

TEACHING ENGLISH UNDER A FLEXIBLE EDUCATIONAL MODEL: THE CASE OF EL
SERVICIO EDUCATIVO RURAL (SER) IN EL ORIENTE ANTIOQUEÑO.

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to unveil the experiences of teachers who worked under the flexible educational model of the SER (Rural Educational Service) program, supporting English Language Teaching from different perspectives. For this research project, we considered the collaboration of 6 participants who worked with the program at different rural contexts. Through semi-structured interviews their experiences in terms of their teaching process, their perceptions, challenges, and suggestions regarding the Teaching and learning of English under the framework of *EL SER* program. This research work is framed within qualitative research and the methodology of systematization of experiences. Likewise, the results of this study revealed that through some appropriate teaching and learning methods, teachers, even if they do not have extensive knowledge of English, they can articulate with other strategies so that students have a good quality of learning. On the other hand, The SER program must train its teachers in the educational field so that they have the tools to help provide better knowledge to students in this flexible model. Contextualization within the SER as a flexible educational model must be considered, because not all rural contexts have the same characteristics.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The General Education Law, Law 115 of 1994, in its article 1, established that “education is a process of permanent, personal, cultural and social training that is based on an integral conception of the human person, of their dignity, of their rights and their duties”. Although at the national and international level it is sought that all people have access to education, it is evident that not all the population has access to it. Therefore, we would be talking about several illiterate communities that have not had the opportunity to be in the educational process, especially the communities in rural areas, although this is also found in urban communities.

Considering the educational processes of national and international corporations, it is important to mention that Globalization in the world is expanding more and more, and all countries must prepare for it; This preparation is given from many processes and education is one of them. In this case, we would be talking about globalization from a foreign language learning perspective, specifically English language teaching and learning. Globalization which started some time ago is an ongoing thing that cannot be stopped. It is a multi-faceted phenomenon which ramifies into all areas of human life. Since the idea of globalization is a thing that comes from the rich and affluent countries of the West, many in the developing and Third World countries welcome it with much delight as it offers them a great deal in terms of capital flow which promises prosperity (Razak, 2011.)

Throughout history, English teaching has been seen as a way to get globalization everywhere, so we found some teachers that motivate their students by saying that they must learn English to leave the country and find a better job, and other teachers said that they must learn the language because that language is spoken by many people around the world. The

education in the Colombian system has adapted English as a tool to get globalization, students are being prepared to be part of a globalized world where English is essential not only for communication but also for trading. The PNB (*Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo*) 2004-2019 presented some proposals showing the need to theorize the teaching of a foreign language. Other analyses described how the country's educational institutions approach bilingualism, analyzing the standards proposed by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, the process that children go through when learning another language, and the implications for classrooms (Velasco, 2011).

Furthermore, Colombia has tried to reduce the educational gap in many ways, that is why the Ministry of National Education (MEN) has proposed some educational plans. One of those plans is the National Bilingualism Program (PNB), which is focused on the area of English, therefore, it also has a relationship with globalization. Taking into account the relationship between globalization and English, the main objective of the PNB is to have citizens capable of communicating in English, with internationally comparable standards, who insert the country in the processes of universal communication, in the global economy, and in cultural openness (MEN, 2014-2019).

This statement pointed out the importance of knowing and listening to the stories behind the people who are in disadvantaged population from the educational field to raise awareness regarding the teaching of English to adults from flexible educational models such as SER (Servicio Educativo Rural) in El Oriente Antioqueño, taking into account some government proposals and plans, therefore Gallardo (2006) states that literacy is a dramatic situation in which all national, local and international programs try to eradicate and is one-fifth of the world population, that is, 771 million adults are illiterate according to the "conventional ways of

measuring". And it is precisely these measures that make it difficult to determine with certainty how many illiterates there are at present. (Gallardo, 2006)

The Ministry of National Education (MEN) highlights education as the right and differential approach for the rural population and proposes the inclusion of educational and rural projects, as well as territorial approaches to strengthen cultural practices, such as comprehensive rural development with social inclusion and the formation of human and social capital.

It is important to make visible the voices that have not been heard, especially the voices of teachers, since at the national level many educational plans and projects have been launched, but they are not adequately monitored. It is important to highlight the importance of understanding these experiences as future teachers in these possible scenarios, also there is very little information on this context, as we found little literature on the teaching of young people and adults in English in the framework under flexible educational models.

Based on the previous ideas, our objective is to describe teachers' experiences teaching English to adults under a Flexible Educational Model (SER-Servicio Educativo Rural) in El Oriente Antioqueño.

CONCEPTUAL REFERENCES

During the construction of the framework of this work, we interpreted different concepts that are key pieces for the understanding and knowledge of this research project as well as to for approaching the theoretical foundations to have a more panoramic vision of what was intended to be done in the processes of this research. In short, in this section, we explained some of the most important concepts that redefine our studies such as Illiteracy, EPJA, SER, CLEI, Flexible Models and Teaching English to adults.

Analbafetismo (Illiteracy)

Illiteracy impedes the realization of human capabilities and the achievement of justice and economic and social development, particularly for women (Gallardo 2006).

According to Huidobro (1996), literacy has been the subject of sustained study for a couple of decades, since its international recognition as a human right and as an essential instrument to aspire to other rights. In Latin American countries, educational policies have been oriented towards aspects of quality and equity, associated with social mobility.

According to SABE (*Encuesta Nacional de Salud, Bienestar y Envejecimiento*, 2016), Colombia has an illiteracy rate of 5.35% based on the National Agricultural Census conducted in 2014, which showed that the rural sector concerning illiteracy corresponded to 13.8%, i.e., 50% of the census population in this sector is illiterate. SABE (2016) identified at that time that approximately 16.5% of people over 60 years of age had not started or passed any educational level. Illiteracy among the elderly is increasing as they get older, people between 60 and 64 years old have an illiteracy rate of 10.4%, for those over 85 years old it is 30.5%. Illiteracy is also

endemic among people with disabilities, who have not benefited from the educational opportunities available to other population groups. According to the findings of the alternative report "Disability and Social Inclusion", about 34% of people with disabilities cannot read or write, 33.8% do not finish any school grade and 37.9% only finish Primary, finally, 30% do not study because they consider they are not of school-age (Correa & Castro, 2016)

EPJA Educación para jóvenes y adultos (Education For Youth and Adults)

From the MEN, certain bases and terms were determined that help to clarify what the EPJA is, MEN (2017) determined:

In Colombia, the Education of Young and Adult People (EPJA) is defined in the national regulations in force. These norms guide the attention of those who, as citizens, aspire to study, complete or validate their studies, when they did not do it at regular ages. In the same way, norms guide those who did not achieve complete the levels, cycles, or degrees of formal regular education. It is important to consider that the provision of the educational service corresponds to the exercise of a fundamental right for this population, in order to satisfy the needs and self-interest. (p. 10)

The MEN (2017) also mentions that the EPJA sought a training that commits, in addition to the learning in the areas of knowledge established in the curriculum and plans of study, comprehensive care according to the characteristics of this population related to age, sex, educational level attained, cognitive development, disability status, ethnicity, context sociocultural and other differential characteristics. Likewise, contemplate the knowledge accumulated throughout life, which makes it necessary to distinguish between regular education in infancy, childhood, and youth from which young people, adults, and the elderly received.

Considering these illiteracy rates, one of the most affected populations is rural. The rural population is made up of peasants, large, medium, and small landowners, indigenous groups, Afro-Colombians, and people who sell their workforce in agricultural work especially. Characterizing the Colombian rural population implies recognizing the geographical and biodiversity differences that exist in the national territory, which directly affect the development of agricultural activities or exploitation of resources (MEN, 2015). From the perspective of education as a right and the differential approach for the rural population, the MEN (2017) proposed the inclusion of rural educational projects and territorial approaches to strengthen cultural practices, comprehensive rural development with social and productive inclusion, and the formation of human capital and social. The rural education policies and guidelines recognized that the highest illiteracy rates in Colombia are located in rural areas, which is why the MEN has raised as a necessity the guarantee of the right to education based on the following aspects: a) conditions that guarantee access and permanence of the population in the educational system; b) the factors that affect the quality of education; c) the institutional framework that supports the functioning of the system to achieve the objectives and d) the planning and financing of education. Education programs for young people, adults, and the elderly in rural areas should include CLEI (*Ciclo Lectivo Especial Integrado*) or (Special Integrated Lesson Cycle) from 1 to 6, taking advantage of flexible educational models or the construction of their own pedagogical models that allow accounting for the integral development of this population. Likewise, it is important to integrate the mandatory (transversal) pedagogical projects and bear in mind the importance of the formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of productive pedagogical projects and citizenship training.

SER Servicio Educativo Rural (Rural educational service)

According to the MEN (1997), determines that:

SER is an educational model for primary, secondary, and middle school education for young people and adults (Decree 3011/97) in rural and peasant sectors that, based on the reality and potential of each community, defines the lines of training and thematic cores that integrate the fundamental areas of education and organize knowledge with an interdisciplinary approach and curricular relevance with a sense of personal and social, community and productive, cultural, recreational, aesthetic, scientific and technological human development. It is based on community research processes from which educational materials and pedagogical mediation processes relevant to the students of the region are built.

This model was designed by the *Universidad Católica de Oriente (UCO)* in the municipality of Rionegro, Antioquia as a different educational proposal focused on rural education aimed at youth and adults in rural contexts. This proposal began in El *Oriente Antioqueño* and little by little it began to be known more and was expanding throughout the department of Antioquia and reaching other places such as Boyacá, Cauca, and others.

SER proposals were based on academic work from the training of graduates and specialists, from the action-participatory research methodology, and with the support of institutional research groups from a pedagogy of the text (*Pedagogía del texto*). From the pedagogy of the text, the SER proposed a timely and appropriate teaching method that can allow the participants of this educational model to qualitatively appropriate the necessary knowledge to transform their reality for their development as human beings. It also proposed to implement an educational community, a community of all and for all from the participatory and non-

representative democracy and the goal is to achieve a citizen construction from learning and promotion.

CLEI Ciclo Lectivo Especial Integrado (Special Integrated Lesson Cycle)

It is a set of curricular processes and actions organized in such a way that it integrates areas of knowledge and pedagogical projects, of shorter duration than that provided for the regular cycles of the educational public service, that is, it is possible that students who are part of this curriculum, they can do two educational years such as sixth and seventh, in just one, with this they allow achieving the aims and objectives of basic and secondary education according to the particular conditions of the adult population.

The educational route of CLEI cycles is organized as it is described in the table below:

Table 1

Lesson Cycle	CLEI	Equivalent grade of education
One	CLEI 1	1 st , 2 nd , and 3 rd
Two	CLEI 2	4 th and 5 th
Three	CLEI 3	6 th and 7 th

Four	CLEI 4	8 th and 9 th
Five	CLEI 5	10 th
Six	CLEI 6	11 th

Some rules must be considered as required by the MEN (1997), which are:

1. People aged fifteen (15) years or more, who have not entered any grade of the primary basic education cycle, may access the CLEI 1.
2. To CLEI 2, people over fifteen (15) years of age who have completed a maximum of the first three grades of the basic primary cycle enter the CLEI 2.
3. People aged fifteen (15) years or more, who have completed the cycle of basic primary education in Adult Education programs adjusted to this decree, may enter the CLEI 3.
4. Similarly, people aged fifteen (15) years or older, who have completed the cycle of basic primary education in regular education and who have been out of school for more than two (2) years, may access the CLEI 4.

Therefore, minors under fifteen (15) years of age may not be accommodated in the modality of educational care for adults but must be accommodated by educational

establishments where the curriculum offers formal education in regular cycles. The people who finish all the CLEI, will receive the bachelor's degree from the educational establishment where they have studied.

Flexible Models

They are alternatives of educational offer that allow serving diverse populations. MEN (2012) stipulated some characteristics regarding the flexible models, they have a conceptual proposal of a pedagogical and didactic nature. Also, it seeks to respond to the particular conditions and needs of the target population and to have management, administration, training, and monitoring processes, as well as teaching materials that are related to the theoretical positions they transmit.

IEP (*Instituto Europeo de Posgrado*) (2018) mentioned why these flexible models can be so useful and important in the educational process, flexible models can offer adequate training that responds to the students' needs, considering their expectations and some social, ethnic, and geographical issues. The improvement of educational quality through learning that is developed with pedagogical strategies and resources, and the benefiting of dispersed communities in rural areas, it means, people of all ages with high vulnerability, can be carried out through these models.

It is important before applying the flexible model to study the context, with that, the teachers can identify the age rate of the students, their socioeconomic characteristics, identify educational needs, and all these factors that involve the context to find the best way to apply the model.

Teaching English to Adults

Today people are having more access to education from different areas. Education is a right that must be fulfilled at any stage of life, that is, not only children have the right to it, adults too. Education is configured as a process of cultural reproduction and transmutation with a dual role: first, as a space that is modified or impacted by globalization, having to adjust to the new requirements (Avedaño & Guacaneme, 2016). We are in a society that advances every day; therefore, we advance with it. Consequently, education is modified, and new particularities are emerging such as the need to learn English in order to face possible needs that may arise in the future and for the academic benefit as such, in the case of adults, most of the times, it offers employment benefits.

Considering that learning English offers different benefits not only academic but also work, this entails different characteristics when teaching and learning English. As mentioned, (Cristal, 2003) globalization urges us to experience constant changes, where knowing a universal or global language such as English allows crossing borders and helps us to be more competitive.

From didactics as a fundamental part of ELT Ricoy and Álvarez (2016), mention that didactics is to advocate for globalized learning and language learning in the community. In them, the inclusion of external stimuli, which incorporate playful components and are linked to everyday life, as well as the combination of innovative didactic resources contribute to improving interest in the language to be acquired. From these ideas we infer those didactics leads us to teach, learn, educate, know, skills, and also the goal, content, organization, types, forms, methods, means, learning results, as stated by De Camilloni (2008). Didactics should focus on the need to produce conceptual changes in them, in some cases very important, to develop their

ability to translate the fundamental principles of didactic discourse into a pedagogical project and practice.

Another important field that we cover is the strategies from ELT, defined by Deveci, (2007) as the aids that allow teachers to promote their integral development, with the purpose of their constant motivation to learn, learn to do, learn to be, and learn to develop critical and reflective thinking that promotes their improvement in the social context where they develop. It is understood as a plan that seeks to achieve a goal with the help of each educator who uses techniques adapted to each of his students to obtain results that can be evidenced in their growth.

Finally, we will talk about assessment being a fundamental piece in ELT, (Obando, 2018) defines assessment as:

The function of assessment, for the achievement of this meaningful learning, must then be performed from its three optics: diagnostic, to establish the existing gaps between the learning objectives at a given time and the reality of the student, to take action and decrease them; formative, to generate that learning, from practical experiences and linked to the daily life of the student; and summative, to meet the established measurement parameters, in order to successfully overcome each level of learning.

Assessment plays an important role in education and is fundamental in the teaching process. Through proper assessment, teachers can classify and grade their students, give feedback, and structure their teaching accordingly. Assessment is one of the phases that provide more information to both the teacher and the student about the eventual gap that may need to be addressed, between the actual state of the teaching-learning process at a given time and the objectives set for it (Obando, 2018).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this section was to analyze in-depth the studies and research focused on the teaching of English to adults in rural contexts, for this reason, we conducted a search to find theoretical support and complete our approaches.

We focused on the search for the most recent and accurate research in texts that approached our problematizing question. This search was carried out in several phases. First, we explored several documents related to the main topic, then we chose those closest to our ideals because they were better contextualized, their publication date was more recent, and the effectiveness of the research conducted.

We considered that the teaching of English to adults in rural contexts is the axis and the driving force of this project, for this reason, it is important to mention a study conducted between 2009 and 2011, where we are in a marginal urban context of a comuna of Medellín. Arango (2009) carried out this study where the population of the Comuna 13, a neighborhood affected by violence, displacement, constant wars due to invisible barriers and other conflict factors, lived in a stage where the illiteracy rate was too high, as a result of the lack of opportunities at that time. This is how the *Alfabeto* project was born, a proposal that supported the educational development of the community and sought entities to sponsor the proposal, not to completely eradicate illiteracy, but to give a better quality of life to the people affected by this context. The Alfabeto project began with approximately 60 people from the sector and gradually increased the number of direct and indirect beneficiaries.

The results obtained from these data collection methods were that in 2009, 80 direct beneficiaries were enrolled, of which 25 were certified by the institution with completed primary school, to link them to the education sector to complete high school. In 2010, 98 students were enrolled, of which 38 students were certified with completed primary school. A system of effects

and impact indicators is currently being created to guide the work of the Alphabet Project to systematize the effects that are being caused in the educational community.

On the other hand, and continuing with our approach to teaching English to adults in rural contexts, we had Gallardo (2006) were in his research called Defining reading, literacy, and other related concepts. He described the situation in which all national and international programs to eradicate illiteracy are exposed to one-fifth of the world's population, for that year 771 million adults were illiterate according to the "Conventional ways of measuring". The purpose of this qualitative research is to study the problem of reading and to try to find ways to solve the problems of illiteracy, low reading ability, and lack of reading habits.

According to Gallardo (2006) Reading is a pleasant or enjoyable practice, the reader has the possibility of reading or not, and no one does things they dislike. From there, the idea of motivating more people to learn and showing them that it is never too late to study and achieve their goals is imparted.

Regarding English teaching, it is important to talk about overcoming fears in teaching English to adults. A case study: the city, its legends and webspaces, which was research undertaken by Agudo, Cumbredo, Delicado, and Ferreira (2008). This study was carried out in a course in which at least 30 adults (professionals) They participated, in San Vicente de Alcántara, Province of Badajoz. To carry out the research, the 30 people who were going to participate had never studied English. It was qualitative research, carried out with a Case Study-Research methodology.

As a result of the main purpose, was to help solve two educational problems in the field of teaching English, one of those problems is the feeling of frustration of many adults when faced with learning a second language, added to the fact that the trend in Language teaching is about including technological tools, resources to which, in many cases, students are oblivious.

To fulfill the purpose of this research, the authors used a test to identify the needs of the students, and subsequently, they created exercises and tools that favored student learning. This allowed them to study the context and act on it.

In conclusion, the rejection that a large part of the adult population feels towards learning English as a second language is notable. This aversion, not towards the language, but towards the learning process, should be a matter of utmost importance when creating new educational methodologies and materials. If this obstacle were not enough, this rejection is magnified by the fear that the latest educational trends that integrate new technologies in the language classroom provoke in uninitiated users, because, even if they were professionals, this rejection was evident. It was important to study the needs of the students and their context, because by making use of the latter, a familiarization between the student, the context, and English can be created, and with this, the learning and teaching process of the student could be carried out satisfactorily implementing English and technological tools.

Considering the learning of English in rural areas, González, Monsalve, and Moreno carried out a study in 2015 called *La pedagogía del texto en la enseñanza- aprendizaje del inglés en el medio rural, in Rionegro, Antioquia*, where the main objective was to review the theoretical foundations that allow validating the proposal of teaching English, using the pedagogy of the text, taking as a reference the context in which the rural students are.

The researchers based their proposal on the Rural Educational Service program of the Universidad Católica de Oriente, where the pedagogy of the text is used, where great findings are achieved that allow promoting the use of the said methodology in the teaching-learning of foreign languages, in this case, from English.

To conclude, it was possible to show how the pedagogy of the text promotes in the teaching-learning process learning that is framed in the context in which the subject learns,

through communicative power, allowing the learner to produce texts becoming aware of reality and promoting a commitment to change against this.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the most common teaching practices with youth and adult students in EFL classrooms under *El SER* program context.
2. To describe teachers' perceptions of their experiences being a teacher with the framework of *El SER* program.
3. To display the most common challenges when teaching English under *El SER* program context.

METHODOLOGY

As the present study intended to describe the experiences of English Teaching to adults under a Flexible Educational Model in the case of *El SER* program in El Oriente Antioqueño, this research was undertaken under a qualitative design, together with a methodology of systematization of experiences and the social constructivist paradigm.

As qualitative research allows exploring and understanding people's points of view from their experiences and beliefs (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), we envisioned this approach as pertinent path to know in depth teachers' backgrounds, perceptions, and meanings in relation to the teaching of English under El SER to turn this knowledge into meaningful data for the educational field. In fact, we believed that research focused on discovering, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making a difference in people's lives. By the above, we could say that these elements were fundamental for the research because the thoughts that have been obtained over the years about why many people have had certain difficulties to study and even more so in the rural context, provided answers to our research question.

When it comes to the systematization of experiences, Jara (2018) defined that allows the production of new knowledge, which comes directly from lived experiences, which are always concrete and delimited expressions of a broader social and historical practice. It also allowed us to bring new proposals of different realities and new knowledge with us and with the participants who had access to these experiences.

The systematization of experiences refers to taking our practices as sources of learning to critically appropriate the experiences and provided new ideas and contributions to group

collective experiences, based on the analysis and interpretation of stories as historical processes, where different participants acted in certain contexts, in our case, *El SER* program environments. Systematization intentionally builds a located knowledge, which enables us to abstract what we were doing and thus finds fertile grounds where the opening to generalization is possible. Those who systematize produce knowledge from what they live, feel, think, and do, from their interests, their emotions, their knowledge, their actions, and omissions (Jara, 2018).

It raised then, our need to systematize some experiences of teaching in *El SER* program contexts which are rural and urban contexts, then we allowed listening to each of the stories of the participants who inspired this project to understand realities for one of the many contexts to teach English to know what happened in relation to the teaching English practices, its perceptions, and the most common challenges, and offer possible emerging proposals, different perspectives, and listen to the teachers.

Considering the facts mentioned above, this research project was undertaken through the social constructivist paradigm, considering what Creswell (2009) mentioned that ‘‘social constructivist hold assumptions that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work’’, this idea is very interesting because we were approaching a specific context in which we as researchers understood that all realities are different and these realities needed to be understood from different perspectives, and this were the lived experience of the teachers and the students in *EL SER* program. We understood that this paradigm highlights that the experiences and their results cannot be generalized to the whole population, so we could identify different behaviors and patterns working hand in hand with the participants, and with this we could build a meaning of the experiences with the participants, using the participants’ context and opinions,

with this we could identify realities and interpret the experiences' meaning, thus finding a possible solution or a new outcome.

CRITERIA TO SELECT PARTICIPANTS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The participants of this research project were teachers of the El SER program, specifically located in El Oriente Antioqueño. Six teachers, two of them with a degree in English Language Teaching, one with a degree in Mathematics, one tutor with a degree in Preschool Education, and another one in rural education, were part of the sample. Some participants have specializations such as Pedagogy and Didactics, and a couple of them are coursing master's degrees in Education, and master's degrees in ICT. All participants had the experience of working in El SER program. Currently two of them are still in the program. We considered that this population is ideal to carry out our intentions with the research project, because each of them had and have the opportunity to teach English within the El SER project in rural contexts with several years of experience, so they were people who lived different experiences and their voices can be heard and interpreted from what each of them lived.

Regarding ethical considerations, it was necessary to clarify that our research work protects first the intellectual property of the authors from their theories and points of view, giving them their respective recognition in the citations as well as their bibliographic sources. For the same reason, informed consent was given to the participants of our research, where confidentiality was established to protect their identities and that their data and information be used only for academic purposes. All-access to the information was extracted legally. Specifically, there was no monetary bonus for the researchers or the participants of this project, the research conducted did not affect in any way the different processes in which the subjects were part of our research participants. As researchers, we cannot carry out our projects successfully if we do not receive the help of other people" (Dawson, 2002), the intention was that the participants felt comfortable and can cooperate in the best possible way.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Considering the nature of this research project, in which we sought to approach participants' points of view, beliefs, feelings, opinions, perceptions, and experiences, the most appropriate method to collect data is interviews.

Methods were selected because they provided the data, we required to produce a complete piece of research. Decisions must be made about which methods were the best for particular purposes and then data-collecting instruments must be designed to do the job (Bell, 2010). Focused on the purpose of this research project, our question, the problem statement, the objectives, and the selection of participants, we decided to implement a data collection method which was designed and based on the goals of this project. The method of semi-structured interview was implemented as data collection method for this research project.

We considered that interviews were a good tool for understanding participants' experiences, as Altrichter, Posh, and Somekh (2000) mentioned that interviews give access to other people's perceptions, including crucially the thoughts, attitudes, and opinions that lie behind their behavior, this is an important factor in understanding people's experiences and the reason for their responses. It was important to comprehend participants' feelings and experiences, and through interviews, we as researchers could identify some patterns, expressions, and body language in the participants' answers, in other words, interviews allowed a closer interaction between the participant and the researcher.

Taking into consideration the ideas mentioned above, "one major advantage of the interview is its adaptability. A skillful interviewer can follow up ideas, probe response and investigate motives and feelings, which the questionnaire can never do" (Bell, 2010, p. 161), this

point was highly relevant because we could interpret some situation that can emerge in the interview, we could notice if the participant was uncomfortable or if the participant did not want to continue the interview, so we were able to have a wider approach of participants' perceptions and viewpoints of a specific phenomenon.

This method of data collection aimed to allow the process for the participants of our research to approach deep reflections and thoughts in a freeway, where they could feel safe and give their opinions about their points of view openly as this method proposed. After undertaking/running/implementing interviews, transcriptions were made and stored to have a systematization of information. Then, a codification and categorization was done following Coffey and Atkinson's ideas (2005) who pointed out that the initial purpose of encoding is to facilitate the retrieval of categorized data segments, bearing in mind that, a codification of the interviews was made with the intention of responding to the general and specific objectives, considering the different perspectives and opinions of each participant in the interviews carried out, and through this data coding process, we obtained at great results that emerged from the interviews, the codification and the analysis of the data.

Once the categorization process was done, we were able to obtain four categories that were oriented towards: teaching practices, teachers' perceptions/views, challenges when teaching English, and suggestions. These categories were derived based on our specific objectives and the analysis of the interviews conducted, and from each of these, other subcategories emerge; from teaching practices, we have; teaching strategies, assessment-testing, materials-resources, and curricular practices. From teachers' perceptions and views, we have; being a teacher under the framework of EL SER, learning/teaching English, dealing with materials, and meaningful experiences. From the challenges in teaching English, we have; Professional

development/training, teaching English without being an English teacher, and teachers and students towards English. And finally, in suggestions, we have; Materials and curriculum and training/professional development. This led us to organize the information and put into practice the tools proposed by Atkinson & Coffey (2002) to analyze the data and have a broader and more assertive look at the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Considering the purpose of this study which focused on describing the experiences of English Teaching to adults under a Flexible Educational Model in the case of Servicio Educativo Rural (SER) program in El Oriente Antioqueño, we used the data collection method that we consider more relevant to find a relationship between the theory and studies previously seen and the new results obtained from the Semi-structured interviews carried out.

In this sense, the results yielded important data regarding teaching practices, teachers' perceptions/views, challenges when teaching English, and a new category that emerged that was suggestions. Furthermore, the information obtained was vital in order to answer the research question stated at the beginning of this study.

Teaching practices

This category was one of the most outstanding one due to its level of information and detail, here we were able to analyze it extensively, since four very important subcategories emerged from it, and we will begin to give them their respective places: teaching strategies, assessment/testing, materials and resources, and curricular practices. The voice of six participants was the key to obtain the data that will be described next.

Teaching Strategies

Through the different methods of data collection and taking into account the SER as our object of study, it was significant to analyze the teaching strategies that teachers applied with their students from the SER and, according to Mónica (Interview 3, September 2021): “*Uno mira cuál es el tema que corresponde al mediador y se realiza el manejo de vocabulario para que puedan manejarlo. Por ejemplo, algo tan sencillo como manejar el verbo ser y estar. Entonces*

primero tengo que manejar vocabulario de lugares, vocabulario de profesiones. Yo hago mucho énfasis en vocabulario” We can infer that although the teachers prepared their classes, these had to be subject to a mediator, and then they had to adapt it to their class because many of their students had no previous knowledge of the topics to be addressed.

One of the most predominant aspects we were able to find is that teachers always tried to use recursion in their strategies and methodologies, but although they often did not have the resources to carry them out, they decided to opt for other conventional ways to present their teaching strategies, as Jhon (Interview 5, September 2021) states: *"Entonces cogí aparte de la guía y hacía con ellos una especie de exposición cierto, entonces usted vea, el tema es esto usted trabaja, así como la parte de introducción, los objetivos, empezar como a adentrarlos a ellos. Y ya empezaba, digamos, con vídeos. Trataba de tener mucho de videos, para que ellos comprendieran, de vídeos, de imágenes de toda esa parte de lo que es visual, porque la parte de escritura pues si es más complejo”* And this in turn shows us that although the teachers constantly gave instructions to their students on how they should present their work and under what parameters they should do it, they permanently used different strategies, among the most common ones the use of audiovisual material, such as audios, videos, and images, because according to Jhon's narratives, working from written comprehension could become tedious for them. In this vein, Wegner et al. (2013) mentioned that the learner's motivation is most of the times regarded as a central condition for successful learning, it is notorious how through different strategies it is about students learning in the best way and not seeing the learning process as something tedious.

Taking into account the needs of the students, didactics is a very useful strategy when applying the contents, Deveci (2007) mentions the importance of integral development and how

it can be used to motivate. For example, it is remarkable how one of the strategies from the didactics was a transversalization between the contents and the work field of the students, Jhon (Interview 5, September 2021) mentions: “*Entonces, por ejemplo, digamos que, que en la parte traté de ser como unas pequeñas de que mi proyecto como tal transversalización en, en el SER, allá, en el grupo del trigal. Entonces cogí matemáticas cogí ciencias, cogí español, pues mi inglés y empecé como a, a trabajar con eso, al par de, del cultivo de flores.*” From the aforementioned, we were able to obtain that most of the teachers chose to include the subjects they had a greater knowledge of, as in the case of Jhon with mathematics, and to unify them with English and Spanish. We were able to find this on repeated occasions where teachers did not feel confident enough to teach English and resorted to methodological and conceptual support from other subjects.

Assessment and testing

According to González et al., (2002) in a learner-centered curriculum, evaluation generally takes the form of informal monitoring which is carried on alongside the teaching-learning process, principally by the participants in the process, that is, teachers and learners.

During the interview exercise, we were able to obtain very little, because the information collected, the answers had something in common with the opinions of the other participants regarding assessment and testing, all the participants had very similar opinions. Written workshops are very popular among teachers in the SER program, most of them applied this type of test in order to have an approximate idea of what they had learned, very few teachers opted for conventional evaluation methods, as Mónica (Interview 3, September 2021) states: “*Los talleres, talleres escritos de manera que ellos puedan hacerlo de forma grupal, porque para ellos es*

mucha ayuda, por ejemplo, en el área de ingles no soy de que saquen una hoja y usted me va a escribir esto, no, porque para ellos no, no es pues como lo ideal.”

On the other hand, we could also find that many teachers opted for group evaluations, and as an evaluation strategy to put students with other classmates who have a better command of English, so they can help classmates who have more difficulty, this can be evidenced with Monica (interview 3, September 2021) where she responds: *“Pues en la evaluación no, mas es talleres grupales, porque de pronto ellos se desempeñan un poquito mejor, y también lo que yo les decía, mirar que los compañeros que de pronto les va un poquito mejor, entonces, como organizar los grupos de trabajo de esa manera.”*

In general, many teachers did not implement the traditional evaluation, because there is a bias with the evaluation and the fear not only from the students, but also from the teachers, that an evaluation is characterized by being difficult and complex, the fear of having to learn everything by heart or of failing, since when talking about an exam people tend to feel nervous and insecure, and experiences feed this fear even more. On the other hand, teachers have expanded their creativity and changed the evaluation methodologies and realized that there are many other ways to evaluate, this can be evidenced in Astrid’s narratives (Interview 1, September 2021) where she expresses the following: *“Yo me pongo en los zapatos de ellos y a mí, cuando yo estaba en el colegio, en la universidad, me hablaban de evaluación y a mí me daba mucho miedo y yo lloraba, entonces yo trato de no hacer eso. Eh, digamos los procesos evaluativos los hago constantemente [...] Porque la verdad se genera un bloqueo mental, porque me ha pasado, yo hablo desde mi experiencia. Realmente a mí esa palabra de evaluación, a mí ya me bloquea, esa palabra cuando le dicen: “Está en un parcial” ya, me bloqueó, entonces como que ir explorando todas esas actividades y uno va conociendo y va eh digamos puntuando personas.”*

Materials and resources

The materials and resources are of vital importance to transmit knowledge to students in a much more practical way, so it is necessary that these materials and resources are optimal and adapted for students. Bearing in mind what Nuñez and Tellez (2009) mentioned, reflecting on the teaching process is relevant at the time of developing materials that satisfy students' learning objectives and styles, preferences, and expectations. From the materials and resources that the teachers told us about their experiences, we were able to find important findings with our research project. One of the most used materials was the use of the mediators designed specifically for the SER program, used by all participants with their students, as well as the help of other materials such as photocopies, as expressed by Martha (Interview 4, September 2021):

“Ellos manejan unos módulos, manejan los módulos, también uno maneja fotocopias, porque las necesidades de los estudiantes, todas no son las mismas. Uno va a encontrar los grupos que se les va a facilitar más trabajar en el libro ¿cierto? hay otros que: “No profe, yo prefiero una fotocopia” Entonces uno prefiere sacarle relacionado al mismo tema que haya ahí, pero que se les adapte más a las necesidades de ellos, folletos.”

Taking into account the importance of the materials, Ricoy and Álvarez (20016) mention that the combination of didactics with components related to the everyday life of each student is something crucial for the teaching and learning process, Astrid (Interview 1, September 2021) exclaimed that: *“También uso las lecturas como interpretación de lectura, pues obviamente lecturas muy sencillas, lecturas que se contextualicen al entorno de ellos, vocabulario muy cotidiano al contexto de ellos y también trabajamos canciones con subtítulos, que ellos vayan reconociendo, escuchando en inglés y viendo también la palabra en inglés y también el método pues de traducción que de pronto en algunas en algunas ocasiones no es tan bueno, pero en*

otras sí es muy bueno hacer la traducción.” Alluding to the importance of readings as material to reinforce learning in the classroom, these readings must be previously contextualized, with vocabulary that they can understand and that in turn learning is better, this was applied with the help of translation and songs with subtitles, as stated by Astrid.

Curricular practices

Learning comes to be seen as the gradual accretion of achievable goals, these goals are often initially proposed by government objectives set in different curricula depending on the contexts and the schools. From the above, we can refer to the importance of curricular practices as initiatives that are based on different methodologies for students to reach their maximum level. Nunan (1996) states:

A learner-centered curriculum will need to be modified during the course of program delivery as the learners' skills develop, their self-awareness as learners grows and their perceived needs change. It is the outcomes of an ongoing dialogue between teachers and learners which will determine content and learning objectives (p. 5)

According to the above, we were able to find relevant information regarding the curricular practices experienced in the flexible model of the SER program, wherefrom the curricular design some changes, and curricular adaptations were made to adapt to the context of the students, as Martha declares (Interview 4, September 2021): *“Entonces trata, el mediador trata de adecuarse, de estar, pero uno es consciente de que uno debe de hacer unas adecuaciones sin salirse pues de lo que debe de tratarse los temas que están, siguiendo las líneas pues que uno debe de tener dentro del programa.”*

Many times, the curricular programs were decontextualized, this was one of the most frequent problems that we could find because most of the participants agreed on the same thing, the curricular guidelines were not fully adapted. The role of teachers when working under a flexible educational model so that not only students can educate themselves in a better way, but also that they can learn from what they already know. This is what Luz Miryam mentions (Interview 2, September 2021): *“Pero entonces como el modelo SER es un programa flexible nosotros como docentes teníamos la oportunidad de poder eh adaptar esos contenidos a la realidad o a las necesidades de los estudiantes [...] el programa SER es un modelo flexible, entonces sabíamos que los contenidos estaban un poco desactualizados, creo que en este momento están en esa actualización y pues están sacando otra vez nuevo material.”* Another of the experiences we were able to find and analyze was how the teachers started from the simplest to the most complex to relate it in the different themes of their classes, using the same methodology used in primary schools, colors, numbers, parts of the body, so that the students could adapt little by little. As Jhon answers in (Interview 5, September 2021): *“Cuando me tocó solo que fue muy poquito tiempo, eh, que eso fue como dos meses, que hice yo ahí en el inglés, coger lo básico, el vocabulario, empezamos con los números, empezamos con los colores, empezamos con eh, como se llama? Las partes del cuerpo”*

Teachers' perceptions /views

This second category is focused on the teachers' experiences and their perceptions of some events and how they are perceived from their different points of view.

Being a teacher under the framework of EL SER

Being a teacher carries many responsibilities and challenges, even more so when working in a different context than those commonly known as SER. From the outset, a curricular theme is understood, for example, as mentioned by teacher Martha (Interview 4, September 2021): *‘pero uno como docente, uno tiene esa capacidad o ese amor por la profesión de saber uno adecuarse a cada una de esas situaciones y a cada uno de los grupos; yo sabía que me enfrentaba a algo totalmente distinto; que a los niños se les enseña algo distinto’* making a contrast that when teaching young people and adults it is something different than working with children.

It is important to understand the context of the students to be able to cover the academic contents and generate an environment that allows trust in the classroom, as we mentioned above, one of the contexts is to differentiate the teaching and learning process of adults, since they are very different from children, but there are also other characteristics, as Jhon mentions (Interview 5, September 2021): *‘ellos eran felices, entonces para ellos seguir desde las 3 hasta las 5 y 30 o 6 de la tarde estudiando, era gente que no se desmotivaba, era gente feliz, y entonces a uno le contaban las historias y uno hasta se ponía a llorar, porque eran personas realmente motivadas, llegaban allá, no es que yo quiero, no porque me vaya a seguir una carrera, sino porque yo quiero cumplir ese sueño que tenía, que no pude por ciertas circunstancias’* highlighting that most of his students worked and were there by personal motivation, González et al., (2002) stated that when talking about the teaching role, it should not only be focused on that they are instructors, but also on their role as the teacher as a learner must also be considered. It is important bear in mind, that being a teacher goes beyond teaching a course, it implies learning and unlearning, getting involved with students and their contexts, it implies being a friend and guiding. In addition, following the line of text pedagogy, Gónzales et al., (2015) show how it is intended that the student becomes aware of their reality, and for this it is very important that the

teacher is informed about the context and that s/he learns together with the students so that there is a social construction.

Learning/teaching English

At the time of teaching a class, the teacher must be clear about the objectives that s/he plans to carry out through the contents, but what happens when these contents are also new for the teacher? as Sherin (2002) mentions, the implementation of the lesson planning reform also promotes the development of new pedagogical routines and new understandings of the domain for the teacher, who can learn while teaching. Taking into account that some teachers had to study and prepare to teach English, it can be seen how fear was generated from the teachers' perspective when they had to teach the English class, for example Martha states (Interview 4, September 2021): *‘es complicado, porque es que, si uno como profesor le tiene miedo al inglés, porque no vamos a decir mentiras, hay profes que le tienen miedo a las matemáticas, y la mayoría el inglés.’* Hinting that the teaching of English could be complex since from the teacher's perspective English was difficult, so she had to prepare and study before going to teach the contents to her students.

Considering the teachers' fear when teaching English, it is important to highlight what Astrid says (Interview 1, September 2021): *‘Bueno, realmente hay una prevención y un miedo. Hay un temor hacia lo nuevo, sí, como a todos nos sucede como seres humanos. Aprender algo nuevo, descubrir algo nuevo y enfrentarnos a un idioma que no es nativo, siempre va a generar un susto y un temor en los participantes.’* Since you can see the fear is not only of the teachers, but the students sometimes also feel afraid of learning something that they are not used to and that is completely new for them. With this, it can be highlighted that when teaching English there may be fear from the teacher and from the students, but the teacher looks for the best strategies to

meet the objectives according to the contents, looking for general learning, that is, that the teacher and students can learn together.

Dealing with materials

When working under a context such as SER there are some vitally important curricular aspects, in this case, we will talk about pedagogical mediators, which are materials created and distributed by the SER's program. The idea is that teachers and students can use these pedagogical mediators as a type of guidance regarding the contents and possible activities that can be carried out in the classroom. For each course there is a pedagogical mediator depending on the CLEI, for example, for CLEI II there is a pedagogical mediator of mathematics that is different from the CLEI III. As Luz Miryam mentions (Interview 2, September 2021): *''pues se trabaja por libros, pero entonces en inglés no había ese material, solamente para CLEI III.''* This is an important aspect since if we are talking about six CLEIs and there is only one pedagogical mediator for CLEI III, what should the teachers do to cover the other five CLEIs if they did not have pedagogical mediators?

Considering the previous question, Mónica states (Interview 3, September 2021):

''Porque el mediador ya usted lo puede aplicar ya con el participante, por ejemplo, yo ya con estudiantes que están en el CLEI V y que llevan todo el proceso, yo ese mediador ya no lo utilizo, ya tengo que mirar es que les voy a dar, porque obviamente ya lo vieron entonces no.'' In short, having already covered the pedagogical mediator, teachers must make their own planning and activities regarding the criteria that they use and according to what they consider to be the next thing that should be taught.

Remembering that the SER is the one who creates and designs its own mediators, it is important to highlight some things that must be improved considering the different contexts to which they are directed, as Jhon mentions (Interview 5, September 2021): *‘‘Pero en el momento de llegar a al SER, digamos que se encuentra uno con unas guías totalmente descontextualizadas’’* When talking about this decontextualization, it is interesting to read what Monica (Interview 3, September 2021) tells us: *‘‘Si, nosotros porque ya los vamos adaptando, cada tutor los adapta porque incluso en un mediador usted puede encontrar que le hablan de una región diferente a la de donde usted está, o hablan cosas de acá, y un estudiante del bajo cauca, nada que ver, cierto, entonces ya, es uno como tutor adaptarlo a las necesidades del contexto que tiene.’’* As mentioned by González, Montoya and Sierra, (2002) one of the teaching roles is to make decisions regarding materials, language policies and the curriculum, in this case, teachers have the freedom to adapt and contextualize the contents depending on the needs of the students.

Meaningful experiences

In the teaching profession, teachers are responsible for marking the lives of students forever, but students also leave a significant mark on their teachers and peers. The relationship between the students' lives and the content is very important, since as Ricoy and Álvarez (2016) mention, with adequate contextualization and a good command of the content, students can improve their interest in the language they are learning and how to use it to make your day to day better. For example, Martha shares a significant experience (Interview 4, September 2021): *‘‘yo tenía una experiencia toda interesante y era que en un grupo ellos trabajaban en una floristería y aprendiendo los colores... ay profe mira claro por eso es que esta flor se le dice así, claro la flor es de exportación cierto, y ellos no sabían por qué llamaban a esa flor así, sabían el nombre, la manipulaban, trabajaban ahí, sin embargo ellos no sabían que era porque era azul, que era*

porque era roja cierto, que se llamaba de esa manera, entonces ellos, ay profe, eran asombrados y lo que yo le decía, llevarlo a esa cotidianidad, cuando se presentan, pues es muy interesante, es muy rico aunque uno quisiera que fuera más profundo cierto, de manera más más sí más profesional'' It is very significant to see how through the content, in this case English, teachers can make education transcend to other areas, in this case, the work environment of students where in a flower company, they used colors in English to name the flowers to export, and the students had no knowledge that those "red" or "blue" names were *rojo* or *azul* in Spanish.

‘‘Classroom activities can be seen to relate to learners' real-life needs. Skills development can be seen as a gradual, rather than an all-or- nothing process.’’ (Nunan, 1996, p. 5)

As teachers we can motivate our students to follow their dreams and with this, motivate other people not to give up and create a kind of motivational chain, Jhon shows us example of this (Interview 5, September 2021): *‘‘ no profe yo estoy acabando acá, estoy trabajando para ahorrar para poder meterme a un equipo, pero estoy acabando todas las materias, y estoy estudiando y viendo partidos en inglés para ver si de pronto algún día me voy a jugar a otro país, entonces, como que ellos solitos se motivaban, llegaban al salón y motivaban a todos, lo motivaban a uno y eso era como una cadena hermosa.’’* Considering this, ‘‘The learners’ motivation is raised by the selection of topics that meet their levels of knowledge and abilities, as this fulfills their need to feel competent.’’ Wegner et al. (2013) The need for students to feel competent or useful is important, it may be these factors or others that influence motivation, such as self-improvement, continuing studies, or graduating. It is important to have this motivation in each of the students to carry out a more meaningful and enjoyable learning process for all.

Challenges when teaching English.

Teachers, in general, have many challenges regarding teaching, we were able to show that within the challenges of the SER teachers was the teaching of English from different perspectives that will be covered.

Professional development/ training

One of the biggest challenges is that of professional development/training since most teachers had to prepare extremely well to teach the English class. The context must be taken into account, as these are classes for adults and not for children. Mónica tells us (Interview 2, September 2021): *“Es un gran reto. Es un reto muy grande porque la población que nosotros manejamos es población que llevan generalmente entre 20 y 30 años sin estudiar”* and to start teaching English, a very arduous contextualization must be done so that students can make a connection between a second language and the mother tongue.

Another barrier has been the training, Mónica (Interview 3, September 2021) says: *“Otra barrera muy grande, es que nosotros no estamos lo suficientemente capacitados para desempeñarnos en el área, lo que yo les decía ahorita lo de ingles que uno maneja poquito es porque ha sido con base en el autoaprendizaje, cierto, que se ha tenido.”* Here it is evident how professional development and training begins autonomously by the teachers as they do not feel fully qualified to teach English classes, some teachers seek strategies such as researching the contents on the internet or YouTube, seeking support or advice from colleagues, and finally they try to adapt activities so that the contents are easier to teach and can be learned that can be put into practice. Agudo et al., (2008) mentioned that the fear presented in adults to learning English as a second language is rooted in the learning process, since they possibly had a bad experience in relation to the strategies used, that is why it is important to investigate and try to adapt our classes so that our students learn in the best way.

Teaching English without being an English teacher

Considering that in the SER the teachers work under a flexible educational model, where teachers must teach all subjects, one of the big problems is that not everyone has the necessary knowledge to teach English, for example, someone who has a degree in mathematics must teach English, which is a great challenge. Martha (Interview 4, September 2021) said: *“Pues a ver que les digo, para nosotros los profes que no somos licenciados en inglés, encontramos muchas dificultades, ¿cierto? porque no es como digamos un área que se le faciliten ni tanto a los estudiantes ni tanto a los profesores, pero uno trata como de adecuarse, de adecuarse al tipo de educación ¿cierto?”* In this case, she does not have a degree in English, so she states that the great challenge there is to adapt to the context of the SER to be able to approach the English content in the best way.

Teachers have the great challenge of overcoming all the barriers that can be found along the way and trying to grow and improve in the best way, Jhon mentions something he used to do (Interview 5, 2021): *“Pero bueno, yo qué hacía, cogía el tema como tal que correspondía para esa semana o para ese periodo, lo practicaba bien la parte, digamos, de escritura, ¿cierto? Y trataba de practicar la parte de pronunciación, no me iba muy bien, pero trataba de hacer el mayor esfuerzo y que lo que yo llevara tenía que ser memorístico para mí, tenía que aprenderlo memorístico para poder que el estudiante lo entendiera exactamente, porque yo iba a improvisar una palabra, no, no sabía cómo”* As one of the challenges was to learn English and teach it at the same time, he prepared well in advance to be able to memorize everything he was going to teach, since he says that the memorization part was what worked best for him to go to teach the classes and thus be sure of what he was doing in case his students were confused. Considering what González et al., (2002) mentioned, that good preparation and having access to good

materials or resources can guarantee a better teaching and learning process, shows us how teachers must face great challenges and seek the best strategies to overcome adversities.

Teachers and students towards English

Although in the classroom there are challenges that must be overcome, it is important to understand the perspectives of teachers and students, in this case, compared to English. For example, Astrid (Interview 1, September 2021) says: *‘Es difícil, se hace difícil porque ellos ya tienen el chip de que, si no sé hablar español, pues menos voy a hablar inglés, sí, y eso lo escucha uno frecuentemente en ellos. No pues si yo no sé hablar español, bien, ahora voy a hablar inglés.’* It is understandable that students have certain barriers when it comes to learning English, initially because they see it as a complex subject. Agudo et al., (2008) suggest that it is important to study the needs of students and their context, make a familiarization using English and look for the best tools so that the teaching and learning process is carried out satisfactorily.

Not only are there barriers from the students' perspectives, from the teachers as well, Mónica (Interview 3 September 2021) states: *‘No es lo mismo el inglés que nosotros implementamos con base en lo que hemos aprendido y cada uno a que haya una persona con el que estamos capacitados, tienen más herramientas, en la parte de didáctica, de pronto tienen más capacidad de saber este tema como lo puedo dar porque sí, a veces incluso uno se siente, si, como bueno yo que voy a hacer, yo como doy este tema, como la angustia.’* The perception of the fear of English goes beyond learning a second foreign language, it must also be borne in mind that the training required to teach English is of vital importance, as there is a lack of educational resources to cover the topics of content in English.

Suggestions

This category arose from the data collection methods obtained from the participants, who expressed valuable information that could be used in future studies to improve the SER program as a flexible educational model, and within this, the curricula and methodology, to improve the program and constantly update it. In writing these findings, we realized that the SER program still has some areas for improvement, which we will describe below.

Materials and curriculum

Nunan (1996) exhibits that ‘key elements proposed in the curriculum are: initial planning procedures, content selection and gradation; methodology (which includes the selection of learning activities and materials); and ongoing monitoring, assessment and evaluation (p. 4).’

One of the most evident and common suggestions we saw was the technology gap that exists in educational institutions up to the date of publication of this research project in which the SER program was involved. Many teachers stated that there are still difficulties with technological means such as computers and the Internet, as evidenced by Luz Miryam (Interview 2, September 2021) who mentioned: “*Me hubiera gustado haber empleado más las TICs, ya que, pues se ha convertido en un recurso muy importante para fortalecer los procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje, y antes de la pandemia pues no los estábamos utilizando casi pues como se están utilizando ahorita*” This demonstrates that the SER program is not up to date from a technological point of view, since most of the students belonging to this educational model have problems of connectivity and access to the Internet, they simply do not have an electronic device or if they are provided with one, they do not know how to use it, thus presenting a digital illiteracy.

On the other hand, one of the aspects that is part of the suggestions from the materials and the curriculum is the decontextualization of the methodology and the educational guides designed for the SER program, since many of the activities were designed for other types of contexts, as stated by Astrid (Interview 1, September 2021) *“Bueno, realmente me parece que le falta, sí, le falta porque de igual manera, tiene... digamos tiene muchas temáticas de pronto muy citadinas, sí, porque, aunque tenemos de los dos contextos, tenemos personas de la ciudad y tenemos personas rurales, pero tenemos personas muy rurales que o sea, su único medio es la naturaleza, entonces sería más como un vocabulario más rural obviamente sin dejar lo que ya está, ¿cierto?, sería como añadir.”* Like Astrid (Interview 1, September 2021), Mónica (Interview 3, September 2021) tells us about the updating of the pedagogical mediators and the guides used by the SER program to teach their students, she says: *“Pero sí considero que deberíamos tener como de pronto, no sé si ahorita se están haciendo la actualización. Se está trabajando como en eso, que cruz tenga como un mediador, como de acuerdo a esas necesidades. La verdad pues que adaptarlo a la realidad... No, sino que ya los temas me parecen pertinentes, ya es uno como docente, como busca la estrategia para dar a conocer ese tema”.*

Training/professional development

According to Cruz (2006), it is nothing new to say that good teaching performance is one of the factors that have the greatest impact on educational quality. To speak of good professional performance is to know how to adapt to the new situations posed by the students, the curriculum and the structure of the educational centers, and it is also to refer to the knowledge of various disciplines that intersect in practice. This subcategory arose from the need to improve the educational system as a request created by the participants of this research project from the SER

program as a proposal for this program to grow in favor of educational advancement and to provide a better educational offer.

The training of teachers, as a fundamental part of professional development, is part of the suggestions, because the participants expressed it on recurring occasions, where continuous training, according to them, is necessary to offer a better education to their students and create meaningful learning, in this case from the teaching of English, which is our focus and one of the reasons why we decided to focus on this research project. Martha (Interview 4, September 2021) mentioned it as follows: *“Lo principal, uno estar más capacitado en el área, cierto, porque uno quisiera mm, que lo que uno enseñe sea bueno para ellos y sí deje ese aprendizaje y si uno está bien capacitado, uno va a poder dar ese contenido, va a poder impartir ese conocimiento de una manera más fácil, cierto, más asimilable, mientras que uno no, uno le toca empezar a buscar por sus propios medios, y capacitarse uno, pero fuera maravilloso, que nosotros estuviéramos capacitados en inglés, cierto, maravillosos porque tendríamos todas las... no pues todas las ventajas posibles en cuanto a eso”*

Likewise, Astrid (Interview 1, September 2021) stated that teachers should not only be trained in subjects such as English but also in other areas such as pedagogy, where she stated that very few people, if any, are prepared to work in these contexts with the SER program and the great bias that exists, just because they have a bad perception of adult education in rural contexts with English. She states: *“Nos debemos capacitar muchísimo, primero, uno tiene que prepararse muy bien. De hecho es el mayor temor de cuando un tutor llega nuevo porque inmediatamente te dicen es que tienes que dar todas las áreas y eso ya causa, cierto temor, temor por decirlo así, incluso hay compañeros que dicen no, yo soy licenciado en matemáticas Yo no me siento capacitado, cual es la ventaja, que yo siempre he trabajado con el mismo modelo, cuando por*

ejemplo yo llegué acá hace tres años, y me dijeron que era trabajar esa metodología, para mí no fue tan drástico el cambio porque yo ya venía de trabajar esa misma metodología, pero que primero capacitarse, no llegar al aula de clase sin esas herramientas”

To conclude, the results obtained were very gratifying since we found a variety of responses that fit certain patterns within the categories. The methods selected and put into practice allowed us to deepen the experiences of each teacher and in this way, understand her perspectives, with this, providing important information that must be heard in the academic field since it is of the utmost importance.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, we can say that the general objective was fulfilled since we started with this research project, we always had in mind not to deviate from the objective and our research question, which was the importance of listening and talking about the experiences of teachers in the SER program as a flexible educational model in Eastern Antioquia. This proposal was carried out with the help of 6 teacher participants who worked with the SER program in rural contexts with an adult population. For us, it was a great reward to have been able to participate with such professional and qualified people who took the time to help us with the realization of this project. Thanks to them we were able to categorize the information that emerged: Teaching practices, teachers' perceptions and views, challenges when teaching English, and suggestions. These categories emerged from the interviews with each of the six participants, and from each of these categories, other subcategories emerged from the experiences and perceptions that they had as teachers in the SER program. We believe that for future research, the experiences of the students and of the directors who are part of this same program can be considered.

The findings we had can be useful to improve the SER program and contribute to rural education, literacy, and English teaching to adults. Therefore, it is important to mention that from the teaching strategies, the teachers presented their classes, guided by the mediators, but many times they had to make curricular adaptations to adapt them to the context using audiovisual material: audios, videos, and images as good learning strategies.

From the evaluation and testing, many teachers chose not to follow the typical design of the traditional evaluation, the written workshops were chosen as a method of evaluation, as well as group evaluations, where students helped each other while solving their doubts and concerns they had with English. The use of the mediators as a material and resource in the classroom is

relevant for teaching, according to the participants, and for this reason, they applied it as a way to guide themselves when they had doubts or difficulties with English.

We also concluded that the teachers implemented reading comprehension to their students through readings, photocopies, and songs as material to reinforce learning with vocabulary that can be understood by them and that is contextualized with themes with which they can identify. Since the curricular programs are outdated and deal with topics that cannot be adapted to most rural contexts, because these contexts are not the same, this conclusion was expressed by several teachers. The SER program, as a flexible educational model, should be updated and contextualized to the different scenarios.

Many of the teachers had difficulties with teaching English to their students, that is why teachers need to be clear about the objectives, since for them, this may seem complex, so teachers indicated that it is necessary to prepare before teaching the contents for the English area. This fear comes not only from the teachers, but also from the students. This fear should not be a barrier to learning; on the contrary, it should allow them to learn together, strengthening the teacher-student relationship. One of the challenges for teachers is also professional development/training since their main barrier is the training to teach from the subject of English. However, they have autonomously sought help to enrich their classes. The SER program should train its teachers, not only in educational matters, but also from the possible technological gaps that some teachers may have to manage digital media such as educational platforms.

Finally, regarding the challenges, we found that there is very little information related to adult education in rural contexts of English, and that there are many teachers who still have a great challenge to educate in different contexts such as the countryside. The SER program is a program with a lot of potential and for this reason it should be rethought to contribute to the

benefit of the population and the educational community. In addition, thanks to this study we were able to make known the voices of the teachers who are the people who are there giving all their best potential and with the best possible delivery and who can make great contributions to the education of tomorrow and in foreign languages and that through this study future research can be carried out from the systematization of experiences to young people, students and personnel of the people under the SER program. Since their main barrier is the training to teach from the subject of English. However, they have autonomously sought help to enrich their classes. The SER program should train its teachers, not only in educational matters, but also from the possible technological gaps that some teachers may have to manage digital media such as educational platforms.

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