 3). In the next paragraphs we will explain the two categories, how did they emerge, their conceptualization, description and the samples of questionnaires' answers, class observations included in the class work that were the ground for these to come out. The mentioned categories are paired with subcategories that have originated from them. These subcategories provide insights into understanding the influence and effects of the contextualized teaching and learning approach.

The following results were obtained with these categories:

Figure 3

Hierarchical Map



Source: Map generated by NVivo

Development of production skills through CTL

“At the start of my writing I feel like ‘I can do this’ and then I look at it and I think I did it!” (Young 2019).

From our experience during the project, we would say that students greatly appreciate guidance, besides, speaking and writing are the most difficult skills to develop while in the process of learning a second language (Ellis, 2003), that is the reason why we decided to use the CTL approach by involving students in personalized and contextualized use of the language to carry out tasks and promote the development of their productive skills.

In this category there are two main subcategories to analyze: Writing skill improvement and Speaking skill enhancement.

Speaking skill enhancement

Speaking is a fundamental skill in second language learning. It shows that you are able to communicate and participate in real-life situations. According to Krashen (1982), learners improve when faced with challenging inputs, which can lead to learning products, as he suggests that for learners to progress, they need to be exposed to tasks that go beyond their level of proficiency. Contextual teaching and learning offers a promising framework for improving this skill, as it integrates detailed instructions with real-world situations that allow learners to apply their language knowledge in an authentic way.

Derakhshan et al. (2016) highlight the role of authenticity in promoting both accuracy and fluency in second language communication. In addition, learners benefit from practicing speaking in scenarios they might encounter outside academic settings, such as

dialogues, surveys and role-plays, and it is the teacher's job to carefully analyze and choose appropriate learning activities that align with the learners' level, learning objectives and available learning resources. When planning the activities and tasks, we took into account the choice of topics and tasks that were related to the curriculum objectives and connected to real-life scenarios so that students could participate in the lessons and, consequently, become aware of the role of language in real life.

After a thorough analysis of the observations collected during the implementation of the pedagogical intervention, focusing on the performance of tasks contextualized with the objectives of the study, a marked improvement in the learners' speaking skills has been noted. This progress is clearly evidenced in the following observations: O3.LC highlights that students showed a more fluent and conscious integration of grammar and vocabulary. In addition, they demonstrated greater awareness of and attention to the correct pronunciation of words, suggesting a significant development in their linguistic competence.

On the other hand, in observation O8.SCH, it was observed that the students correctly used possessives to describe the relationship they had with the members mentioned in their descriptions. This appropriate use of possessives indicates a deeper understanding of grammatical structure and an improved ability to express relationships and possession in English.

These findings reveal that after the implementation of the pedagogical intervention, students are more competent in the language which facilitates their sentence order, use of

correct vocabulary to record their audios for the task and communicate messages more clearly and coherently. Taken together, these results confirm the positive influence of the intervention on the development of students' speaking skills

Furthermore, along with the intervention, it is evidenced how students gradually improved in terms of pronunciation and fluency as the tasks were carried out. In the first sessions, during the first oral task intervention with the school sample, certain difficulties were identified. It was noted that most of the pupils had long pauses in their speech, indicating a lack of confidence in performing speaking activities. In addition, pronunciation errors were evident in common words such as 'my', 'like', 'funny', 'I' and 'favorite'. These errors reflected the need for more pronunciation practice to improve the quality of their oral productions. It is important to note that many students expressed discomfort with the speaking activities due to nerves and fear of making mistakes, which had a negative effect on their performance.

However, by the end of the intervention, significant progress was observed. Most of the students were able to pronounce the target language correctly, with only a few still struggling with specific words such as "live" and "field". In addition, an improvement in pauses and hesitations during speech was noted, as they were not as prolonged as in the earlier recordings. This change indicates an increase in the learners' confidence and fluency as they progressed through the Cycle 2 sessions.

These results clearly show the students' progress in terms of pronunciation and fluency throughout the intervention. The constant practice and support provided during the sessions contributed to overcoming the initial challenges and improving the students'

speaking skills. This progress is a positive indicator of the positive effect of the activities designed in Cycle 2 on the students' speaking skill development.

It is also noticed that students show a level of engagement by listening to their recordings and follow up repeating them if they identify a mistake in pronunciation. They usually asked the teacher when in doubt and reviewed the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) together. This practice demonstrates a proactive attitude to improve their language skills and ensures accuracy in their pronunciation. An example of this commitment is reflected in observation O8.LC, which highlights how learners demonstrate a greater commitment to their pronunciation during homework activities. They avoid hesitation, the use of unnecessary words and unnecessary pauses in their recordings, suggesting a level of self-assessment and self-correction that contributes significantly to their progress.

A comparative analysis of the students' oral products at the beginning and at the end of the intervention has also been carried out. This analysis reveals a marked improvement in the quality and accuracy of their productions. Examples of such products include recordings of simulated conversations, descriptions of pictures and short presentations on specific topics. In general, there is greater fluency, clarity and accuracy in the learners' pronunciation and intonation in the final recordings compared to the initial recordings. This progress is evidence of the positive effect of the intervention on the development of students' speaking skills throughout the teaching cycle. Some of the sentences correctly pronounced by the students are shown below.

S6.SCH: *"Hi, I live in Villa Laura. In my neighborhood, you can play in the parks and you can go to medical appointments in the health center."*

S7.SCH: *"Hi, I live in Belencito. In the stores you can buy trendy clothes. Men can go get haircuts in the barbershops. You can drink micheladas in the viewpoint"*

S5.LC: *"Mmm... In this case, I live in Suba Lombardía in a three-story house. You can find many car washes, parks and you have the opportunity to look at Cali Avenue."*

S6.LC: *"I live in Suba Villa Maria. My neighborhood is very quiet during the day, but not at night, because I live near a park"*.

In these samples of some spoken artifacts from the last microcycle, we can observe the improvement students show in the previously discussed areas. Students show proficiency in the use of grammar and vocabulary to express their thoughts. Moreover, they continue to show ongoing enhancement in their pronunciation of the target language and a noticeable decrease in hesitations is evident during the recording of their final product.

Writing skill improvement

After closely examining the significant improvements in speaking skills achieved through the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approach, now we want to turn our focus to the second crucial aspect of language acquisition: writing. Similar to speaking, writing needs a solid foundation in language knowledge, as well as the ability to creatively and effectively construct and communicate ideas. During our research about the

improvement of writing skills applying the CTL approach, we based our analysis in Pauline Gibbons' scaffolding theory, which highlights the essential role of structured language support in second language learning.

According to Gibbons (2009), this scaffolding facilitates gradual independence in language tasks, this principle was key as we implemented contextual strategies to enhance students' writing development. Our theoretical perspective was further enriched by insights from Graham (2008), who highlighted the effectiveness of process writing strategies such as explicit instruction and feedback, and from Bayat (2014), who emphasizes treating writing as an evolving process rather than focusing solely on the final product. These strategies were particularly vital in addressing the challenges faced by our students, who, despite recognizing the importance of writing, often felt uncertain about how to start and progress with their writing tasks.

The practical application of these theories was evident in our collected data, which revealed significant post-intervention improvements in students' writing organization, vocabulary use, and grammatical accuracy. For instance, during the initial assessment (pre-intervention product), students struggled with basic structure and frequently made grammatical errors that impeded clarity. However, post-intervention samples showed a remarkable enhancement in their ability to organize thoughts coherently, employ a richer vocabulary, and adhere to grammatical rules more consistently.

In addition, field observations highlighted specific instances of improvement evident in the students. For example, it was noted that some of their texts were more detailed and longer than previously submitted, reflecting progress in their writing skills.

Moreover, during the "Writing" activity, students accepted and worked according to the teacher's comments, which resulted in an improvement in the development of their writing up to the "Publishing" stage.

The review of vocabulary and grammar concepts proved to be significant, which was reflected in the students' understanding and application. The sentence construction activity provided a valuable opportunity to practice and reinforce students' grammar skills.

Furthermore, when analyzing the students' progress, it was evident that their confidence in writing had increased significantly. At the beginning of the intervention, students were somewhat reserved about writing tasks and were often hesitant to produce long texts. However, by the end of the intervention, they were not only more willing to engage in these activities, but also showed greater initiative and independence in their writing projects. Observations such as: "Students are now more skilled at self-editing their work, frequently revising drafts to refine expression and improve clarity", are clear evidence of this development.

The following is the product of the activities developed by the students, where it can be noticed the difficulties they presented at the diagnostic cycle and how they improved in the last written tasks.

Table 4

Excerpts of students' answers during pre- and post-intervention written tasks (Texts)

Pre-Intervention product	Post-Intervention product
<p>S8.SCH: “I am from Medellin, I like dancing, study school... I live in Belencito... I like eat ice-cream and fresas”</p>	<p>S8.SCH: “I live in Belencito, my neighborhood is very commercial. There is a lot of noise, there is a lot of pollution. It's pleasant.</p> <p>There are five parks, there are several hills, there is a very cool viewpoint, there are five very organized fields and there are two churches.”</p>
<p>S2.SCH: “My name is Juan, I paisa, I from medellin Colombia, I love soccer, I play I like soccer. I are Nacional team”</p>	<p>S2.SCH: “I live in Belencito villa Laura. My neighborhood is dangerous, it's fun, there are a lot of houses, it's polluted.</p> <p>There are five parks, there are several hills, there is a very cool viewpoint, there are five very organized fields, there are two churches and three to four supermarkets.”</p>
<p>S4.LC “i am Lorena. i am 23 year old i like watch movies and listen music. My favorite book is 100 años de Soledad”</p>	<p>S4.LC “I live in a big house, my house is in front of a marketplace. I live near the street 90, it is near a mall, there are many restaurants, there are some parks and gym's. My neighborhood is very dangerous, I don't like my neighborhood.”</p>
<p>S7.LC “My name is Julian i am a doctor. i</p>	<p>S7.LC “I live in Suba las Mercedes, It's a</p>



like animals dogs and cats. i am responsible and active.”

neighborhood near to La Conejera, it's a very quiet place because there are only complexes, there are approximately seven complexes, the security is nice and there is a farm near to my neighborhood and there is a mall near too.”

These findings not only support the foundational theories behind using scaffolding and process-oriented techniques in language instruction but also highlight the practical effectiveness of these methodologies in advancing students' writing proficiency. The use of targeted strategies to improve their written products shows a level of engagement that directly benefits their skill development, similar to the improvements noted in their speaking abilities.

CTL to foster students' learning process

The development of comprehensive language competences in second language learners transcends conventional teaching methods. Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) stands out for not only enhancing specific language skills, but also enriching the learning environment in a holistic way. In this section, we delve into how contextual teaching and learning actively contributes to essential learning processes, focusing on stimulating student participation and fostering collaborative learning.

Active student participation and collaborative learning are essential elements in the QAL framework. These practices not only make language learning more dynamic, but also enhance comprehension and retention of the material. By encouraging active participation, learners become protagonists in their own learning process, giving them a sense of empowerment and responsibility for their education.

In addition, collaborative learning promotes interaction among students, allowing them to share ideas, solve problems together and build knowledge collaboratively. This approach not only strengthens language skills, but also promotes valuable social and communication skills in a multicultural and diverse environment.

In this second category, there are 2 subcategories to analyze: Lesson engagement and Promoting collaborative work.

Lesson Engagement

According to Fredricks et al. (2004), student engagement, which is crucial for positive outcomes and a sustained desire to continue learning, is enhanced in environments where teachers and classmates actively participate in challenging and well-guided tasks. Task-based language learning further supports this by engaging students in the development of meaningful tasks that promote engagement (Willis, 2011).

During our research, we focused on the effects of a pedagogical intervention on students' engagement and learning outcomes. Observations during the sessions indicated a progressive increase in student interest and engagement, which were manifest in several ways and that we reported in the field notes:

1. **Increased Motivation and Active Learning:** Students displayed enthusiasm and motivation, actively practicing new vocabulary and grammatical structures. They also used body language and visual aids, enhancing their communication and showing a commitment to effectively use the new language. [O6.LC](#): “They seemed enthusiastic and motivated to practice the newly learned vocabulary and grammar structures. Some students used body language and visual aids to support their communication”
2. **Feedback Reception and Application:** Regular feedback from teachers, particularly regarding vocabulary, sentence structure, and adjective use, was viewed by students as an opportunity for growth. This feedback encouraged students to refine their language skills actively.
[O4.SCH](#): “Students received feedback in order to help them with some vocabulary words, the use of adjectives and structure. Feedback was received as a growing opportunity”
3. **Strategic Learning:** Some students adopted additional strategies to enhance their participation, such as using keyword papers and highlighted notes during audio recording tasks, demonstrating a proactive approach to their learning.
4. **Adaptive Strategies and Autonomy:** Over time, students began using various strategies tailored to their competence levels, showing greater autonomy and ability to adapt to learning demands.

[05.SCH](#): “Some students implemented papers with keywords, highlighted information and comments in order to make easier their oral participation in the audio recording exercise”

5. Emotional Engagement: The emotional connection to learning content was particularly evident when students discussed personal topics such as family. [S4.LC](#): “Describir a mi familia siempre es muy emotivo porque no siempre estamos juntos. Siento que hablar de algo tan cargado de sentimientos hace que te den más ganas de completar el proyecto y aplicar lo visto en clases” This emotional engagement, described by Fredricks (2009) as pivotal for academic performance, was evident in students' passionate responses and contributed significantly to their motivation and overall engagement.
6. Safe Learning Environment: The intervention promoted a supportive atmosphere where respect and empathy were encouraged, helping students feel safe and valued, which facilitated learning and performance. [S6.SCH](#): “Para mí las clases son buenas y yo he aprendido mucho. Siento que ya me gusta el inglés así que no les cambiaría nada”.
7. Self-Assessment and Reflection: Students increasingly engaged in self-assessment, reflecting on their learning process and identifying areas for improvement. Their responses in post-intervention questionnaires highlighted significant progress in language skills and a greater appreciation for their achievements. [S5.LC](#): “Yo siento que he mejorado mucho porque ahora yo puedo usar más palabras con expresiones como There is y There are me ayudan hablar de mi vida y mi barrio”

These observations and student feedback underscore the importance of engagement in the learning process and its influence on student motivation, performance, and emotional connection to the subject. This study reinforces the need for educational strategies that foster active and emotional engagement in learning environments.

Promoting collaborative work

Our study explores the promotion of collaborative work within the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) framework, based on Vygotsky's social development theory. Vygotsky (1978) proposed that learning is inherently social, with knowledge constructed through interaction. This theory is supported by Luong (2022), who highlighted the universal applicability of these principles across disciplines by emphasizing social interactions' crucial role in cognitive development. Kagan's research (1994) on cooperative learning also underscores that structured group interactions significantly enhance language learning by providing realistic opportunities for language use in natural settings.

Young and Ferguson (2020) further advocate for collaborative learning through their description of a writing workshop model where children engage extensively in sharing and discussing their and others' writing within a community setting. This method fosters an environment where constructive criticism and celebration of achievements are normative, promoting a communal language and thought process among learners.

Throughout the development of our project, we employed various data collection methods such as classroom observations, teacher feedback, and student surveys to evaluate the influence of cooperative learning strategies comprehensively. The collected data revealed substantial enhancements in the quality of student interactions within groups. Students demonstrated increased engagement in discussions, effective negotiation of meanings, and mutual support in both oral and written tasks. For instance, during a task focused on neighborhood environmental issues, observations documented a clear shift from initial individual efforts to robust collaborative solutions.

Students themselves reported that the supportive nature of group work encouraged them to practice speaking fluently and collaborate during discussions and presentations, significantly reducing their anxiety levels. In activities that required partner interactions, students were encouraged to extend conversations and ask follow-up questions, enhancing their speaking and listening skills.

This nurturing of a safe learning environment was evident as students participated in exercises like describing their classmates' personality traits, receiving positive feedback, and engaging in mutual respect. These interactions not only reduced anxiety associated with language tasks but also boosted students' confidence and proficiency in crucial language skills.

Survey responses and behavioral observations during the sessions underscored the effectiveness of cooperative learning in fostering a more conducive atmosphere for

language acquisition. Students expressed a marked improvement in their ability to communicate within their community, noting a newfound confidence in discussing local activities and places. Additionally, the opportunity to participate in interviews and collaborative tasks allowed students to deepen their understanding of their peers and the content, enhancing their engagement and communal ties.

Overall, the integration of cooperative learning into both speaking and writing activities has profound pedagogical implications. It demonstrates that moving from traditional instructional models to more interactive and supportive teaching methods can significantly enhance language learning outcomes and contribute to students' overall well-being.

5. Conclusions

The primary goal of this research was to investigate the efficacy of the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approach in improving writing and speaking skills among 11th-grade students in a public school and A1 level students at a language center in Colombia. The data for this study were collected through classroom observations, student questionnaires, and the analysis of written and spoken artifacts.

Based on the analysis and its implications for this inquiry, the following paragraphs respond to the research question of this study. The integration of CTL into the English language classroom led to an experience-based process that effectively encouraged the development of writing and speaking skills across different educational levels. From the

outset of the project, students demonstrated increased engagement by participating actively and creating their own portfolios, thus fostering autonomy and independent learning. The choice to let students write and speak about personally relevant topics, such as family, school, and neighborhood, proved particularly effective in motivating them to use English more proficiently.

A significant finding from the data collected (questionnaires and observations) was the initial perception students held about writing and speaking activities. Many students viewed these tasks as uninteresting and challenging, a sentiment that was prevalent across both English and their native Spanish. However, as the project progressed, there was a noticeable shift in students' perceptions of their abilities in these areas. By the end of the project, they acknowledged the importance of ESL writing and speaking skills, with many expressing increased confidence and a better understanding of the language.

Questionnaires conducted after various tasks revealed that the use of the writing process and speaking models significantly aided students in learning new vocabulary and structures, which facilitated the completion of their tasks. This outcome highlights that students were continually aware of their learning process and could assess the utility and effectiveness of the educational materials and activities used (Gibbons, 2009; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

Furthermore, most participants expressed satisfaction with their improved writing and speaking skills by the project's end, although many also acknowledged the need for

continued improvement to reach higher levels of proficiency. This reflects a growing independence in their language use, moving away from heavy reliance on provided models.

The CTL approach not only improves specific language abilities but also creates a richer, more engaging educational environment. By integrating contextualized tasks, scaffolding techniques, and cooperative learning strategies, teachers can effectively enhance students' writing and speaking skills while fostering a positive and supportive learning environment. This study underscores the importance of moving away from traditional instructional approaches towards more interactive and collaborative teaching models to achieve optimal language learning outcomes.

Pedagogical Implications

Given the findings and conclusions of this study, several pedagogical contributions to the educational setting at the participating public school and language center are evident. In contexts like these Colombian educational institutions, where resources and qualified English instructors are often scarce, CTL offers a viable strategy for enhancing language education. The study's implementation of CTL not only aligns with the goals of Colombia's bilingual education standards but also demonstrates that contextualized and functional approaches to teaching can significantly enrich the EFL learning experience. Despite promoting meaningful learning, it is clear from this project that there is still substantial room for developing and refining methods of teaching language skills. The use of CTL to guide students through writing and speaking processes shows that students require more

comprehensive support in understanding the objectives and intended outcomes of their language activities.

However, despite promoting meaningful learning, it is clear from this project that there is still substantial room for developing and refining methods of teaching language skills. The use of CTL to guide students through writing and speaking processes shows that students require more comprehensive support in understanding the objectives and intended outcomes of their language activities. Therefore, future efforts should focus on providing educators with additional training and resources to effectively implement CTL strategies, including ongoing professional development and access to relevant materials and technology. Additionally, collaborative efforts between teachers, curriculum designers, and educational policymakers are essential to ensure that CTL is integrated systematically and sustainably into language education programs, ultimately leading to more proficient and confident English language learners in Colombia.

Limitations

Several limitations were encountered during this research that may have influenced the outcomes and the generalizability of the findings. Firstly, interactions between the head teacher and the students at times presented challenges. As the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approach diverges from traditional teaching methods, concerns of the implications related with scores were observed at the very beginning of the research among students who were accustomed to conventional learning environments.

Additionally, broader educational policies and curricular requirements constrained the flexibility to fully implement innovative teaching methods. Changes in educational standards and requirements, which are often beyond the control of individual researchers and teachers, influenced the extent to which CTL could be integrated and evaluated within the existing curriculum.

Lastly, the research did not extensively account for individual differences in learning styles and prior knowledge, which are critical factors that could influence the effectiveness of any pedagogical approach. Future studies should consider these variables to provide a more detailed understanding of how different students respond to CTL-based learning. This consideration is essential for refining and enhancing the efficacy of innovative educational strategies like CTL, ensuring they are adaptable to diverse student needs and educational settings.

Further Research

This study opens several avenues for further research within the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) framework. Future investigations could explore the impact of a task-based approach on the development of CTL writing and speaking competencies in greater depth by examining specific task types, task complexity, and task sequencing. Additionally, exploring the effectiveness of different feedback methods and their influence on students' writing and speaking skills could provide valuable insights into optimizing language instruction within the CTL context.

Another potential area of study is the influence of students' first language in the learning of English writing and speaking skills within CTL environments. Research could delve into how transfer from the first language affects language production and how teachers can leverage students' linguistic backgrounds to scaffold learning effectively.

Furthermore, investigating the role of cultural factors in language production and communication could enhance our understanding of the interplay between language and culture in the CTL classroom.

Additionally, longitudinal studies tracking students' language development over an extended period within CTL settings could provide valuable insights into the long-term effectiveness of CTL and other pedagogical approaches. Understanding how language skills evolve over time and identifying factors that contribute to sustained language proficiency would inform curriculum design and instructional practices within CTL environments.

Overall, these areas of research have the potential to deepen our understanding of language learning processes and inform the development of more effective teaching strategies in CTL contexts, ultimately enhancing students' writing and speaking skills in English.

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APPENDIXES

[Appendix A](#)

School and Language center consents

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Field notes format

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Questionnaires

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Lesson plans designed for the pedagogical intervention

[Appendix E](#)

Collected data after the pedagogical intervention

[Appendix F](#)

Data analysis: NVivo