UDL Strategies To Create Safe Learning Environments For EFL Learning In Vulnerable Contexts

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Abstract

This research addresses the challenges faced in L2 classrooms in public schools in Colombia. From a critical social point of view, the environmental and psychological input received by students inside and outside the classroom has a direct impact on their proficiency and lack of motivation to improve their L2. This research seeks to promote the implementation of Universal Design for Learning strategies that can ensure a safe learning environment in order to improve students' holistic well-being in the classroom, and English proficiency. There were 24 participants from the age of 12-years old to 15-years old, all of them in seventh grade in a public school located in the south of Bogotá. The data collection and implementation was conducted based on Action Research (AR)methodology, the instruments used were: observation, class implementation, interviews and analysis of artifacts. After the implementation of two didactic units, students improved their performance in the use of English as a foreign language in environments that promote learning in a comfortable and safe manner within the educational institution.

Keywords: Language acquisition, Safe learning environment, Childhood education, Foreign language, Education.

Resumen

Esta investigación aborda los desafíos enfrentados en las aulas de L2 en las escuelas públicas de Colombia. Desde un punto de vista social , el entorno y la influencia psicológica recibida por los estudiantes dentro y fuera del aula tienen un impacto directo en su competencia y falta de motivación para mejorar su L2. Esta investigación busca promover la implementación de estrategias de Diseño Universal para el Aprendizaje que puedan garantizar un entorno de aprendizaje seguro con el fin de mejorar el bienestar integral de los estudiantes en el aula y su competencia en inglés. Hubo 24 participantes con edades comprendidas entre los 12 y los 15 años, todos ellos en séptimo grado en una escuela pública ubicada en el sur de Bogotá. La recolección de datos y su implementación se llevó a cabo según la metodología de la Investigación Acción (IA), y los instrumentos utilizados fueron: observación, implementación de clases, entrevistas y análisis de artefactos. Después de la implementación de dos unidades didácticas, los estudiantes mejoraron su desempeño en el uso del inglés como lengua extranjera en entornos que promueven el aprendizaje de manera cómoda y segura dentro de la institución educativa.

Palabras clave: Adquisición de lenguas, Educación, Entorno de aprendizaje seguro, Educación infantil, Lengua extranjera.

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List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

UDL: Universal Design for learning

AR: Action Research

Chapter I. Introduction

The world remains in a constant transformation process, due to dynamics that generate changes in communication styles, in the way of accessing information, in the consumption of goods and in the processes of interaction and cultural development. To a large extent, explains Ferrada et al. (2013), aspects such as technology have represented an important fact in these processes of change, since they have made the flow of information and knowledge more efficient, also helping to guide new forms of communication. The development of globalization has also marked a significant change in the lifestyle of all people and in the educational processes, since schools must work on preparing world citizens who have the skills to adapt to the demands of an increasingly competitive international environment (García et al., 2000). Therefore, it can be said that the social, political, and cultural dynamics that exist today demand new skills and abilities that allow students to excel and have better opportunities.

Bearing this phenomenon in mind, mastering a second language is a fundamental need in the 21st century. According to Wanless (2016), globalization involves aspects such as international negotiation, and all professionals must match a language that is relevant to their origin and the destination negotiating country (Yusupova, 2022). Learning a second language is established not only as a key component in the processes of school training and job development, but also as a tool that allows people to connect with other cultures and develop a better understanding about the world. In other words, learning a second language is key for

people to improve the development of their skills and promote better participation in a globalized world.

Based on that, we have identified one of the most frequent difficulties in education which is about adapting teaching processes based on the different ones our students, especially those who may belong to a vulnerable or segregated community in which access to quality education is not fully guaranteed with programs designed to prevent these students from facing situations that could harm them academically, emotionally and socially.

Many researches have been based on the different learning processes that students go through during their academic development, however, one of the principles of this research is to observe the effects of the promotion of safe learning environments in terms of teaching English as a foreign language in students of a public school in the city of Bogota. This observation is guided by the implementation of techniques and approaches corresponding to the design, planning and implementation of different resources and spaces to promote meaningful learning.

Universal learning design (UDL) is based on a series of resources that help us design, plan and execute methodological implementations that mainly create content, techniques and learning environments that promote equal learning opportunities for their participants.

The main objective of this UDL methodology is to improve educational experiences and generate meaningful learning in a flexible way that is able to adjust to the different needs of the different students in a particular community. This approach has been implemented in different researches in which different positive findings have been demonstrated in terms of the generation of knowledge, for that reason this research is developing different strategies during this investigation that will help us implement English as a foreign language sessions in a particular community in order to observe and define whether safe learning environments are generated through these applications.

Due to these events, this research is focused on the creation, promotion and implementation of safe learning environments, based on the UDL universal learning design methodology, in order to identify the factors that promote a learning environment in which its participants develop skills in the English language as a foreign language.

Political context

In Colombia, vulnerable individuals are defined by the national government as those who are exposed to exclusion, poverty, and the effects of inequality and violence (MEN, 2015). Vulnerability is also understood as an aspect that deteriorates people's well-being and quality of life, and that impedes the development of communities (Díaz, 2020). According to data provided by the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE, 2021), 39.30% of Colombia's population lives in poverty. Furthermore, 31% of individuals in Colombia are recognized as vulnerable by the DANE due to living with less than $690,524 COP per month. As explained by Aguilar (2015), vulnerability in Colombia is a phenomenon related to aspects such as inequality, social segregation, discrimination, lack of job opportunities, and violence.

There are many factors that make people in Colombia vulnerable. Colombia is one of the most unequal countries in the world, with a Gini coefficient of 0.53 (World Bank, 2023). This means that a few people control a large share of the country's wealth, while the majority of the population lives in poverty. Besides, the country has been plagued by violence for decades, due to the armed conflict between the government and the FARC and other guerrillas; this violence has displaced millions of people and created a climate of fear and insecurity. Additionally, Colombia is a diverse country, with people from many different ethnic groups. However, these groups often face discrimination, which can make them more vulnerable to poverty, violence, and other challenges.

Thus, other factors that make people in Colombia vulnerable, such as gender, age, disability, location. Women and girls are often more vulnerable to violence, poverty, and discrimination than men; children and the elderly are also more vulnerable to these

challenges; people with disabilities often face discrimination and lack of access to services, and populations in rural areas or conflict-affected areas are often more vulnerable.

It is important to consider that vulnerability greatly affects the education sector, particularly in terms of the poorest population's access to safe schools that allow them to develop their capacities and have all the means and resources necessary for a true quality education (Moratto & Sánchez, 2018). On the other hand, teachers may engage in a number of exclusion practices that can have a negative impact on students from vulnerable communities; these practices can include low expectation, stereotyping, bullying, and lack of support (Juvonen et al., 2019). Effectively, teachers may have low expectations for students from vulnerable communities, and students who are expected to fail are more likely to fail. Teachers also may stereotype students from vulnerable communities, and students who are stereotyped, for example as being lazy, disruptive, or unintelligent, can find it more difficult to succeed in school (Kessels & Heyder, 2020). Students from vulnerable communities are more likely to be bullied by their peers and by their teachers, which can have a devastating impact on students' academic performance and their mental health. They also may not have the same level of support as other students, including lack of access to tutoring, extracurricular activities or parental involvement (Roksa et al., 2020). All of these teaching practices can add to the political conditions that determine the vulnerability of certain sectors of the population in Colombia.

Therefore, the importance of facing vulnerability through education is recognized, so that students can develop all their capacities, and also take advantage of the opportunities offered by a globalized environment (Moratto & Sánchez, 2018). Thus, in this section it is important to comprehend the relationship between vulnerable contexts, safe learning environments and learning English. First, it is crucial to understand the limitations that vulnerable communities have when it comes to learning English. Secondly, it explains how,

from the design of strategies that favorably affect the development of safe learning environments, in contexts of vulnerability, it is feasible to enhance English language learning.

Internal migration has had a significant impact on the vulnerability of students. Violence has been a major factor in internal migration and has had a negative impact on student education (Urrego & Giraldo, 2022). The violence has led to many people being forced to leave their homes and communities, and this has made it difficult for students to access quality education. Additionally, the violence has created an environment of insecurity, which has made students more likely to drop out of school (Nilsson & González, 2020).

This has made it difficult for families to provide their children with the resources they need to succeed in school (Bonilla et al., 2020). As a result, students from migrant families are more likely to drop out of school and join the informal labor force. The Colombian government has taken some steps to address the problem of internal migration and violence. However, these measures have not been enough to solve the problem. There are still many students who are affected by internal migration and violence.

This situation can be particularly difficult for students from rural or low-income communities. These students may be more exposed to discrimination and bullying (Bianchi et al., 2021). Students from rural or low-income communities may have different accents, beliefs, or customs than students from urban or high-income communities, which can lead to them being seen as different or strange, which can make it easier for them to be discriminated against or bullied. Additionally, they may not have the same resources as other students. Students from rural or low-income communities may not have access to the same resources as other students, such as tutors, extracurricular programs, or technology. This can make it difficult for them to succeed in school and can also make them more vulnerable to discrimination and bullying.

Moreover, they might find themselves residing in violent surroundings. Students hailing from rural or economically disadvantaged backgrounds could face an elevated risk of living in environments characterized by violence, thereby heightening their susceptibility. (Few et al., 2021). Discrimination and bullying can have a significant negative impact on the lives of students. They can lead to mental health problems, learning problems, and dropping out of school. As a result, these students are more likely to drop out of school and join the informal labor force. This can have a negative impact on their personal and professional lives and can also contribute to the problem of poverty in Colombia. These consequences become a cycle that expands the risks of vulnerability. After all, children who drop out of school are more likely to live in poverty, as they have fewer opportunities to find a well-paid job and have access to the resources they need to succeed in life.

Additionally, they are more likely to get involved in violence. This is because they may feel frustrated and hopeless and may be attracted to gangs or criminal groups. Abuse is also a threat to them, as they may be more vulnerable to predators, and may not have anyone to protect them. They may also have mental health problems, as they may feel stressed, anxious, and depressed. Dropping out of school and being unable to join the informal labor force are complex problems that require multifaceted solutions. A joint approach is needed by families, schools, government, and the community to address these problems and protect children from vulnerability (Deckard & Auyero, 2022).

In this line. English also relates to vulnerability since there are a number of places where students might be able to hear English, but are still learning the language, which makes them vulnerable as well (Gultom & Oktaviani, 2022). Students who are not fluent in English may be at a disadvantage in the classroom, as they may not be able to understand the lessons or participate in discussions. This can lead to feelings of isolation and frustration and can make it difficult for them to succeed academically. Besides, they may be unable to

communicate with their neighbors or participate in community activities, which can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness; they may also be more likely to be targets of discrimination or bullying. Additionally, since the internet can be a great resource for language learning, it can also be a place where students who are not fluent in English can be vulnerable, so they may be exposed to harmful content or be targeted by predators (Lim et al., 2022).

In this section, some examples of specific places in which students may be exposed to situations of vulnerability will be shown. A classroom where the teacher does not communicate in the student's native language, for example, can make it difficult for the student to understand, thus affecting his understanding of the different tasks he must perform and the instructions he must follow, being present in a community in which their mother tongue is not spoken and the knowledge and understanding of the language of the environment is very non-existent and very little can evidently hinder their relationship and social and cultural interaction with the other members of this environment. Interaction through social networks or other free-to-use platforms can put an individual in vulnerable situations with high exposure to cyberbullying (Anwar & Graham, 2021).

Additionally, some students who belong to other communities that are trying to join the social space may also be vulnerable.

These students may face discrimination or perhaps because of their cultural or religious background, they may also feel isolated and just because they do not feel that they belong to a majority community or group, they could be subject to discrimination or harassment which can cause them to feel isolated and alone and It can also hinder or interrupt your academic and personal development and process. They may feel that they do not belong to the majority culture, this generates feelings of isolation and loneliness.

On the other hand, they may not have access to the same resources as other students; in circumstances they can result in difficulty in academic success (Leavell et al., 2019).

Some of the vulnerable communities tend to be located in specific areas such as low-income neighborhoods or fabelas; These neighborhoods are usually characterized by high rates of poverty, unemployment, crime, and other different situations (Oviedo, 2021).

They may also be located in immigrant or indigenous communities, for example, in which it has been shown that they can become victims of discrimination and lack access to resources that help them improve their quality of life.

A notable example may be that: communities with racial characteristics that are different from those of the dominant environment may be subject to different types of violence or discrimination, which may lead them to lack the physical and cultural social resources that contribute to the further improvement of their quality of life.

Vulnerable communities are often located in these areas due to a number of factors, including historical patterns of discrimination; These patterns have led to the concentration of vulnerable populations in certain areas (Useche, 2023). It may also be due to lack of economic opportunities; These areas often lack good jobs and other opportunities, which can make it difficult for people to escape poverty. It is important to note that not all vulnerable communities are located in these areas. They are located in specific sectors, such as rural and suburban areas, this situation can sometimes generate a negative impact when accessing different sectors and resources that in some way can truncate their academic, personal and social development as individuals.

This political context shows that creating an appropriate learning environment for learning English as a foreign language is especially critical for students in vulnerable contexts, who may also live in large cities such as Bogotá, depending on their specific

conditions. From this point, the following section will specify the research problem and define the objectives.

Statement of the problem

In Colombia, the Ministry of Education -MEN- has been developing concrete actions to care for vulnerable populations throughout the country, based on the three fundamental axes of the Educational Revolution: coverage, quality, and efficiency (MEN, 2016). In the first place, coverage implies expanding the places in urban and rural schools for vulnerable populations. Quality refers to the design of appropriate methodologies and flexible pedagogical models that help meet the needs of the population. Finally, efficiency implies reorganizing the offer to locate support teachers trained to serve the educational needs of vulnerable populations (MEN, 2015). In this way, a comprehensive approach to educational care for this population stands out, through which the government tries to reduce gaps and overcome barriers.

However, the Colombian Ministry of Education has a significant gap between what is stipulated and what is actually happening, as supported by Sánchez (2020), since students are below the OECD average in math, science, and English; and since the early school dropout rate is 17%. Teacher quality is low, and education spending is insufficient. This is how authors such as Moratto & Sánchez (2018) put it, because they point out that in reality there are still significant limitations in the country in terms of access, quality and efficiency in education for the vulnerable population. Mainly, these limitations derive from the lack of resources and a huge gap in educational quality in vulnerable contexts, which is reflected in the results of State tests and the number of students who do not follow their studies in higher education. In addition, as indicated by García et al. (2000), educational policies do not consider in detail the context and needs of students in vulnerable conditions, which is why

educational models are not articulated to the set of visions and expectations of the communities. In summary, it can be said that the Colombian State has not yet been able to guarantee quality and efficient education for the vulnerable population.

Bearing this phenomenon in mind, the importance of developing strategies that promote an imminent educational transformation is understood, through strategies that strengthen the educational process inside and outside the school. According to Ferrada et al. (2013), it is essential to promote a transformation based on the inclusion of the special needs of students who live in conditions of violence and poverty, in order to train them to face conflicting situations. On the other hand, as explained by Beamon (2001), beyond increasing education coverage, it is important to understand the reasons why students in vulnerable conditions abandon school, focusing attention on aspects such as the environment and teaching strategies. Education, therefore, must be established as a point of support for students who face situations of vulnerability.

In that point, it is crucial to acknowledge that the living conditions of vulnerable populations have a significant impact on the quality of education they receive. In order to understand the context in which these students learn, it is important to take into account factors such as their economic situation, social networks and support, family relationships, quality of life, and well-being, as stated by Foldy et al. (2009).

Additionally, the environment generated in a classroom plays a very important role in terms of generating opportunities for learning for students in vulnerable conditions.

Holley & Stein (2005) mention how important the dynamics of a classroom are, including the interpersonal and academic relationships of students and teachers, in which respect, conflict resolution mechanisms that can be generated in both students such as between teachers and students and the generation of dialogue as part of the teaching initiative

are fundamental keys to the generation of a favorable classroom in which significant knowledge is generated.

Therefore, it is of vital importance to take into account a chain of actions and variables that promote the generation of knowledge and high-value learning, because these characteristics become a crucial error for the promotion of an education of quality that on some occasions is not evident in vulnerable communities.

Taking these characteristics into account, we will be able to generate a favorable academic environment in which respect, opinions and the different ways of learning of each of the individuals promote in them a feeling of security and well-being.

Considering the former, this section endeavors to illustrate the importance of promoting a safe learning environment in the development of education, especially in what has to do with the teaching of English. A safe learning environment is essential for supporting student learning styles and enhancing their cognitive and emotional abilities, which includes dynamic activities and tools in the classroom. The learning environment, in this sense, is defined as the intangible space that supports the students in the pursuit of knowledge, and that makes them feel empowered to participate in class and discussions (Roys & Franco, 2019). For this reason, Scavarelli et al. (2021) affirm that one of the basic pillars of education is that children learn through the tools that are in space, which in turn enable dynamic activities that enhance their cognitive abilities and emotions. In short, promoting a safe learning environment is essential for serving the vast spectrum of student learning styles.

The learning environment is key to quality education (Westera, 2019), and a safe and comfortable environment allows students to learn effectively, ask questions, take risks, and feel comfortable sharing their opinions (Massod & Karakuş, 2019). This is especially important for EFL learning, as students must feel safe and comfortable in order to interact

with the language (Díaz, 2020). By promoting safe learning environments, we can help students learn and develop their skills.

In learning English, participation, dialogue, and continuous interaction are key factors, which is why it is necessary to have a safe learning environment for these skills to be developed. According to Derakhshan et al. (2015), in English classes students must feel confident to make mistakes in pronunciation, within an environment full of trust and support. In addition, students must have the freedom to interact and communicate with their classmates and their teachers in another language, which implies that there are good relationships, respect, and kindness (Beamon, 2001). For this interaction to happen, that set of environmental factors may play the most important role for the developing relationship of the students with the target language. In brief, it can be said that the classroom environment is decisive in the practice and learning of a second language.

In summary, the learning environment is an important producer of educational processes, and it must be taken into account to guide continuous improvement strategies in EFL learning. This is key in vulnerable environments in which there are not generally good conditions of security, comfort, and access to various types of resources. Particularly, this research focuses on the case of 11th grade students from the city of Bogotá located in vulnerable contexts, with the aim of finding options to improve their performance when learning English as a foreign language.

These students have been facing different difficulties in the process of learning English, firstly the delays and inconveniences caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which undoubtedly interrupted the regular study process in various communities and this was no exception. On the other hand, these students belong to a vulnerable socioeconomic population, many of the families of these students belong to low-income families in which it is not possible to have economic coverage that allows them to have access to better quality

education and must take their studies in public schools in which there are sometimes problems of trained personnel to meet the special needs of each of the students, lack of sufficient resources to meet the need for technological, logistical and research resources for practice and participation in academic environments more complete or competitive.

On the other hand, many of these students belong to foreign families that have migrated to Colombia looking for a better social, economic and cultural well-being, in which many of them arrive in the country in conditions that allow them to establish themselves in dignified conditions that can cover some basic need like; feeding, housing, social security, legality in their immigration status, which leads us to define that this student population, although diverse in many aspects, shares a vulnerability that is broadly characterized by socioeconomic factors.

Research Question

Based on the context described, the research question and objectives are established as follows: How does implementing UDL in the EFL classroom provide a safer and more efficient learning environment for 7th grade students at a public school in the south of Bogotá?

Objectives

- General objective: Comprehend how the implementation of UDL approach provides a safer learning environment in the classroom.
- Specific objective: Design EFL learning materials based on UDL to enhance students' learning experiences.

Rationale

The development of safe learning environments depends on the possibility of building sincere relationships between students and teachers, in such a way that in the classroom there is a good disposition to listen to the voices of the students, integrate diverse opinions, attend to individual needs, and promote harmonious participatory processes (Raghallaigh & Cunniffe, 2013). However, it should not be understood that the development of safe learning environments is equivalent to eliminating conflicts within the classroom, because when there are no conflicts, learning and critical thinking do not occur (Holley & Steiner, 2005). In this case, the conflict refers to the diversity of thought, disagreements, and contrary opinions, which are a natural part of the learning process (Beamon, 2001). Simply put, students must feel emotionally safe in order to be open to critical evaluation of their opinions by other students in the class.

In EFL, the development of safe learning environments is important for students to get out of their comfort zones, express themselves openly and develop the required skills. According to Subirats et al. (2005), the foregoing is key in vulnerable contexts, in which students, due to limited interest and poor focus on pedagogical strategies, usually have a more restricted participation in class, and do not usually express their opinions in an open and free manner, because they do not have an environment based on support, reciprocity, interaction and collaboration. For this reason, it is important to establish the form in which the development of safe learning environments strengthens EFL learning in vulnerable contexts. Accordingly, it must be understood in the first place, why schools must continuously promote processes of change and adaptation focused on the evaluation of learning environments. Secondly, it must be explained why these processes have a special relevance in the case of vulnerable contexts.

In the field of teaching, the UDL specifically refers to the fact that it is an educational framework in which its main objective is the design, creation and implementation of learning scenarios that are accessible to all participants, taking into account the different ways and learning styles of different individuals. There are three principles belonging to the UDL method; the application and use of multiple means and resources, multiple means of action and use thereof and finally multiple means or academic purposes that together contribute to the objective of generating significant and efficient knowledge in learners (Ramos et al., 2023). According to Kearney (2018), there is evidence to suggest that UDL may be effective in improving learning outcomes for learners of English as a foreign language. On the other hand, agency is the ability to make decisions and act there are some skills that the student should develop under this implementation, in order to provide them with sufficient knowledge of their way of learning and to understand how, under the use of different strategies and resources, they can develop knowledge at their own pace, prior skills development and motivating them may this exercise be something really satisfying for them.

Under the established guidelines of the UDL framework, according to Fraser (2016) the aim is to promote the "agency" of the apprentices by providing them with the necessary tools and resources to be successful during the process. For example, the UDL makes the student recognize their own strengths and abilities, in the same way that it helps to identify what could traditionally be called "knowledge weaknesses" with which, they must find a way to complement them and in that order of ideas to achieve better development and management of those underdeveloped skills. Concluding, UDL has the ability to improve learners' learning outcomes as far as EFL is concerned. Through our Action Research, we will be able to demonstrate the positive impact that the implementation of these strategies is expected to have during our sessions with the participants.

On the one hand, the school is an institution that must systematically improve the conception and development of the dynamics, styles, and pedagogical approaches. In particular, the school environment is a set of objective and subjective factors that are established through the educational process, and that generate a particular influence on students, contributing decisively to strengthening their comprehensive general education (Markkanen et al., 2019). According to Subirats et al. (2005), schools must offer different tools and resources to the students, to respond to the educational needs of each one of them, through the continuous adaptation of the spaces in which the learning activities take place. In brief, a good learning environment is related to aspects such as student adaptation, enthusiasm for activities, interest, and motivation.

When there are environmental conditions that guarantee inclusion to promote learning, positive impacts are generated in the learning processes. A warm and pleasant environment is important for learning because it generates well-being which, in turn, promotes good academic results (Gayle et al., 2013). As Hew & Brush (2007) asserts, when negative conditions persist in the environment that affect the well-being, tranquility, confidence, and safety of the students, significant effects can be generated in the teaching processes, and in the development of important skills and abilities for the students. According to Beamon (2001) the school environment in the teaching and learning processes must serve as a tool to provide new knowledge to students, since all classrooms must have, in addition to the necessary materials for learning, the necessary conditions for students to feel comfortable and insurance. In short, learning environments generate relevant impacts in the teaching processes, and that they can help to promote participation, collectivity, entertainment, creativity and the improvement of academic results.

Creating safe and supportive learning environments is crucial in vulnerable communities, where various external factors can negatively impact students' ability to learn

and succeed. By designing strategies that prioritize a friendly learning environment, we can help address the systemic challenges faced by these students, and support them in achieving their academic goals.

Taking into consideration the former, this work has the intention of designing and implementing strategies based on UDL to promote the creation of safe learning environments for EFL learning in vulnerable contexts, in the case of 11th grade students in an educational institution in Bogotá, Colombia. In particular, for the teaching of English it is important that students have a good teaching environment, in which they have access to different resources and materials and can also build healthy relationships with the other people that make up the educational community (Gayle et al., 2013). Therefore, it is important to comprehend the impact on EFL learning by implementing strategies that promote friendly learning environments, taking a specific population as a case study.

Finally, this work may serve as a guide for revising the strategies that have been developed to improve teaching in the case of vulnerable communities and promote new approaches focused on the evaluation of learning environments. As pointed out by Pizarro (2001), vulnerability responds to complex processes that are related to the social, political, economic, cultural and educational context, which is why the strategies must start from detailed analysis of the context and the classroom environment. Therefore, it is relevant to comprehend the form in which the development of safe learning environments strengthens EFL learning in vulnerable contexts.

This work applies to UDL since it goes beyond accessible design for people with disabilities to make all aspects of the educational experience more inclusive for all stakeholders, regardless of gender, race and ethnicity, age, disability, and age learning style; UDL-based courses could address inclusion and diversity and affect satisfaction, performance, and engagement. According to Ismailov & Chiu (2022) UDL “is based on

seven universal design principles: (1) fair use, (2) flexibility in use, (3) simple and intuitive, (4) perceptible information, (5) error tolerance, (6) low physical effort, and (7) size and space for zooming and use" (p. 1). Besides, according to the Center for Applied Special Technology (2018), UDL helps learners feel comfortable communicating and collaborating within a community of learners.

Chapter II. Theoretical framework

The theory here addresses aspects that affect the learning of English as a foreign language in vulnerable communities by understanding the relationships between the different concepts that we as researchers propose here, which we classify as: vulnerable population, learning English as a foreign language, English as a foreign language learning strategies and safe learning environments, taking these concepts by As Molbæk & Hedegaard-Sørensen (2023) mentions, it is possible to guide the design of strategies that help improve the learning of English as a foreign language in vulnerable contexts.

Starting from the premise that learning depends on the quality of learning environments as stated in the theory presented in this chapter, it raises a discussion about the way in which the development of safe learning environments can help improve English learning. As a foreign language in vulnerable contexts. In that sense, we initially explored the concept of vulnerable communities. Subsequently, the teaching and learning strategies of English as a foreign language are analyzed. Additionally, the concept of a safe learning environment is presented. Finally, we will explain the concept of Universal Design for learning which has been implemented in different teaching resources as mentioned by Bohun et al. (2022).

Universal design for learning occupies an important place when analyzing and implementing strategies that promote and encourage students of the selected population to

understand English from different resources and different approaches, all of them based on UDL models, which allow us as researchers provide the opportunity. Additionally, we will move on to evaluate how this can be used in a specific community in which we will carry out our research and implementation with which we hope the resources and expected results can reinforce the natural ability of each student in the understanding and development of skills in a foreign language such as is the English language of the participants of this project.

EFL Learning: The process to develop communicative skills in a different language and the role it has during foreign language acquisition

EFL learning refers to the process to be able to develop communication skills in the foreign language, in our case it will be the English language as a foreign language that is not naturally spoken in our Colombian society despite the fact that it is part of the curriculum of all educational public institutions in our Colombian territory, especially in the city of Bogotá. In the exploration carried out during this research, we observe the process of development of communicative skills in said foreign language and recognize its crucial role in the acquisition of communicative skills, this, of course, implies understanding various facets and stages such as participation, communication and understanding of it during the learning stage as mentioned by Hernández & Gutiérrez (2008). However, despite the diversity of available resources that we can find, including creation and communication technologies, we consider that developing the ability to handle a foreign language involves facing different challenges related to the structure of the language, pronunciation, vocabulary learning, and contextual application by the learner.

As researchers, we recognize the importance of each of these processes and aspects, as stated by Smith y Johnson (2010), who guides us to emphasize the impact that this generates on the natural communicative skills that are reflected in the Mother tongue and

Transition. What this entails with the understanding and understanding of a foreign language. Additionally, Neumeirer (2005) states that the acquisition of a foreign language, especially English, not only improves communication skills. and expressive skills, but also complements and enriches the skills and interaction of individuals, extending to the management and understanding of information, collaborative learning and the skills they perform in social interaction in different communities. In this sense, the teaching of skills that in our case corresponds to English as a foreign language becomes an imperative skill since we recognize the fundamental role of English in various contexts of the Colombian reality, which requires pedagogies that encompass social and cultural attention to the needs of the diverse communities in our territory.

The acquisition of a foreign language, such as English, definitely improves communicative and cognitive skills Cisneros (2016), the importance of intercultural competence in English as a foreign language is also highlighted, taking the student further in terms of what is In addition, Silva (2015) explores how the structure of language profoundly influences the perception and interpretation of the society and culture to which we belong and to which we do not. The integration of these cultural and contextual dimensions in the teaching of English, especially in our reality in public education in Colombia, not only improves comprehension but also increases the motivation of our students, as long as our pedagogical processes and methodology have It is a priority to establish guidelines that allow us to generate a much more significant impact in terms of teaching English as a foreign language.

Taking into account the aforementioned, it is relevant to carry out a review of the literature that we consider may be appropriate in order to establish the necessary parameters regarding the scope that is proposed during this research.

We want to direct this research to establish the different relationships of English as a foreign language goes beyond simple linguistic competence. Díaz (2021) states that the English teaching exercise serves as a key tool for global understanding, facilitating interactions with diverse cultures. On the other hand, Parupalli (2019) emphasizes the importance of the crucial role of English as a foreign language in the promotion of intercultural and social competencies. Therefore, our research will be based on observing and analyzing these competencies through the sessions that we will have ended with the sample of this action research in order to observe whether or not the promotion of pragmatic skills within the teaching of EFL allows our learners to use.

In this essence, we denote that EFL teaching can serve as an incentive to acquire essential skills such as communication management, information management and the creation of enriching knowledge, while at the same time we could promote intellectual competence and intercultural, these, you could highlight the importance of using practical and dynamic approaches aligned with the interests of the students and this research, with the objective of promoting collaborative interaction and joint learning through innovative and notable strategies (Ziadie & Andrews, 2018).

At the same time, the development of skills in the Manetar language will also be effective in terms of understanding how a majority is presented in different skills such as speaking, writing and understanding text and various content in English, we consider that generating spaces prone to of communication and experimentation with that language, (Clement & Murugavel, 2018). Written production, a process of generating coherent and meaningful texts, encourages the enrichment of vocabulary and creative expression (Bonell et al., 2018). Reading, although it involves textual understanding, is intrinsically interactive, interweaving the reader's existing knowledge with new information (Clavijo et al., 2011; Santiesteban & Velázquez, 2012).

Finally, we consider that EFL instruction largely transcends linguistic acquisition by integrating cultural and pragmatic dimensions of society to promote the development of diverse skills that strengthen our learners. The relationship that exists between the EFL student and the acquisition of skills that lead him to have good performance are relevant to achieve a sufficient communicative structure that allows him from a point of view to continue with his learning program, also giving him the necessary tools to identify his strengths, in this way you will be able to have a more profitable and enriching process. This becomes essential to support students in being able to navigate linguistic complexities while internalizing and exploring the pragmatic diversities and dynamism of English-speaking society in communicative aspects.

Safe Learning Environments

Creating safe learning environments is something that has perhaps been talked about previously in Colombia, but on this occasion we make special reference to the emotional security that must be guaranteed in the learning process proposed by the different educational institutions of the state, especially the security that The learner must feel during their process and the support that we as research teachers propose in this action research. In our opinion, the creation of safe environments should be a priority for institutions, since through these various objectives are aligned, such as; personal development, the improvement of communication and understanding skills and additionally the generation and promotion of social values that are fundamental to understand and develop and function in any community (Kitchenham et al., 2011), states that it is essential that learners feel motivated and committed in their process of acquiring knowledge regarding a foreign language. According to Gayle et al. (2013), the use of teaching strategies allows students to explore and navigate through various areas, facing challenges and tasks with which step by step they can perform better

and efficiently in order to adapt said knowledge to new contexts increasingly complex, both in academic life and in personal and cultural development. On the other hand, Holley & Steiner (2005) affirm that students require means, resources and support appropriate to their needs, in order to organize information effectively and solve problems that life and the academic environment bring with them to those who respond.

In the same position, Raghallaigh & Cunniffe (2013) describe learning strategies to deliberate actions taken by students to achieve specific goals, especially influenced by environmental conditions and interpersonal relationships within their academic community. Therefore, it is important to promote friendly learning within institutions, which allow students and teachers to actively participate with the peace of mind that this is an enriching space and not a space full of imposed situations where distraction is the negative result of a procedure or process but rather takes it as an opportunity to strengthen and deepen this interaction lesson to generate an environment and a positive perception for the learner.

On one hand, the development of a safe learning environment is key in the development of skills and abilities that allow students to improve their performance and their level of understanding in different areas of knowledge. According to Kitchenham, Budgen & Brereton (2011), the point is that through adequate spaces in a dynamic and entertaining way, activities that are attractive and motivating can be developed, since they capture the attention of students immediately and for a long time, and improve their concentration, considering that the contents of the different subjects are better assimilated and understood. In a safe learning environment, every student is provided with the opportunity to develop academically, emotionally, and physically in a supportive atmosphere free of intimidation and abuse, which is key to promoting a solid and reliable learning process (Turner & Braine, 2015). Therefore, a safe learning environment is related to the possibility that the student must improve his immersion in the learning process and continuously and gradually improve his abilities.

On the other hand, safe learning environments are crucial in promoting student's motivation. According to Raghallaigh & Cunniffe (2013), promoting a safe learning environment, in this sense, is a great element in education since it allows entertaining and at the same time directing the student in an entertaining and dynamic way towards learning the contents of each specific discipline. This implies avoiding environmental conditions that may be detrimental to learning processes and promoting conditions that may be positive (Kitchenham et al., 2011). The development of a safe learning environment is a pillar in education, since it enables the development of a significant number of significant experiences for students, which generate a considerable contribution to their comprehensive training (Gayle et al., 2013). The space powers didactics that allow students to build their own reality in an environment based on support, understanding and trust (Gillen et al., 2011). Thus, the motivation and interest of the student can be considerably improved when there are good processes and approaches that strengthen a safe learning environment.

The development of safe learning environments fosters not only the abilities of students, but also strengthens their learning processes and improves their motivation. This occurs because in a safe learning environment, students feel physically and psychologically safe to make decisions, share ideas, take actions and interact with others (Turner & Braine, 2015). A learning environment implies the development of mutual respect, support, and respectful communication among teachers and students (Gillen et al., 2011). Overall, safe learning environments provide language learners with valuable learning opportunities to take advantage of, as it is possible to interact in an environment that encourages participation, collaboration and camaraderie.

Which means that safe learning environments provide a supportive environment where learners can feel physically and emotionally safe to make decisions, share ideas, take actions and interact with others, which will allow them to concentrate and pay full attention.

to their learning process and improve their performance, the safe learning environment also boosts the motivation of each individual because when they feel in a friendly environment and feel supported, their participation and their own interaction with others is more likely. others in the context. EFL is much more spontaneous, which leads to greater motivation and better academic performance. In addition to that, the development of friendly environments for learning also requires collaboration on the part of the teaching and administrative team of academic institutions.

The teacher has the responsibility of creating materials, activities and creating spaces that inspire and promote knowledge instead of creating or designing materials that may be "aggressors" of learning systems and styles. The administration of the institutions must provide the physical, monetary and personnel resources necessary for the process to be successful. All elements must be carefully considered and analyzed when it comes to populations that are in some circumstance of vulnerability, because They need a calm context to help them. Acquire new skills in the EFL framework and, above all, feel comfortable and accompanied during this process of acquiring language and communication skills.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an educational framework that emphasizes inclusivity in teacher’s practices to provide for the diverse needs of all learners, including those acquiring foreign languages (Kieran & Anderson, 2018). Applying these principles to foreign language classes guarantees accessibility, equity, and effectiveness for students of various backgrounds, abilities, and disabilities.

These principles are:

Inclusivity: By incorporating and taking into account aspects such as learners' language backgrounds, learning styles, and ability levels.

Multiple Means of Representation: To accommodate the many different learning styles, UDL recommends providing information in many different formats, including text, audio, video, and interactive materials like ICT.

Different Means of Engagement: UDL tries to encourage students to get more involved in the learning process by using technology, games, and cultural immersion.

Multiple Means of Expression: UDL looks for students to have the opportunity to express language skills through a variety of communication skills, including writing, speaking, and multimedia.

Addressing Diverse Learners: One of the primary goals of UDL is adjusting instruction and evaluations to take into account the variety of students' backgrounds.

Teacher Training: To successfully apply UDL in language classrooms, teachers need to receive training that focuses on the concepts of UDL and how they apply to language instruction.

Student Success and Retention: By customizing instruction to meet each student's needs, UDL goal is to increase student success rates in language programs by encouraging engagement, and perseverance.

The importance of promoting (UDL) in the classroom

In order to create safe learning environments and guarantee that all children have access to an equitable education, it is key that Universal Design for Learning (UDL) be promoted in the classroom (Rice, 2015). Rice (2015) research reveals the value of using a variety of sources and applications in UDL methodologies.

1. Equity and Fairness:

UDL promotes equity in education by acknowledging students' diverse backgrounds and experiences linked to safety, this promotes opportunities for all students to prosper in a safe learning environment (Smith & Johnson, 2020).

2. Reducing Learning Barriers:

Concerns about safety can obstruct learning, affecting students' focus, interaction, and participation in class. Strategies directed to understanding and minimizing these factors should help to overcome such obstacles, leading to improved focus, engagement, and overall well-being (Anderson & Brown, 2018).

3. Mental and Emotional Health:

UDL recognizes that mental and emotional health is essential for learning. Students feeling unsafe may experience stress, anxiety, or trauma, obstructing their learning capacity. By creating a safe learning environment, UDL focuses on students' mental and emotional well-being, creating a positive setting for learning and personal development (Jones, 2019).

4. Supporting Diverse Needs:

LGBTQ+ students, students with disabilities, and members of vulnerable groups are just a few of the students whose safety-related issues UDL is aware of. That is why UDL methods can address these specific needs, encouraging to create an environment where every student is valued, respected, and protected (García & Martínez, 2021).

In conclusion, encouraging Universal Design for Learning to create safe learning environments aligns with principles of inclusivity, equity, and well-being. It facilitates removing barriers to learning, prevents discrimination, empowers students, and contributes to positive learning outcomes. By prioritizing safety and inclusivity, educators and institutions place the groundwork for effective and meaningful education.

Vulnerable communities

Vulnerability is understood as a risk situation derived from precarious social and economic conditions and shows a painful side of the human condition inserted in the field of inequalities, and implies the lack of access to basic services and different types of employment and academic opportunities, which prevents people from boosting their growth and development (Hernández & Gutiérrez, 2008). Vulnerability limits the development of people's capacities, prevents them from accessing various types of services and having good support processes in each of the aspects that are key to their personal fulfillment. Bearing in mind the former, vulnerability can be defined as a set of deprivations associated with factors such as inequality and equality, which prevent a person from taking advantage of the various opportunities that exist in the context.

Some authors point out that vulnerability affects people's chances of accessing quality education. For example, Subirats et al. (2005) explain that vulnerability reflects an inequality based on income and poverty, which generates as a result the breakdown of the social fabric and the weakening of the individual's social ties with the community. In addition, as explained by García, Malo & Rodríguez (2000), vulnerability creates difficulties for people to participate in society, due to the lack of integration and the impossibility of realizing social rights such as education, health, and housing. According to Yu et al. (2021), vulnerability is not limited to material deprivation, but is also related to segregation, stigmatization, social rejection, and significant reduction of the quality of various services and social rights. In this sense, in vulnerable contexts there are not only greater difficulties in accessing the education system, but also limited quality and efficiency of educational services.

Thus, the serious situation faced by the vulnerable population demands the development of adequate public policies that allow to alleviate and improve the situation of the populations with the greatest social and economic problems. Although efforts have been

made around the world to improve the situation of the most vulnerable people, the public policies that have been generated have not been efficient, since they do not consider the dynamism of the different circumstances that make a person vulnerable (Lampis, 2010). Even though the government in Colombia has established programs to improve the school attendance of children and young people, or for people to have easier access to the health system, little has been done to solve poverty in an integral way (Ortiz & Díaz, 2018). It is key to formulate strategies from which the different dimensions of which the phenomenon is made up are addressed, considering the importance of the participation of the population, in order to strengthen their and encourage the development of skills from which it is possible overcome and put an end to the situation of vulnerability (Pizarro, 2001). The solution to vulnerability, therefore, must be addressed from comprehensive approaches that consider not only the lack of economic resources but also inclusion, social participation and the protection of social rights.

Therefore, work must be done on the development of the capacities of the vulnerable community, for which education has a relevant role. According to Hernández & Gutiérrez (2008), the development of the vulnerable population must be based, above all, on enhancing the capacities of people, since it is on these capacities that their well-being ultimately depends. The quality of life does not depend on the amount of income that families have, but on the possibilities, they have to apply and use their capacities in an appropriate manner, with the intention of satisfying their needs (Gayle et al., 2013). In this sense, the well-being of people does not depend so much on resources but on a series of assessments of living conditions, which are personal aspects that determine the way in which the individual lives and develops.

In summary, vulnerability is not only associated with poverty or lack of income, but with a set of conditions that affect people's socio-emotional well-being and quality of life.

Among these factors, for example, insecurity, the lack of adequate environments for the development of education, bullying, the absence of support networks in the community, and all those things that can have a negative impact on the education (Morales et al., 2013). For this reason, it is necessary that teaching strategies in vulnerable contexts foster the development of participation, confidence, and interest in class activities amid safe learning environments.

The authors cited in this part helps us understand that vulnerability is characterized by a variety of circumstances, such as social exclusion, poverty, and lack of access to essential services.Also, vulnerability can have a significant impact on people's ability to access quality education. Additionally, education can play a key role in building the capacities of vulnerable communities and helping them overcome their challenges. Teaching strategies in vulnerable contexts must be designed to encourage participation, confidence and interest in learning. Therefore, promoting the creation of safe environments for EFL in vulnerable contexts is not only a way to improve performance in a second language, but also to impact quality of life.

Chapter III. Methodological Framework

Qualitative research in education, as conceptualized by Bogdan & Biklen (2007), entails a careful investigation of the educational phenomena throughout the lens of the participants' experience. This approach emphasizes on the subjective point of view and environmental tones that influence the teaching process. According to Bogdan & Biklen (2007), qualitative research in education "involves studying things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 3). This method goes beyond description, looking to understand the fundamental meanings, motivations, and social interactions that influence educational practices. Through qualitative research, researchers try to understand the complexity of educational settings,

providing insight on the complexity of teaching, learning, and the wide range of educational environments (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007).

Qualitative research, established in a constructivist model, provides a valuable perspective for exploring complex phenomena and deriving meaning from the viewpoints of participants (Creswell, 2018). Constructivism claims that knowledge is actively constructed by individuals through their interactions with the environment and social context (Cohen & Sampieri, 2018). In the discipline of educational research, adopting a qualitative approach within a constructivist framework allows researchers to investigate the lived experiences and subjective interpretations of participants, facilitating a deep understanding of phenomena in context.

It is within qualitative study that Action research (AR henceforward) has been chosen as the methodology. AR, according to Anne Burns (2019), is characterized by a cyclical process that involves planning, acting, observing, and reflecting to enhance a particular situation. Burns (2019) emphasizes that this research approach integrates a qualitative perspective, promoting systematic inquiry and fostering collaboration with participants. The central focus of action research is the potential for transformative change, aligning with the constructivist principle that highlights how knowledge develops through continuous engagement and reflective practices.

This theoretical framework posits that qualitative research, grounded in constructivism, can be enriched by integrating action research principles. Researchers adopting this approach engage with participants to co-construct knowledge, facilitating a deeper understanding of their perspectives and needs. The cyclical nature of action research allows for continuous refinement of interventions based on qualitative insights, leading to practical and contextualized outcomes. Thus, the framework acknowledges the dynamic

nature of the research process, emphasizing the reciprocal relationship between the researcher and participants and the potential for positive change within educational settings.

In this line, the selection of the appropriate research method comes from its alignment with the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. Action research closely adheres to the beliefs of UDL, which highlights the significance of flexibility, adaptability, and a commitment to ongoing enhancement in the realm of education. UDL champions the concept that educators should tailor their approaches to cater to the varied requirements of learners. The iterative and introspective character of action research mirrors the iterative and adaptable essence of implementing UDL principles.

Thus, reflection and adaptation of UDL encouraged us as educators and researchers to continually reflect on their practices and make necessary adjustments. Action research facilitates this process by providing a structured framework for ongoing data collection, analysis, and reflection. It allowed us to document changes over time and gauge their impact on student learning.

Action research, as defined by Evans et al. (2010), involves the systematic collection and analysis of data to inform decisions and improvements in educational practices. This approach empowered us as educators to gather evidence about the effectiveness of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategies, thus aligning with the evidence-based nature of UDL (Evans et al., 2010). Furthermore, it serves as a developmental tool for educators, fostering reflective practice and the refinement of teaching strategies (Evans et al., 2010). As UDL often necessitates a shift in instructional practices, Action Research can provide valuable support during this transition (Evans et al., 2010).

Continuous improvement is a fundamental aspect of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) within the educational context. Action research, as emphasized by Burns (2019), provides an organized procedure for identifying areas in need of enhancement, encouraging

interventions, implementing changes, and assessing outcomes. This systematic methodology serves as a valuable tool for addressing challenges inherent in UDL, including the adaptation of teaching methods to minimize impediments to learning. The inherent flexibility in action research also enables customization to meet the distinctive requirements of individual students. Furthermore, Burns highlights that action research plays a crucial role in recognizing and resolving challenges and barriers such as resistance to change or resource limitations, ensuring that practical solutions are adapted to the unique educational context (Burns, 2019).

Diversification is a key element of action research, in order to create a safe learning environment that transcends barriers in learning English as a foreign language. This approach encourages intercommunication, multiculturalism, and the exchange of different perspectives, fostering discussions on various topics during students' academic lives (Brown & Lee, 2018).

In summary, it is a substantiated approach for examining Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, offering the required adaptability for tailoring to diverse settings and promoting continuous reflection and adjustment. This research methodology empowers educators to make informed, evidence-based decisions about UDL implementation, actively engaging the educational community in the process (Creswell, 2014).

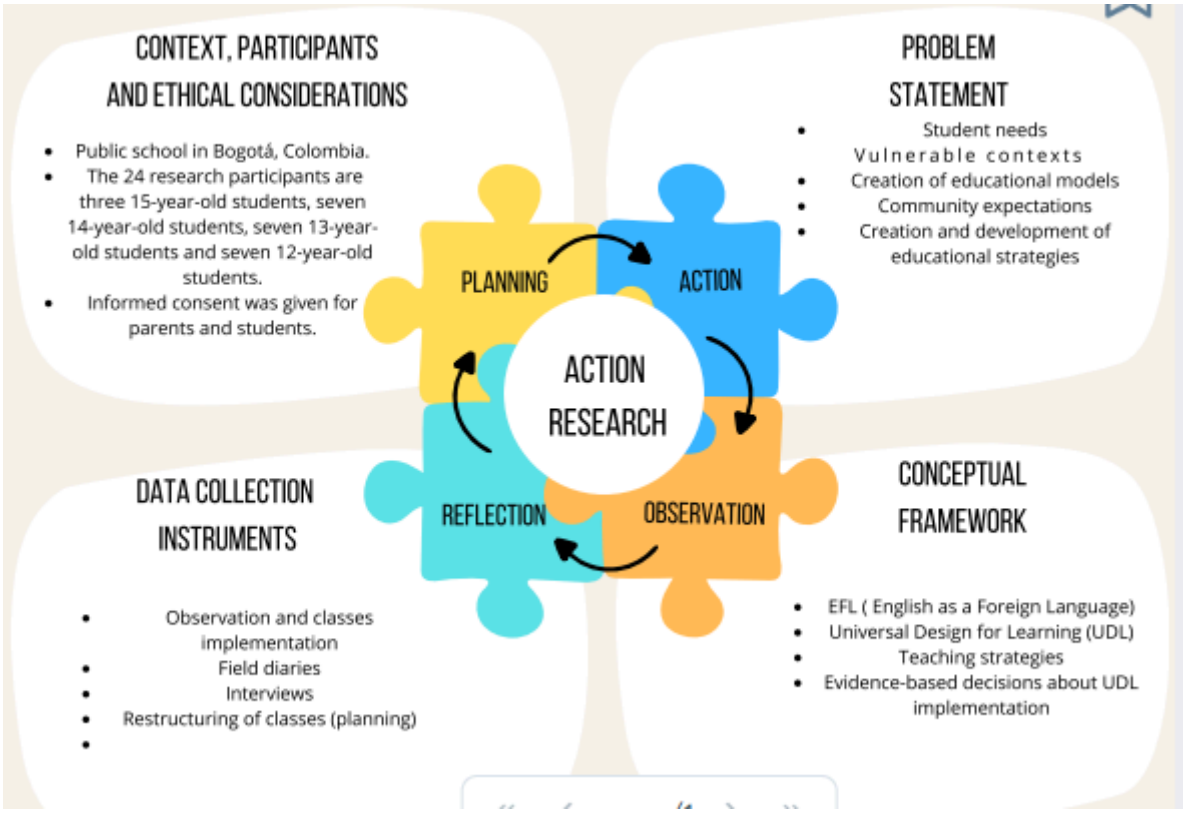
The organization of our AR

Based on Kemmis & McTaggart (1988), Burns (2019) describes Action Research as a cyclical process based on 4 basic steps: Plan, Act, Observe and Reflect. In our case, we started by reflecting, at this stage we got in contact with the head English teacher of the group so we could gather information about them in order to prepare and plan something in advance for the classes ahead. Following this, we started planning units that we thought at that

moment were going to be ideal for the group. We took into consideration everything we have learned about UDL and the key strategies in order to create a safe learning environment.

Figure 1

Visual representation of the cycles and elements of our Action Research



Cycle I

It took place from September 28th to October 19th 2023 during a two-hour class a week (4 weeks).

Stage 1: Reflection

With the information gathered from the head teacher and school coordinator, but also with the information that we had about the socio-economical context of the school, we reflected on what tools we could use in order to reach the students that we knew could have some difficulties in their learning process.

Stage 2: Planning

We started planning the first didactic unit, we wanted to bring topics that could start some kind of reflection on the group. It consisted of 4 classes, where we saw topics like ethical values, health, and personal care. In each class, we tried to include visual aids and have activities that encouraged them to engage and express within the class.

Stage 3: Action

During this part of the process, we started teaching the planned classes to the group. In the first class, we did an activity to check their level and to be able to get to know them. It was interesting to see them work and interact with us, even though it was quite challenging to apply the activity we planned due to lack of proficiency.

Stage 4: Observation

Consequently, we consider this was the key stage where we identified the difficulties within the group, not only with the topics but also with the teacher and all the preconceptions they had about the English class. We collected all of this information in our field diaries, our class observations, and more importantly all the feedback given by the students and their response to the class.

Stage 5: Reflection

Finally, in this stage we had the opportunity to reflect and discuss the information we gathered, and during this process we came out with the conclusion that we had to make and implement some changes in our planned classes in order to truly get the students to feel safe and listened to, since their level was not the one we were informed at the beginning of the process.

Cycle II

It took place from October 21st to November 22nd, 2023 during a two-hour class a week (4 weeks).

Stage 1: Reflection

With the information gathered from the previous classes, we realized that we had to make changes on the lesson plan if we wanted to provide a friendly environment, due to the lack of knowledge and input the class was getting outside the ones we were able to give.

Stage 2: Planning

We started redoing planning the second didactic unit. We wanted to rethink the topics, using A1-A2 level, in order to provide valuable and understandable input for the class. It consisted of 4 classes, where we saw topics like globalization and experiences at school, introducing vocabulary and input like the day, years and months. In each class, we tried to include visual aids and have activities that encouraged them to engage and express within the class.

Stage 3: Action

During this part of the process, we started teaching the planned classes to the group. In the following classes we applied the teaching strategies we planned beforehand, and since we knew the group we were able to get more work done.

Stage 4: Observation

Consequently, we saw an advance with the group, most of them participated more during the class and were able to communicate with their classmates in English some of the information they were learning.

Stage 5: Reflection

Finally, in this stage we had the opportunity to reflect and discuss the information we gathered, and during this process we came out with the conclusion that we did see some improvement in the class, and they were a lot more welcoming with us.

Context population

As previously mentioned, this research took place in a public school located in the south of the city of Bogotá, Colombia, which has previously authorized verbally and in writing that allows the development of our methodological implementation with the participation of their students. The students were informed of this implementation, the purpose of our research was explained to each of them, and they were free to participate in it or not following the parameters established by the institution. As for the facilities, in general terms, campus A of the school has good infrastructure conditions, it has computer rooms, laboratories and adequate classrooms with elements necessary for the development of academic activities, it also has a recreation and sports area in which they can play and practice sports like soccer or basketball.

In this institution, 3 different academic shifts are established, some take place in the morning from 6:30 AM to 12:30 PM; the afternoon day goes from 12:30 PM to 6:30 PM; and a day that goes from 7:30 PM to 6:30 PM: 00 PM, in which academic activities are focused on students who are in special situations such as: older students mixed into younger grades classrooms, special situations such as loss of regular academic quality, problems or difficulties of force majeure that prevent them from attending the two regular days.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that students receive food within the institution which is granted by PAE decree (School Feeding Program) established by the Congress of the Republic of Colombia, which seeks to mitigate malnutrition and promote physical, mental, emotional and cognitive of the students of district educational institutions in Colombia, these meals consist of a snack each day and lunch for the morning and afternoon school day.

Participants

The participants in this research project are seventh-grade high school students, 25 students, of which 24 of them agreed to participate in the research and the collection of their data. Thus, 7 out of the former mentioned agreed to be photographed or filmed during the established sessions, the remaining 17 did not agree.

For the implementation of our methodological units, among the 24 research participants there are three 15-year-old students, seven 14-year-old students, seven 13-year-old students and seven 12-year-old students. In this population, there are two foreign students with Spanish as their native language.

During the initial interactions with the students through the implementation of the methodological dictation, it became evident that, in general terms, they were students with limited knowledge of English. It was not easy for them to generate effective communication and meaningful communicative units since they possessed knowledge of some words and basic questions, to which they generally demonstrated correct comprehension. However, they did not yet have the ability to express themselves or provide responses in English. This was rooted in the fact that the topics planned for each session referred to specific grammatical structures, which were explained by their primary instructor, but did not allow enough time and space for them to have meaningful interactions and experiences.

It is important to mention that, in general terms, they were very participative students and ready to follow the instructions and planned activities, with energy and vigor typical of people their age, which led us to think that they could achieve positive results in their interaction and communication in a foreign language such as English under safe and appropriate socioemotional conditions.

Data collection instruments

In this section, we follow the predefined parameters for the development of the class in terms of materials and activities that were carried out and we highlight the importance of the data collection process. We implemented different instruments in order to gather the necessary data to respond to our previous questions, subsequently these were analyzed. In this way, according to the statements of Cohen y Sampieri (2018), we focused on the fact that AR is not based solely on collecting data, but also having the opportunity to analyze it and be able to create reflections on it, adapting it to the perspective of our research. In this way, we were able to define whether the implementation of safe environments for learning English as a foreign language was an efficient way in the education and teaching of foreign languages.

To refer to the data collection instruments for our research, three types of data collection instruments were chosen: field diaries, observation diaries and semi-structured interviews (Smith, 2017; Johnson, 2019). These tools are recognized as necessary to collect data in real time and space, to facilitate the complete documentation of various events, in a specific context, observed and studied academically (Brown & Lee, 2018). As Nassaji (2020) highlights, the effectiveness of data collection depends on several factors. Mainly with the credibility of the chosen instrument (Evans et al., 2010). This involves understanding the purpose and inherent nature of the instrument. Furthermore, managing these tools through best practices is necessary to minimize methodological and noticeable errors (Jones, 2019).

In the first place, it should be noted that the instruments implemented: daily observation, field diary and semi-structured interviews were used during the sessions applied with the participants, in order to have broad and sufficient knowledge of the situations that arose in each of the sessions, in which one of the researchers had the task of recording in them what he is able to perceive and, on the other hand, the researcher who had the role of

teacher also wrote their comments, observations and appreciations into the observation diaries and field diaries that were the tool to register those observations comments.

The methodology employed for data collection should align with the principles of impartiality, ethics, and functionality to prevent the introduction of biases that might hinder the investigative and observational process (Anderson, 2018; Brown, 2020).

To begin, our research involved the collection of data through observation diaries. According to Gray (2019), these diaries offer a genuine means of tracking the scenarios unfolding within the environment where participants engage in the designed methodological implementations. The purpose is to precisely document and elaborate on progress, changes, and even aspects that may not have been previously discussed in overarching approaches. Such insights can illuminate resolutions different from what the researcher had initially predicted.

However, this approach was enriched by the inclusion of recordings, photographs, and structured interviews, meticulously tailored to match the specific context of the participants and their interactions. This comprehensive approach was implemented within the institution, ensuring that all measurement elements are aligned with a common objective and purpose (Davis & Miller, 2016).

On the other hand, field diaries are an instrument that can help record information about the events that take place during the sessions. Azalte, Puerta & Morales (2008) as cited Espinoza & Ríos (2017) ensure that field diaries are present in the event that is predicted to be observed. The main uses of this instrument are based on: Describing the type of situations and events that occur in the classroom, critical and objective interpretation of the events that took place during the implemented sessions, and finally, reflection related to the theory estimated within the investigation or related to the findings obtained.

The second instrument was interviews, a data collection tool that can vary in structure, preparation, and purpose, which aims to determine the position of one or more individuals on a specific topic or subject, as outlined by Cohen & Sampieri (2008). This method provides the opportunity to gain clear, direct, and conversational insights into the perspectives of individuals regarding their realities and social environments. Additionally, interviews facilitated the exploration of diverse approaches and opinions held by our participants in this specific context.

The Semi structured interview, in general, is a flexible system during data collection in which you can collect valuable information from each of its participants, said information being verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard. Cohen & Sampieri (2008) ensures that during the interview, the interviewer cannot design or fall into biases during the planning, development and execution of these instruments. In addition, this must be designed as a space in which the interviewees can have enough time to respond in a reasoned manner and that your response is not a product of suggestion or external influences of the interviewer's own perceptions.

It is considered, based on Kitwood's statements (1977), that a well-executed interview is one that allows rapport to be established, questions are established efficiently, that is, understandable for the interviewee and if the answers given by the interviewee are founded, honest and complemented. In that sense, we encouraged each of our interviewees to respond and give definitions and descriptions related to our implementation. This was controlled through the preparation of the interview, since poor design could lead to erroneous interpretation, and this can make interpretation difficult for the researchers, taking into account that the perception of the interviewee will reflect their social, emotional, affective condition, among other important aspects in human behavior. Additionally, it is worth noting that a pilot interview was conducted with students from a similar background. Such piloting

allowed us to tailor our interview and take into consideration the type of questions and contents that were discussed.

Chapter IV. Ethical considerations

During our research project, students with whom we worked and who were part of our population were involved. This was carried out with the approval of the director of this public school in Bogotá, in which the parents of the students and the participants themselves gave authorization for the implementation of our sessions (Appendices). These authorizations were recorded in informed consents which were provided by our research tutor.

The mentioned authorizations involved informing both the parents of the students and the academic directors about the extent and nature of the students' participation. This information was communicated in a detailed manner, specifying the days, dates, times, and locations of the sessions. Participants were also informed that, if they wished, they might be photographed or filmed during certain moments of the sessions. Importantly, it was emphasized that this visual documentation would solely be used for our research purposes and would remain confidential, directly tied to the objectives of this study.

Having said that, it seemed appropriate to give priority to the use of the participants' data. It should be noted that none of the participants decided to use pseudonyms, since we would only be using their first name. Both the participants and the directors and teachers of the educational center were informed of the purposes of the research as such, of the implementation of the sessions and of the importance of their participation and collaboration to collect the necessary information for this research.

Chapter V. Data analysis

Data management and coding

The analysis of the data we gathered adhered to Charmaz (2006) Grounded Theory methodology. In line with this methodology, our study employed a coding procedure involving data segmentation to identify, label, and interpret the findings of our investigation into the implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, aiming to establish a safer and more efficient learning environment for 7th-grade students in a public school located in southern Bogotá.

Charmaz (2006) delineates a three-phase coding process: initial coding, where data segments are broken down to generate specific codes; focused coding, wherein these codes are meticulously examined and grouped into categories (both initial and focused coding were facilitated using the Excel software); and axial coding, which involves linking categories pertinent to the research inquiry (Charmaz, 2006).

Taking the previous information presented, in the following section we will present the data collected. The triangulation method involved intersecting information collected from interviews, field notes, and observations, ensuring the credibility and dependability of our research.

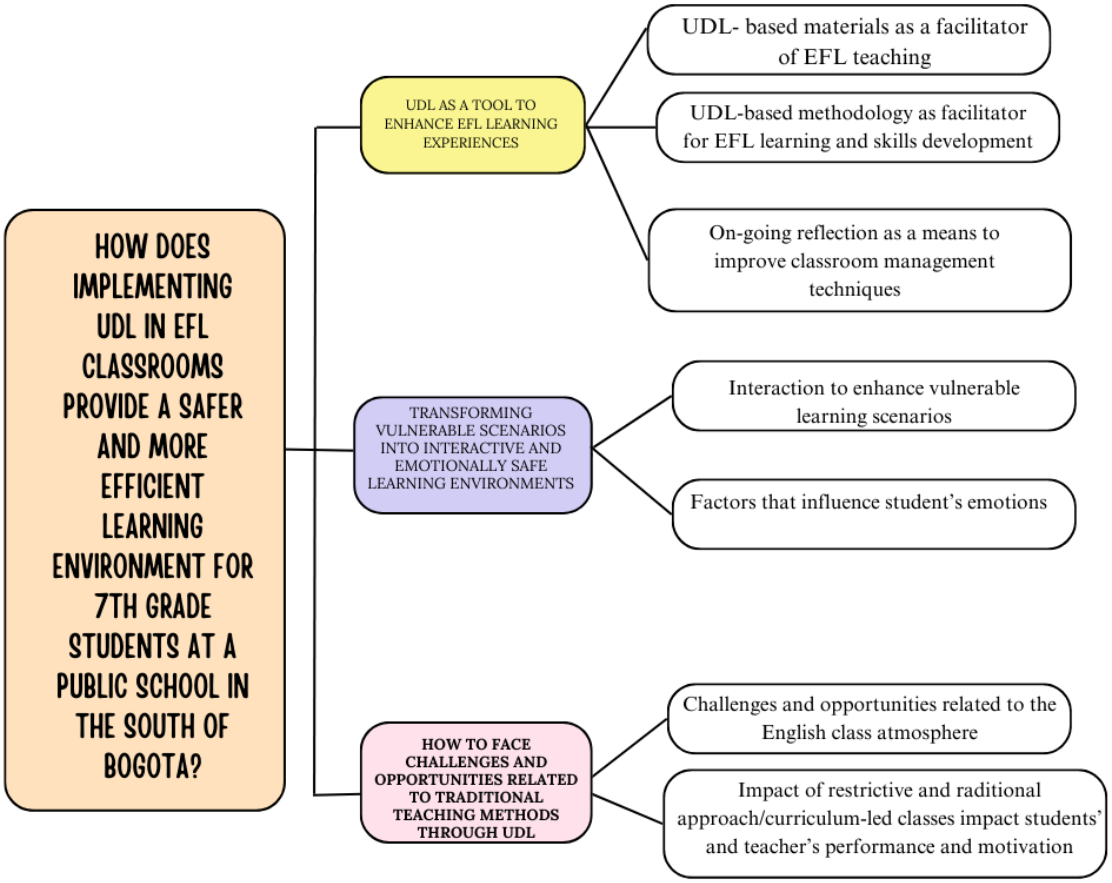
The subsequent chart (Figure 2) illustrates the data encoding process mentioned earlier. In it, you will see three categories and seven subcategories that surfaced from the analysis and interrelation of the gathered data.

Additionally, going from the macro categories, some subcategories are obtained, which were the main source to be able to define what we previously called macro categories, this was done in order to understand, analyze and locate each of the aspects that were

obtained, observed and classified within the sessions and interviews applied to the students participating in this project.

Figure 2

Code analysis and saturation: Main categories and subcategories



From the results obtained and describing the relationships of these analyzed data, several statements have emerged which can help us examine and establish answers to our research question: How does implementing UDL in the EFL classroom provide a safer and more efficient learning environment for 7th grade students at a public school in the south of Bogotá?

Cycle 1: UDL as a tool to enhance EFL learning experiences

The findings derived from this first cycle refer to the development and implementation of activities based on the UDL methodology for teaching a second foreign

language in a traditional English classroom, which enhanced the learning experience of participants. UDL, or Universal Design for Learning, is a framework that aims to cater to the diverse needs of learners by providing multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression. According to Meyer et al. (2014), "UDL encourages educators to proactively design learning experiences that remove barriers and provide options to accommodate the variability of all learners" (p. 5). By integrating UDL principles into the design of language learning activities, educators can create more inclusive and effective learning environments for all students, regardless of their individual differences or learning preferences.

Thus, based on the rigorous analysis that was carried out, and in line with the Action Research methodology of this project, several subcategories were obtained. Such subcategories will be described in light of the questions: What did we observe? What did we plan? How did we act? And what did we reflect on?; and aligned to our experiences as researchers and teachers of the English classes in our context.

Furthermore, such subcategories emerged as ways to understand certain factors that took place within these pedagogical contexts. Likewise, in this search, we sought to understand, analyze, and create certain strategies that could be implemented within the classroom to understand and investigate the educational processes that each student has.

UDL-based materials as facilitators for teaching English as a foreign language.

What did we plan?

It is well-known that materials are of great importance when implementing diverse methodologies inside the classroom. Such materials have led to innovative designs and adaptations in EFL contexts, where many teachers, material developers have found attractive and creative ways to produce resources for learners.

In this line, as UDL is mainly based on the premise that large populations should have access to curricula, materials and strategies that optimize their knowledge, our results evidence that designing meaningful and inclusive materials does create a positive impact in students' learning processes. Likewise, the learning objects and materials that were designed for this implementation specially contributed to our pedagogical knowledge and adaptation skills. Designing UDL materials allowed us to make changes, adaptations, and improvements to determine how our classroom could be an efficient and effective learning environment, and to motivate students' participation.

> *We started by showing some slides made by hand on paper, and also we have made some other that was going to be shown by the video beam just to make sure they were able to see some differences painted on each other about personal care and a small explanation about how to use the present simple, its structure and we showed some examples. We asked some who know about self-care to put together a definition, after this we saw some examples of self-care and put the vocabulary of self-care into practice by repeating it out loud.*
>
> *Furthermore, we noticed that the use of the slides was useful for them because they were able to notice the errors that had been written and drawn on some of them, leading them to have the correct answer*. (Field diary - October 5th, 2023)

It is vitally important to mention that rethinking the way in which we wanted to present some topics during the sessions was paramount in the co-construction of effective learning processes. Such rethinking included making changes in the programming and tools used along the didactic units in order to not repeat activities and materials used in previous sessions, as well as finding resources with which to create optimal material for the development of the class. All these actions were thought and developed based on the general abilities of the group in which these resources were applied. Additionally, it was observed

that although not all students reacted the same way to the different stimuli and materials presented, having the main goal of creating resources that were stimulating, visually attractive and easy to manipulate allowed students to advance in their cognitive abilities and processes.

UDL based methodology as facilitator for EFL learning and -skills development

What did we observe?

UDL based methodology became a facilitator for EFL learning, since it allowed us to implement different pedagogical strategies that elevated students' English performance and competence. Framed within this methodology, dynamism and careful planning had a rapid effect on the reception and integration of information and content by the students. Therefore, it was evidenced throughout the course of the sessions, that students became significantly more interested in carrying out workshops and learning experiences that were designed for them. Nonetheless, regarding the implementation of new materials, it was noticed that it is vitally important to explain in detail the use and operation of such learning objects/materials because this could often lead to misunderstandings.

> *During the observations carried out in the last sessions we have noticed progress in the learning and use of adjectives and personal pronouns, some of the students have recorded the activities and materials used during the explanation and development of the aforementioned topics in order to solve a problem about the activities that were carried out in this session (the students were talking about it).* (Field Diary - Date October 19th, 2023).

It was also evidenced throughout the UDL-based sessions that students had a tendency to have better results and performance. For instance, in terms of the language use skill, students were able to clarify doubts and apply rules correctly during the exercises

presented; similarly, students who had more ability to pronounce or read, had a much closer and faster adaptation compared to what they had been experiencing in their traditional classes previously, which consisted on filling in the book and answering written workshops that lacked a meaningful or communicative approach. Therefore, implementing a coherent and inclusive methodology such as UDL did promote the development of skills and language learning inside our classroom.

Ongoing reflection as means to improve classroom management techniques

What did we reflect on?

In this section, we will present some of the reflections generated during the use and implementation of the methodology guided under UDL techniques. Such insights and thoughts were mostly compiled in the field diaries that were used as a data gathering tool during this study.

Initially, we had designed and prepared all the sessions that were going to be developed with the students/participants. These didactic units were conceived based on the level of knowledge of English that their main tutor had mentioned to us upon arriving at the first session. Nevertheless, even if at the beginning we managed to get students' attention, and they responded to the activities planned for that first meeting, it was noticed that they were not 100% clear about the topics that the main teacher had mentioned to us. Consequently, this mismatch made it clear that the main topics such as: present continuous, past continuous, future simple, among others, had to be replaced by more elementary topics that gave them a better basis in the language such as: the verb to be, the English alphabet, most common words in English, cardinal and ordinal numbers, days of the week and months of the year, dates in English, among others.

Apart from the implemented modifications in the planning - which were a product of our pedagogical reflections, we also implemented changes in the dynamics that this could represent, and the way in which topics should be presented and executed by us to generate meaningful learning experiences with our students. In this way, it was evident that reflecting on real contexts and situations that students and teachers navigate allows a better understanding and implementation of pedagogical strategies and contents.

Based on this scenario, as reflective and conscious teachers, we decided to carry out an analysis at the end of each class that we called "Opportunities for improvement", this section opened reflective and metacognitive spaces in which we could identify elements that were not functioning the way we had previously proposed so that new strategies or decisions could be made to tackle those gaps and improve the learning experience.

Within this line, one of the most relevant examples that depict how reflection enhanced the teaching/learning experience was when we were designing the class and the activities with which we were going to introduce how to make physical descriptions. By going deeper into the elements that they were supposed to describe (height, skin color, body shape, etc.) it became evident to us that these features and tasks could trigger insecurities or environments of rejection, ridicule, discrimination, sexualization among others. Hence, such insights allowed us to rethink our planning in a respectful and empathetic manner with no room for comments, actions, gestures and thoughts that could generate an unfavorable environment for a good learning experience. The following excerpt depicts how as teachers we have to be aware of what can happen in a classroom, especially be assertive in order not to generate opportunities that may present unfavorable situations.

> *We had to improve in class management. We must be more active and take ownership of the situation, it would be good to improve integration strategies, especially when*

we were reintroducing the topics which are body parts and how to describe people.

(Observations diary - Date October 19th, 2023, personal communication)

Cycle 2: Transforming vulnerable scenarios into interactive and emotionally safe learning environment

In this section, some aspects of vital importance that were carried out to promote a meaningful and useful learning process in teaching practice are reflected.

This section highlights crucial aspects considered in creating a satisfactory and meaningful learning process, representing positive elements for implementation in various teaching practices aimed at fostering interactive and secure learning environments.

During this research exercise, one of the main challenges we set ourselves was to find a way to transform scenarios with vulnerable communities and generate/promote safe environments for their learning, especially that of English as a foreign language. Thus, the findings we obtained shed light on how to transform such vulnerability that is so usual in our Colombian contexts into opportunities for the correct and proper application and management of didactic resources. Like this, our results prove that enriching experiences provoke interactive learning spaces and generate knowledge construction. Within this line, several aspects such as interaction in the English classroom and factors that relate to students' emotions were analyzed and considered as key features that transform vulnerable settings into safe ones.

Interaction to Enhance Vulnerable Learning Scenarios

What did we observe?

During this phase, we were able to observe and analyze some aspects related to the interaction between human beings and the different ways in which we can learn and acquire new skills and improve some others that we have naturally. Not only in terms of English as a

foreign language but also learning and developing social, communicative, and coexistence skills, among others.

However, focusing a little more on the objectives that took place in this research exercise, one of the main aspects to observe was how knowledge was generated and skills improved through interaction. The findings obtained show that in a classroom it is very important to observe the way in which the learners relate to each other, observe their capacity for collaboration and teamwork to respond to the challenges they faced during the sessions.

As it was stated before, this project was carried out within a vulnerable population in different terms. For this reason, we had to take into account that this vulnerability hindered the learning process, and it was our objective to generate positive solutions so that students went through learning processes in a satisfactory manner. Hence, these difficult environments challenged us to implement teaching strategies and tasks in which students had to find the collaboration of some of their colleagues, identify the strengths of some of them and adapt them to their own style and reasoning in order to generate a solution to a certain situation.

Accordingly, in order to promote this interaction, we carried out several activities in which they had to work collaborating with each other. One example of such tasks consisted of building a simple text with a series of words that were disorganized: there were 4 different texts in which they had to work approximately in groups of 4 or 5 people, and they had to work as a team to be able to organize said text in which. This simple, yet collaborative task, allowed us to observe that some students had more reception and knew better how to use verbs, and that others handled the text better than some of their classmates, or that some others are more effective with pronouns. This awareness allowed us to see how they could communicate and collaborate while learning.

In this specific task, beyond ensuring that the sentences were correctly organized, what became evident was how mutual learning took place. The discussions students had

about which word was correct or not, where the adjectives could be located, finding a way to locate the pronouns, and how they justified their response were evidence of a safe space to interact, discuss, share ideas and be safe. Such questioning or approval from their other classmates as they argued why a word was or was not located correctly became a meaningful exchange of previous knowledge that they had already been developing during the previous sessions. Therefore, by hearing them sharing them with their peers and depicting their knowledge, we were able to observe and demonstrate that it is possible to generate learning spaces in vulnerable populations through the use of interaction with other people, learning with them, and also learning from them.

Factors that influence in the student's emotions

What did we plan?

Emotions and feelings were also evident in the development of this project, since they are part of who we are as human beings.

Natural emotions such as fear, insecurity, frustration, sadness, and others can easily arise within a group of students. This phenomenon is particularly prominent during high school, a stage where adolescents spend a significant portion of their time. Biologically-driven changes during this period can shape crucial aspects of their personality, influencing both their learning process and their perception of it as a meaningful endeavor. As observed by Lazarus (2000), "Emotions are a central feature of high school experiences, influencing students' perceptions, motivations, and interactions within educational settings".

Throughout the implementation of our didactic units to transform these scenarios, several emotions arose. In this line, it is important to consider that seventh grade can be an accurate scenario to promote and embrace various types of emotions and feelings, which

could help students along their transition to higher grades and experiences that might generate stronger or more complex emotions, such as uncertainty, anxiety, among others.

That being said, the results allowed us to see how important it is that teachers have the ability to help students generate positive and pleasant thoughts, emotions, and sensations during the different academic stages that they go through in high school within our classes.

Like this, the type of tasks and learning experiences we designed became a factor that influenced students' emotions in the class. From the first session we had with them, we let them know that their active participation during our sessions would represent a small percentage of what their final grade. Consequently, from the design of our materials, class topics, activities, and practice exercises we always kept in mind that the idea was to challenge them, observe them, and evaluate them participating and constructing knowledge within a safe environment. Nonetheless, at the same time, it was necessary to be careful with this purpose since our intention was not to generate stress in them, or expose them to adverse situations that could make them feel insecure, uncomfortable, anxious, etc.

In this way, what we sought was to obtain and observe the different emotions in them and how they could manifest them during the implementation process with the applied sessions. It was vitally important to let them know that during this period the primary rules were respect and respect. Participation, since we did not want to subject them to a hostile environment, was quite important because we were able to observe their skills, and to see them interacting naturally with one another. It also allowed us to see how they improved their skills and comprehend the attitudes they showed when working as team members. Finally, such positive emotions evidenced their disposition and spirit during the sessions despite the fact that in some occasions there were class management situations that made them feel confused when giving an instruction.

Accordingly, a significant learning process is a factor that is directly linked to the socio-emotional process that a student may face inside the classroom. All those interactions and observations that were evidenced show that, although it is true that we cannot control everything that happens in their daily environment, we, as teachers, can try to support and manage a good emotional relationship in them with our instructional design and guidance.

Such results finally evidence the important role that a teacher has and the responsibility that their teaching brings into students' lives and emotional development. It has been proved that poor management of a class, a grade or an activity can have an emotional effect on the learner, which can hinder in their learning process as a student and their training as an active and functional person in a society.

How To Face Challenges And Opportunities Related To Traditional Teaching Methods Through UDL.

Challenges and opportunities related to the English class atmosphere

What did we observe?

Throughout our sessions, we have encountered various challenges, notably in fostering effective teacher-student relationships. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of our students is pivotal in tailoring activities to accommodate diverse learning styles. By implementing UDL, we observed a positive reception to the activities introduced. This approach involved incorporating a range of tools beyond mere technology to enhance student comprehension. Each activity was executed, with the goal to receive feedback and improve, culminating in the completion and delivery of tasks by the end of every class.

However, one recurring challenge pertained to the availability of tools, often not at our disposal in their entirety. Despite this constraint, we used available resources to diversify activities, thereby capitalizing on opportunities for reusing materials. Throughout the whole

implementation, UDL remained a cornerstone, fostering inclusive and dynamic learning environments. Consequently, students perceived a marked difference between conventional English classes, characterized by a strict demeanor, and our sessions. A seventh-grade student remarked on the contrast, emphasizing the engaging nature of our classes and the level of participation and productivity experienced:

> *¿Cuéntanos qué diferencias percibes entre las sesiones regulares de inglés con la profesora principal asignada y las que has tenido con nosotros?*
>
> *Participante; Pues lo que ya le había dicho, es que la profe es muy rabona, muy cascarrabias. Hay veces que lo regaña por todo y en el cambio, las 3 o 4 clases que hemos tenido con los de la Universidad han sido más divertidas, hacen que uno trabaje o se ha trabajado más, yo creo que se trabaja más, en cambio, con la profesora la mayoría se la toma de recocha*. (Interview 23 November, 2023 - participant 1, personal communication)

Consequently, the development of these classes made students integrate and have a different perspective on English classes. Our aim, as educators, has been to instill a curiosity for learning a second language in a more engaging and practical manner. By contextualizing learning within real-life scenarios, we attempted to ensure that acquired knowledge finds practical application.

Restrictive traditional approach and curriculum-led classes impact students and teacher's performance and motivation

What did we observe?

The impact of restrictive traditional approaches and curriculum-led classes on both student and teacher performance and motivation is evident from our observations. We have noticed a significant lack of student motivation as a consequence of the rigid implementation

of the curriculum without any adjustments to inject dynamism into teaching. This is exacerbated by the impossibility of integrating complementary tools as a resource for the sessions we were leading with the appendices of this action research, in order to achieve a better explanation of the topics and the reluctance to explore new teaching strategies. Interviews with seventh grade students further underscored this issue:

Entrevistador; ¿No tomarías clases de inglés?

Participante; No

Entrevistador; ¿Por qué?

Participante; Por la profesora, por la profesora. (interview 23 November 2023 - participant 2, personal communication)

The role of teacher motivation in promoting student engagement is critical.

An uninspired teacher inevitably leads to poor learning outcomes, whereas an enthusiastic teacher creates a sense of belonging and confidence among students.

During the conducted interview, students expressed their ideal English class as one marked by mutual respect and active involvement, highlighting the importance of a supportive learning atmosphere.

Orador 1: ¿Cuál crees tú que sería una clase de inglés perfecta, una en la que te sientes chévere, cómodo y animado?

Orador 2: En las que los compañeros no sean muy cansones, por ejemplo, cuando una de la respuesta mal. (Interview 23 November 2023- participant 4, personal communication)

It is good to look for different alternatives and approach methods to be an applicator within the classroom, bringing a dynamic approach and the creation of new pedagogical strategies, being patient with students, having the ability to guide them, giving them feedback so that they know how to recognize their mistakes and so on. They can also reinforce them

through different activities, be creative, have a balance between practice and theory, manage the skills of the group as it is, knowing the strengths and weaknesses of each student, as we have previously mentioned, which allows creating new objectives to achieve inside and outside the classroom.

Chapter VI. Discussion

In the following section, we will contrast and discuss the results previously obtained in our research, with the theoretical framework that guided our project, in order to answer the research question initially posed: How does implement UDL in the EFL classroom provide a safer and more efficient learning environ implemented students at a public school in the south of Bogotá? To solve this, two main issues arose, which we will mention below:

Implementing UDL In Vulnerable Scenarios Is Still A Challenge In Education

During this research we were able to observe that for the implementation of a new strategy such as UDL, it is necessary to adapt the environment such as the classroom, as well as providing teachers with the necessary tools to implement this approach and develop the required types of materials. Furthermore, another aspect that must be assessed relates to how traditional education continues to be reflected within the classroom, which still remains a challenge for the implementation of the UDL and the embracement of diversity.

One of the main aspects observed during this action research was the fact that we were able to promote an environment in which students could have deeper and more meaningful experiences under the criterion of generating safer environments in which each of the students managed to have a more active participation and where no spaces were generated that could affect their cognitive and social development, This is aligned with the considerations proposed by Bohun et al. (2022) which state that these spaces manage to generate a dynamism that usually brings out to the individuals of their comfort zone.

Meanwhile, providing a learning environment that is both safe and challenging for students must entail a careful revision that avoids segregating attitudes that lead the student to a stressful and negative situations; thus, it must aim at generating the possibility of experimenting, contrasting, interpreting and finding in one way or another the solution to a problem. In this way, the English themes and teaching strategies offered and directed by us during the sessions allowed them to engage and learn in safe scenarios, proving that learners are capable of consciously generating tools that help them internalize the different forms and areas of knowledge. This, according to Hernandez & Gutiérrez (2008), is quite important during the learning process of any individual. Showing students how they own resources and actions can facilitate the acquisition of knowledge on a topic or subject based on the knowledge of their own abilities, and reinforcing and improving what we could consider weaknesses.

As Molbæk & Hedegaard-Sørensen (2023) mentions, it is possible to guide the design of strategies that help improve the learning of English as a foreign language. Therefore, it takes us to contrast that, although it is possible and beneficial to carry out UDL implementations in learning spaces, the planning margin of the sessions designed by the institution where these implementations were carried out is not directed or focused on carrying out such implementations.

The planning and design of learning units from the perspective of the UDL in vulnerable communities is necessary to achieve the development of English learning in an effective and inclusive motivating manner, in which the student manages to develop and improve the skills he has on the language. In this line, as Parupalli (2020) proposes it, English as a foreign language plays a significant role in the promotion of intercultural and social competencies. This was evidenced during our sessions with the students, since we were able

to show that many of them managed to advance in their learning processes within safe and reliable spaces that promoted social and meaningful interactions.

The sessions that were held with these students allowed us to reflect on the ease with which spaces of knowledge can be generated from the exercise and application of different methodologies and resources, since we were able to demonstrate a positive acceptance and reception of the students in front of the different activities and topics that were presented during this action research. Many of the principles mentioned by (Kieran & Anderson, 2018) regarding some of the advantages of implementing UDL, such as Different Means of Engagement, Addressing Diverse Learners and Teacher Training, helped us give more effective approaches and be able to analyze well the way in which we had to execute them during our sessions.

On the other hand, this makes us rethink the need to search for different resources to offer to students and find a way to generate learning content through them, which can sometimes become limited due to the low availability of resources, work materials and physical resources in the institutions of the city of Bogotá.

Additionally, we were able to observe, as mentioned by Kieran & Anderson (2018), that the implementation of the UDL is based mainly on promoting access to information, knowledge and different methods in order to make them accessible to all communities, this approach allows everyone to profit from such designs, which was evidently profitable in this vulnerable population that already helps to break down the existing barriers in public education in Colombia and especially that of this institution where our action research was carried out.

The implementation of strategies based on the UDL method brings with it many challenges that we were able to face, in order to obtain beneficial results since it was noted that some cognitive, communicative and social skills improved in the participants of this

research. In addition, the scope of this implementation of these strategies helped us determine that education based on respect for culture and other people and is focused on interaction and the promotion of meaningful learning through teamwork and collaboration are determining factors in people's learning processes which promote a positive culture.

On the other hand, with regard to teaching English as a foreign language in this type of population, the UDL methodology is quite broad and implies great changes in what we know as traditional education. Smith (2014) denotes the positive implications that these learning environments safe learning can achieve, however, effective application may be limited

Creating And Promoting Safe EFL Learning Environments by using UDL materials

During this action research, we were able to observe in general terms what would be defined as a safe learning environment. Our purpose was to understand how to implement an environment within the classroom that was safe for the students and would allow us to analyze if this generated and further promoted meaningful EFL learning. Several aspects related to this will be highlighted now.

Firstly, one of the factors in determining a safe learning environment is its location. Although it may be located in a marginal area, with different social, political, cultural, racial or ethnic problems, it must comply with the mission of not being affected by those external discrepancies that students may experience; therefore, it must be an open space for dialogue, sharing ideas, participation and freedom of good practices, both educational and teaching. Additionally, Zhao-Ron (2008) states that the classroom functions as a physical space and this cannot be limited to the barriers of that same nature or of some external natures such as politics, religion, gender, among others.

During our research, we showed that a friendly learning environment was established primarily through communication. This due to the fact that the students participating in our sessions had the perception that the English sessions were based solely on following instructions provided by a textbook, which had to be completed, but they did not perceive it as a space in which they could explore the learning of English as a foreign language from a different dynamic, so what we did was explain to them that our sessions would not take place as they regularly did.

This implementation proved that confidence was increasing in them when it came to giving their opinion, asking questions, and interacting with each other in order to carry out the proposed activities. Thus, our findings supports what Ferrada et al. (2013) adds in terms of how a friendly environment must provide security and tranquility, which we were able to highlight during our research given that the way in which we directed our sessions and the activities based on participation, teamwork and the exploration of resources and different approaches and topics, All this was achieved through the generation of friendly feelings of security that we transmit to the trainees, which Monje et al. (2009) define as an application of assertive communication strategies, both in the student-teacher relationship and in the relationship of the students among themselves, but beyond active communication. We observed that it is possible to generate these good practices by modifying our speech, demonstrating to them that through the learning exercise there are no failures but on the contrary opportunities for improvement.

Through the implementation of UDL in these spaces and analyzing the advantages of the implementation of safe zones, we showed that students acquired skills such as: Promote student self-regulation they were also able to improve their progress toward mastery while goals were settled, and self-monitoring since they were able to monitor their progress, and reflect on their learning progress and skills. Estupiñán (2020) states that educators contribute

to the pedagogical and social benefits through the type of direction we give to our students, through the way in which we communicate with them and by indicating that they must communicate and share ideas with each other to promote an atmosphere of collaboration, unity, and identity. Such factors are paramount when working with populations that may be exposed to any type of vulnerability. The way in which we communicate with them and in which we indicate that they must communicate and share ideas with each other promotes an atmosphere of collaboration, unity, and identity in them, which is important when working with populations that may be exposed to any type of vulnerability.

Conclusions

In this section, we are navigating some key elements that lead us to synthesize some of the most relevant aspects that this research found in order to clarify and demonstrate the horizon derived from our research questions: How does implementing UDL in the EFL classroom provide a safer and more efficient learning environment for 7th grade students at a public school in the south of Bogotá?

The design of teaching units based on UDL can be applied in vulnerable academic communities in Bogotá if we have the different resources, both physical and methodological. This demands a well-thought and creative design in order to make it accessible to everyone of the community in question, in order to internalize and promote its academic and learning practices.

- An Action Research design was carried out in order to understand how the implementation of UDL inside the English classroom promotes a safer learning environment. Two didactic units were designed, and three main categories arose to show the transformative impact of our implementation. In order to gather the necessary information during the phases. From these, we were able to implement

two didactic units designed by UDL principles. As a result of this implementation, we divided our results in three categories that showed the transformative impact the implementation had in the class environment.

- UDL strategies act as facilitators for the teaching experience by creating spaces in which students feel comfortable to build and express their knowledge. This was evidenced through the students' improvement in their performance, class participation and engagement during the English class.
- UDL strategies promote safe learning environments. Such strategies attract the attention of students, motivate their participation, foster positive emotions, and reverse the previous conceptions they had about traditional English teaching approaches.
- In order to improve our classes, we had to analyze the context of the students and their likes, as well as being willing to make changes in the planning taking into account situations presented by the educational institution. Additionally, after starting the implementation, we made significant changes in order to match the real input they were receiving beside our classes. This in order for students to feel attracted to the class, but also for there to be significant learning.
- It is important to highlight the fact that the use of AR with this type of particular population requires time, careful planning of activities and resources, patience and adaptability of the material created. During the implementation, challenging situations such as class environment, classroom management and time management may arise on the part of the institution or the students themselves.

Limitations

The Implementation Of UDL In Vulnerable Scenarios Requires More Resources And Commitment

At this stage, we are describing the different obstacles and limitations that we were able to reveal during our interventions. They account for some of the difficulties that this research project faced, and limited in one way or another the scope and approach that we hoped to give to this research exercise.

Firstly, it is important to highlight that the hours assigned to the English subject in this educational entity in the city of Bogotá are limited, because students are assigned approximately 90 minutes which are divided into 2 days of classes, this leads to approximately 45 minutes per session, but if we take into account the transfer of students from one room to another and their organization once they arrive in the classroom, the session has fewer minutes. Regarding the organization of our teaching units, we could observe that all sessions were completed by 80% due to different time constraints.

On the other hand, we consider that the lack of resources within the institution limits the number of activities that can be carried out. We were able to witness that although there are some technological resources, such as virtual practice rooms, computers for the use of students, this is difficult to access since this type of physical resources of the institution are not designed to be executed within the English subject which limits the way in which students can interact and carry out activities within these spaces.

Another relevant aspect that relates to what Estupiñán (2020) stated is the institution does not usually provide physical resources such as paints, colors, didactic work papers and other stationery utensils that could help the development of different academic activities within the classroom. Therefore, when these materials are requested by the teacher to carry out a teaching unit, some of the learners are unable to take them to class due to various

difficulties corresponding to the vulnerability that this population presents, even though this is not the case 100% of the time. Despite this, this was not a great difficulty in our research exercise because we assumed the delivery of the necessary materials for the development of our interventions.

One of the most important limitations found regarding the universal learning designs is that the educational system managed by that institution is not designed in terms of availability of time, resources, number of students per group and logistical organization to carry out this type of implementations throughout the institution, limiting us to talking only about the scenario of the subject English as a foreign language.

Finally, we highlight the contribution to our teaching activity, since through the course of the different stages of learning that we faced, we prepared ourselves to be able to navigate the remains that the teaching exercise will bring us. All the challenges we encountered have equipped us to guarantee a good education and learning for our students. Thus, this study has helped us reflect on the reality of public education in Colombia, its advantages and opportunities for improvement, and how our teaching profession can generate and build free, meaningful, equitable and safe learning environments.

They way forward and opportunities to improve

During the course of this research, challenges arose that led us to determine a series of aspects that are quite important in teaching practice, and especially in the teaching of a foreign language. Likewise, we were able to identify some factors that, if improved, would generally help us promote meaningful and efficient learning in terms of design, implementation, practice, and teaching with public school students. For this reason, it is important to mention that the research had to be adapted to the real conditions of the students' contexts, allowing us to understand how to solve the problem and break the barrier of learning a foreign language that was present in this population of students who we work with.

In that order of ideas, this stage is made up of different recommendations for future research that are related to the implementation of UDL for the promotion of EFL learning and or the promotion of safe school environments for communities in general.

In the context of public education in Colombia, many spaces and strategies are still needed for the implementation of the UDL in terms of EFL. As suggested by García & Martinez, (2021), the exploration and application of units and methodologies for the promotion of ELF must be achieved through all the academic programs available to a community, thus helping to ensure that the entire population has access to said programs, with the aim of applying favorable designs and strategies for the population itself.

In the context of teaching and research, it is the responsibility of both to design and promote their academic content in an inclusive manner, taking into account all their student population and their many differences. Since the main goal is the promotion of pedagogical practices based on communicative learning through fair social practices, it is important for the researcher to seek and propose how to design, and evaluate the teaching practices. Taking into account all the features and particularities that your application population may have. Subirats et al. (2005) also maintain that the teacher is the one who guides the experience and development environment of each individual within their academic and social training process.

Even though the design of accessible didactic information can sometimes be a difficulty, we encourage future researchers to design and implement diverse strategies with which students will have the opportunity to interact in various ways and to generate communication and an atmosphere of problem-solving, teamwork and self-knowledge of strong skills and those that need to be improved. Thus, we also encourage carrying out research in this field from different methodological perspectives that can show diverse and successful ways of implementing UDL in the EFL context.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: School's authorization for implementation.

Licenciatura en bilingüismo con énfasis en la enseñanza del Inglés
SOLICITUD DE AUTORIZACIÓN PARA DESARROLLAR PROYECTO DE INVESTIGACIÓN.

Bogotá D.C, Agosto 2 del 2023

Señor Rector (a):

_____

Con el fin de llevar a cabo la investigación titulada "**UDL STRATEGIES TO CREATE SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS FOR EFL LEARNING IN VULNERABLE CONTEXTS.** ". Dirigido por la profesora Jimena Alviar, miembro de la Facultad de Educación de la Universidad El Bosque, Bogotá, Colombia; Nos dirigimos a usted para solicitar su autorización para llevar a cabo dicho proyecto en las clases de inglés con los estudiantes del grado séptimo (jornada tarde). Dicha autorización y participación es estrictamente voluntaria. **Le pedimos que lea detenidamente esta solicitud, y aclaramos que, si antes, durante o después de haber leído este documento tiene preguntas o inquietudes acerca del proyecto, no dude en contactar a alguna de las estudiantes investigadoras por los medios de contacto que más abajo se detallan.**

Esta investigación tiene como objetivo implementar el UDL (Universal Design for Learning) como estrategia pedagógica y en la creación de nuevas actividades para el EFL (English as a Foreign Language) así mismo, el UDL es un enfoque de enseñanza que se utiliza para adaptarse a las necesidades y habilidades de todos los estudiantes y de esta manera se busca eliminar los obstáculos innecesarios en el proceso de aprendizaje, esta estrategia será implementada en el colegio 'INFORMACIÓN CONFIDENCIAL' con el grado séptimo, a través de una investigación-acción colaborativa.

Si usted autoriza la participación de sus estudiantes y la institución, la información obtenida será confidencial con fines académicos y de producción de conocimiento únicamente, sin ningún tipo de afectación a los participantes. Los datos estarán a cargo del equipo de investigación (Docente tutora y estudiantes de la Licenciatura en Bilingüismo con Énfasis en la Enseñanza del Inglés) para el posterior desarrollo de informes y tesis académicas. Como institución poseen el derecho de interrumpir y negar la investigación al considerar que esta perjudica o incumple con lo acordado; si así sucede, la información recogida será descartada del estudio y eliminada.

Los beneficios directos que recibirá la institución o sus estudiantes son los resultados de las estrategias aplicadas para el desarrollo y fortalecimiento de habilidades comunicativas en una segunda lengua, contribuyendo al proyecto de bilingüismo que posee en su institución.

Las actividades que se van a realizar con aprox. 24 niños de bachillerato del grado séptimo (jornada tarde). Estas actividades están comprendidas en 2 unidades didácticas conformadas por tres clases cada uno (6 clases); estas unidades empezarían a mediados de Septiembre y finalizarán en Octubre del presente año. La implementación será llevada a cabo bajo un enfoque comunicativo y basado en tareas, en donde se desarrollarán actividades significativas en la clase de Inglés, para recolectar y analizar dicha información desde un enfoque cualitativo, sin generar ningún riesgo para los participantes o afectación a las actividades establecidas en el calendario académico de la institución.
Declaro haber sido informado(a) de los objetivos y procedimientos de la investigación voluntaria y del tipo de participación que se le solicitará aquí. Declaro haber sido informado(a) que este estudio no involucra ningún peligro o daños para la salud física o mental, con la posibilidad de negarme a participar en cualquier momento y sin recibir señalamiento alguno. Declaro saber que la información entregada será confidencial y anónima para usos y condiciones contemplados en este consentimiento.
Por consiguiente:

Acepto y autorizo a participar _____ No acepto y No autorizo a participar _____

Yo_____, como rector del colegio_____, identificado con CC._____, una vez informado(a) acerca de la investigación llevada a cabo en la
institución por la docente _____ y sus actividades para
estudios de maestría, autorizo su plena participación en dicha investigación.

Firma:_____ Fecha: _____

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Appendix 2: Parents informed consent

UNIVERSIDAD EL BOSQUE

CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

PADRES O ACUDIENTES DEL ESTUDIANTE

TÍTULO DE LA INVESTIGACIÓN

UDL STRATEGIES TO CREATE SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS FOR EFL LEARNING IN VULNERABLE CONTEXTS.

Contextualización del tema:

Después de estar inmersos en diversos escenarios de la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera y posterior a llevar a cabo una reflexión del rol del aprendizaje de una segunda lengua surge nuestro interés de conectar el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras con el desarrollo de habilidades blandas tales como la empatía en nuestros estudiantes.Para contribuir con la formación de ciudadanos empáticos, se busca a través de una intervención de unidades didácticas, abordar el concepto del UDL para la adquisición de una segunda lengua como estrategia. Aprovechar el escenario de enseñanza de una segunda lengua y la motivación que esto representa en los niños y niñas nos permitirá abordar la falta de conciencia sobre la búsqueda de nuevas estrategias pedagógicas y la importancia de mejorar su proceso de aprendizaje en el area de ingles, lo cual esto nos permitirá construir ambientes seguros en los que el estudiante pueda expresar lo que sienten y puedan aprender significativamente.

Descripción de la investigación:

Con base en lo anterior, su hijo/hija está invitado/invitada a participar en una investigación sobre la implementación del UDL como estrategia pedagógica para la enseñanza de una segunda lengua. El objetivo general de este proyecto es entender como la implementación de esta estrategia pedagógica dentro del aula de clases de inglés ayuda a los estudiantes a desarrollar autoconciencia y construcción de vocabulario relacionado con los diferentes temas que serán desarrollados dentro del salón de clase.

La investigación está enmarcada en observaciones de clase de inglés y análisis de las producciones de su hijo/hija, los cuales se almacenarán en grabaciones de video de clases y fotos de la misma. Es importante aclarar que los datos de su hijo/hija serán analizados y almacenados en archivos electrónicos bajo clave de las investigaciones y que en las grabaciones de video o fotos NO se registrará los rostros de los niños y niñas.

En esta investigación, es necesario que su hijo/hija cuente con su aprobación para poder tener en cuenta la información que sea desarrollada en clase y para que haga parte de las entrevistas y grupos focales que se realizarán

Riesgos y Beneficios:

No habrá retribución material o simbólica para su hijo/hija como participante de este proyecto, pero como beneficio, la reflexión que surja a raíz del proceso de investigación

fomentará el desarrollo de habilidades blandas y competencias socioemocionales, tales como la empatía, facilidad de adaptación, entre otros. Al igual que la exposición y trabajo de habilidades relacionadas con el aprendizaje de una segunda lengua. Sin embargo, si a lo largo de las intervenciones su hijo/hija o usted siente algún tipo de inconformidad o incomodidad, el/ella o usted podrá manifestarlo. Su hijo/hija tiene el derecho de retirarse del proyecto cuando lo considere oportuno**.**

Tiempo:

La participación de hijo/hija en el proceso de investigación tendrá una duración de 6 semanas

(correspondientes al trabajo de clase que realizaremos los días jueves para el desarrollar el proyecto) la recolección de datos se llevará a cabo entre septiembre y octubre de 2023 yo (nombre y apellidos)_____ Autorizo la participación de mi hija/hijo _____ (nombres y apellidos del estudiante) en la observación de clase, clases y análisis de artefactos en esta investigación y que se registre el material audiovisual según la explicación realizada al respecto, así como el uso de los datos que se recolectan sobre su participación en este estudio.

Firma del padre de familia

_____ Fecha _____

Nombre: _____ C.C: _____

Firma de los investigadores principales

_____

_____

_____

Fecha:

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Appendix 3: Participants informed assent.

UNIVERSIDAD EL BOSQUE

Título de la investigación:

UDL STRATEGIES TO CREATE SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS FOR EFL LEARNING IN VULNERABLE CONTEXTS

Descripción de la investigación:

Querido estudiante, estás invitado a ser parte de nuestra investigación en la que vas a aprender y reflexionar sobre las emociones que experimentas a diario. ¡Todo lo que desarrollaremos te permitirá reconocer y comprender mejor las emociones mientras practicas inglés! Esto lo haremos en tu colegio durante los meses septiembre y Octubre del 2023 a través de actividades, charlas grupales y experiencias en nuestras clases de inglés.

En este proceso no habrá consecuencias negativas en tus aprendizajes, ni en tu desempeño en el colegio. Debes saber que tu identidad, es decir, tu nombre e información personal, serán un secreto que nosotras mantendremos muy bien guardado bajo llave. También, debes saber que durante algunas actividades de nuestras clases te grabaremos y tomaremos fotos mientras desarrollas las actividades, pero no se verá tu cara, solo escucharemos tu voz y veremos tu proceso de aprendizaje. Por último, tienes el derecho a hacer todas las preguntas que quieras y a informarnos si en algún momento no quieres participar más en este proyecto.

Yo _____ tengo _____ años

Quiero decir que me explicaron el objetivo del proyecto de investigación que se va a desarrollar en mi clase de inglés, y

_____ Si quiero participar

_____ No quiero participar

Además, acepto que me graben y tomen fotos mientras desarrollo las actividades

☐ Si

☐ No

Appendix 4: Didactic Unit

UNIVERSIDAD EL BOSQUE	**Licenciatura en Bilingüismo con Énfasis en la enseñanza del Inglés – Universidad El Bosque**		
	FORMATO PLANEACIÓN DE CLASES PROYECTO: UDL STRATEGIES TO CREATE SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS FOR EFL LEARNING IN VULNERABLE CONTEXTS	**Versión: 01**	
DOCENTES: Maria Fernanda, Vilma Mulett, Miguel Matamoros			**FECHA: Septiembre. 28 Octubre. 5 Octubre. 19**
CURSO: 7º séptimo grado de bachillerato			**AÑO: 2023**

PLANEACIÓN GENERAL

UNIT	WEEK	CONTENTS	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS
1	**1**	**Ethical Values:** Respect, Honesty, Humility, responsibility. **Modal verbs: Should and have to**	- Objective: - By the end of this lesson, students will be able to use the modal verbs "should" and "have to" correctly in sentences to express ethical values, such as responsibility and moral duty. **Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Principles:**	**Warm up:** Picture-Based Discussion: ● Teachers will ask students to share any values or ethical principles they are aware of. Write their responses on the board. ● The teacher will explain that today's lesson will focus on using the modal verbs "should" and "have to" to express ethical values. **Presentation:** ● The teacher will present the modal verb "should and shouldn't", as well as "has to and doesn't have to", will give an example of sentence structure and then we will all create sentences putting the modal verb into practice, for this activity They will form small groups in which each one will have to make a puppet and create a scene where they	1. **Whiteboard and markers** 2. **Flashcards with example sentences** **https://www.canva.com/design/DAFvr9cjvsk/Vm5A8r4qDrHviZmia5UP4w/view?utm_content=DAFvr9cjvsk&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_mediu**
			● Multiple Means of Representation: Use visual aids, examples, and real-life scenarios to explain the concepts, emphasizing ethical values. ● Multiple Means of Engagement: Encourage active participation through group discussions and role-play activities centered around ethical dilemmas. ● Multiple Means of Expression: Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding through written and spoken activities while relating to ethical values.	use the modal verb "should and shouldn't" on the other hand they will have the support of the moral dilemmas previously presented - EJ: I'm not sure if I tell My mom, the secret that my sister told me, is serious. **Practice:** Using flashcards with a moral dilemma, the teacher will read it out aloud, and ask students to come about with a possible solution for the dilemma. Using SHOULD or Have to for the answer. (teacher will provide with a model for the answer) The teacher will ask students to read the sentences and determine which modal verb is used and how it relates to ethical values. Correct and discuss the answers as a class. **Production:** The teacher will divide the class into small groups. The teacher will present a hypothetical ethical dilemma (for example, finding a lost wallet with money), this will be presented through representations between the teachers where each one will have a role depending on the dilemma, in this way the students will be able to see from their perspective What could be the possible solutions to these dilemmas. In their groups, students should discuss and act out the situation, using "should" and "have to" to express their ethical perspectives. Encourage debate and critical thinking. **Evaluation:** As an evaluative activity, students will meet in a group of four people in which they will recreate a podcast-type dialogue where the "should" and "have to" are implemented, this will be shown in class and students must use different support elements such as billboards. , drawings among others, for the creation of this material there will be a class space in which as teachers we will be in constant supervision and providing support to the students.	**m=link&utm_source=publishsharelink**
2	**2**	**Eating disorders and health**	- Objective: - By the end of this lesson, students will be able to use the "being" structure to	**Warm up:** Teacher will begin with an energizing icebreaker activity: **"Healthy or Unhealthy?"**	

		Expressions to give an opinion and describe an opinion	describe the physical states of people, especially in the context of health and eating disorders. - At the end of this lesson, students will be able to identify some of the goals about maintaining healthy eating.	The teacher will show images of different foods on the whiteboard or multimedia presentation. Then he will ask students to categorize each food as "healthy" or "unhealthy" by placing sticky notes with these labels on the images. We will discuss their choices and reasons briefly. **Presentation:** The teacher will introduce the "she has/they have " structure for the descriptions. To begin, write "He/She is like..." on the board and explain that "she is" is used to compare someone's appearance with a particular state or condition, such as health or eating habits, we will have the support of a video which will be explained little by little, Finally, each person will create flashcards with example sentences and images related to health and eating disorders to illustrate the concept. To finish, the teacher will encourage the students to create their own sentences using "be" with the flashcards prepared previously. **Practice:** The teacher will provide printed images of healthy and unhealthy foods. Then will divide the class into small groups. Each group creates a "healthy meal" by arranging the food images on a table. Students describe the meal using "be like" sentences, emphasizing the healthiness of their choices. Each group presents their healthy meal for the class. **Production:** **Game Healthy vs. Unhealthy (15 minutes):** 1. The teacher will divide the class into two teams, which will play stop. 2. Show images of people with different physical appearances on the board. 3. One member of each team will quickly come to the front. 4. Teams take turns using "she is" to describe the person in the image, focusing on health or eating habits. 5. The first to finish must say stop 6. Award points for the composition of the sentence 7. Rotate students for each round.	1. **These are elements that we will use during the session, such as the board and markers** 2. **Flashcards with images related to Health and eating disorders, which each of the students will create during class with the help of the teacher, using different subjects such as: colors, cardboard, cutouts, among others.** -https://www.canva.com/design/DAFxkplFBYg/NWNslAEMpuIDkddLZ61oJg/edit?utm_content=DAFxkplFBYg&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton **video :** https://youtu.be/Znw6zAftT70?si=dHAqQ6T01SDF3hy-
				Evaluation: Play a quick game of "Healthy Habits Charades": The teacher will prepare a list of healthy habits (e.g., exercise, drinking water, eating vegetables). Students take turns acting out a healthy habit without speaking, while the class guesses what they are doing. The teacher will encourage and model students to use "be like" in their descriptions.	3. **Handout with exercises** 4. **Printed images of healthy and unhealthy foods** 5. **Sticky notes**
3	**3**	**Integral Personal Care**	- In this session, the student will be able to describe certain situations that are around him, using time and actions.	**Warm up:** puzzle with personal care phrases and game cultura chupistica -The classroom will be divided into 5 groups, each one must put together a puzzle in which it contains a phrase about integral personal care. **Presentation:** Through a video, the teacher and students are going to create two bodies, that of a girl and a boy, to explain how to have comprehensive personal care, using other elements such as a brush, hand soap, shampoo, among others, at the same time integrating with everyone. the group doing a round table, and using time relationships to make some examples Every day, Once/twice a week/month, year, Every two weeks, Always, Never, Recently, Regularly) **Practice**: Each one through drawings will explain to us what his personal care routine is and how often he puts it into practice, using the simple present **Production:** create a comic For this exercise, the teacher will show, through an image, the template of a comic on the whiteboard. Each person must create their own comic in which they describe some of the personal care routines, using some expressions that will be shown during class to describe habits. . as an example: • I exercise once a week. • I always go to church on Sunday **Evaluation:**At the end, small groups will be organized so that each one can socialize the comic.	**Slides** **papers, colors** **foami** https://www.canva.com/design/DAFwYz5Rwl4/4in n9c-op61L2GlC9iVsYA/edit?utm_content=DAFwYz5Rwl4&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton - For this activity, each student used eighths of colored cardboard, markers, among others.
4	**4**	**Globalization: Value of local cultures**	In this session the student will be able to describe people, things and places by putting into practice the vocabulary seen in class, and will also be able to understand general information in simple text.	**Warm up :**Name Scrabble It involves making a scrabble with all the names in the class. First, the teacher can go out and write her name horizontally or vertically. Afterward, each of the students will write her name based on the letters of the previous ones. **Presentation:**For this topic, a story will be developed through a frizo to give an explanation about certain characteristics of Colombians, such as showing typical dishes, national coat of	

				arms, clothing, celebrations, among others, in this way vocabulary related to this topic will be worked on. . **Practice:** Each one should create their own dictionary where it should contain the vocabulary seen in class with its meaning in English and Spanish, such as, for example, on one of the cards prepared by the student, the figure of the coat of arms of Colombia will be found and on the other side there will be its translation in English and Spanish, this in order for the student to increase his vocabulary and be in constant review **Production:** the traveling suitcase: In the previous class, students will be asked to look for images about food, clothing, the flag, some of the most important monuments of that country, important characters, characteristics, among others. That day in class, they should be done in groups of four. People and together they must recreate the traveling suitcase by gluing each of these images on a cardboard box, and they must share each of the things they found from that country. At the end, they must socialize with the rest of their classmates. **Evaluation:**Each student must prepare a report-type writing in which they will explain the importance of culturally.	-For this activity, each student used eighths of colored cardboard, markers, among others. *https://www.canva.com/design/DAFxk0HdY0M/6aXEL1tlllEYGebb-lA3ug/edit?utm_content=DAFxk0HdY0M&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton

5	**5**	**Describing experiences at school**	- In this section, the student will be able to improve their ability to express and talk about experiences they had at school by describing their own experiences such as pedagogical outings, institution events, or vacations. - This session is designed to get to the students the proper knowledge about giving info about time *Years, months, days*, by using the correct preposition *in, on at,* also related with the pass and places such as school. - They will be able to rewrite their favorite experiences of one of their classmates.	**Warm up:** Broken phone There will be two groups, each will be given a phrase per round, there will be 3 rounds in which the winning group will be the one that has completed the most correct phrases (those phrases are related with the topic preposition *In, On, At*). **Presentation:** Storytelling Teacher is going to organize the groups in which some students will be placed and names as the years of the month. The explanation will be starting with a short story about the months, day, and hours. After that, the students that are not placed as months' names will need to get close to the name of the month that corresponds to the group of students, through movements and discussion between them, they will be able to match with the correct month. The same exercise will be done related with the days of the week Stickers will be given with different names of months and days in order to get the students able to recognize the names and correct the way to write the months and dates, In that way they will be recognized by the other students. **Practice:** They are going to work in groups of 4 or 5 people, and they're going to share with them some school experiences they had using *In, On At* Students will be encouraged to carry out this activity through socialization, this will allow them to feel a safe environment in which there are no errors but opportunities to improve then, each group will be asked to share their favorite with the rest of the class, given detailed information about time and places. It means that they will be given we the stickers of the month's names and days', also they will be given blank stickers and other with the prepositions exposed during the section they will need to match the correct one by the help of their group **Evaluation:** They are going to be distributed in groups, then some examples with images are going to be shown. They must answer which one is the appropriate answer by giving some arguments through a video.	1. **Stickers** 2. **Cards** 3. **Whiteboards and maker** 4. **papers** -**https://www.canva.com/design/DAFxkz7Bgm8/T7X_qBt6P0g9t8dhf7_CxQ/edit?utm_content=DAFxkz7Bgm8&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton**
		Natural world	-Students will be able to talk about situations, phenomena and events. -Students will be able to make recommendations and suggestions	**Warm up:** We will have a small space where we will do aerobics in the company of music	