



Título del Proyecto: The way pre-service teachers from the BA languages program at UCEVA University portray their identity within their immersion practicum.

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**The way pre-service teachers from the BA languages program at UCEVA University
portray their identity within their immersion practicum.**

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Dedication

This project goes to the two fourteen-year-old girls who became friends by phone calls in middle school, to our non-ending evenings reading books and sharing them with each other, to that one book, we searched together for over a year and by the time it was found, we didn't read it because we were too busy fangirling over One Direction songs. It also goes to those black pen lyrics by Halsey, written on our school desks completing each other's lines. To Taylor Swift's magical songs that helped us to go through those nights writing this paper while drinking coffee and tea. To all those personas we were before who we are now.

To the reader, we hope you have in mind this research was made with lots of love by two best friends.

Resumen

El objetivo del presente estudio fue analizar la manera en que los pre-service teachers de la Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés retratan su identidad docente durante práctica pedagógica de inmersión, así como responder a la pregunta de investigación “How do pre-service teachers from the BA languages program at UCEVA University portray their identity within their immersion practicum?” El documento está enmarcado en un paradigma cualitativo y a su vez, responde a un estudio de caso, con el fin de proporcionar un análisis profundo de lo que representa la identidad para los participantes basado en su experiencia práctica de inmersión. Durante la investigación, se encontró que varios factores ayudaron a los pre-service teachers a construir su identidad docente de acuerdo a sus propias preferencias e incluso experiencias previas en el campo académico. Admitir la importancia de analizar la perspectiva del maestro de acuerdo con su propia identidad y rendimiento en el aula, favorece una mayor comprensión de sí mismos en el rol docente, así como en el empoderamiento de sus prácticas.

Palabras Clave

Docentes Practicantes, Identidad Docente, Práctica Pedagógica, Práctica de Inmersión, Inglés como Lengua Extranjera

Abstract

The aim of the present study lies in analyzing the way pre-service teachers in the BA languages at UCEVA program present themselves and portray their teacher's identity during their immersion pedagogical practicum as well as responding to the research question: "How do pre-service teachers from the BA languages program at UCEVA University portray their identity within their immersion practicum?". The research holds a qualitative nature as well as is framed on a case study, in order to provide an understanding of what pre-service teachers mean when they say "teaching identity" based on their immersion practicum experience. During the investigation, it was found that various factors helped the pre-service teachers construct their teacher's identity according to their own preferences and even prior experiences in the academic field, admitting the importance of analyzing teacher's perspective according to their own identity and performance in the classroom in order to get a better and most confident understanding of themselves in the role as well as serving as an aid to empower them in the field.

Keywords

Pre-service teachers, Teaching identity, Pedagogical practicum, Immersion Practicum, English as a Foreign Language

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Introduction

The discovery of pre-service teachers' identity brings with it the reasons for their behavior inside and outside the classroom in the development of their immersion practicum, giving way to the understanding of any aspect that permeates the construction of said process that is always in constant evolution. A recent study by Hapsari & Ena, (2019) evidenced the big relation between two pre-service students and their practicum, showing their positions in the field were mostly influenced by their students and surroundings. This research paper intends to discover the pre-service teachers' identity from 10 students in 5th, 6th and 7th semester from the BA Languages Program at UCEVA in Tuluá, Valle del Cauca, Colombia, given the fact that during these semesters the pre-service teachers go through their immersion pedagogical practicum, which allows them to widely discover themselves as teachers and their procedures in the classroom according to their likes and the context needs.

The research was conducted by using the qualitative approach, this granted the study of the pre-service teachers' attitude and roles in their practicum classes, nevertheless, the scope was explanatory, so the intention was not changing situations or taking action into their realities as pre-service teachers. It was possible to determine that some factors such as collecting guides and relevant material to create classes influenced the participants' perceptions of the teaching practicum and served as a tool for students to choose ways into making classes comfortable and entertaining in their way, they used class instruments and various approaches as a legitimate strategy based on the practicum environment they were exposed to which helped to accommodate their classes in their own terms so the pre-service teachers felt somehow sheltered and confident to carry out their practicum classes.

Chapter I: Problem Contextualization

This research problem approaches the objects of study Teaching Practicum and Teaching Identity from a theoretical position, pertinent normative documents, in addition to a practical dimension which will provide a description about the need of carrying out a research on answering the question: “How do pre-service teachers from the BA languages program at UCEVA University portray their identity within their immersion practicum?”.

The immersion practicum is the phase in which the pre-service teachers are able to engage in classes by embracing the role of teachers for the first time, bearing in mind that they are already prepared to play the part by using what has been taught to them in the first four semesters. Considering the first phase of the BA program, where the pre-service teacher is only allowed to watch, but not perpetrate any action in the classroom, the immersion phase is decisive for the pre-service teachers since they start to work with all the implications of being a teacher, such as planning classes, grading students, getting feedback and connecting with the class environment as they haven't done before, making this study possible due to the need of identifying and describing the perceptions towards identity the pre-service teachers can report during their practicum, and establishing how the immersive practicum scenarios affect their identities and how each one of them find their roles as teachers through the act of teaching.

The idea that pre-service teachers have about identity was inquired from a general perspective in which a short interview was applied to three random students, one per each participant semester from the BA languages program. Within their description it was possible to perceive their conception of identity is molded by almost the same concepts. According to the results, Student 1 conceives identity as the way to recognize herself and what she is as a human being. However, Student 2 describes that identity is shaped by those things that allow a person to

be unique and all the features that are attributed to someone. Student 3's answer serves as a meeting point between the two above since it mentions a spectrum of different dimensions that enable the construction of an identity in a given space-time.

Students shared their different views regarding their own identities as teachers, Student 1 expresses how their decisions as a teacher are affected by their experience in high school, while Student 2 shares they act as a guide for the student and tries to teach as necessary, on the other side, Student 3 just denies having a view of themselves being a teacher since they don't enjoy teaching.

Furthermore, participants' responses describe from their experience which method helps them most in the development of their classes. Student 1 and Student 3 agree that the communicative approach facilitates the progress of their practices, hinting the performance of activities and skills development within the class. Student 2 explains that the method that facilitates their practice is the content-based learning method, as it represents the placement of students in real situations.

Teachers' empowerment could prove to be a factor influencing pre-service teachers' perception of themselves within their classroom practice. The pre-service teachers offer an overview of what makes them feel empowered as teachers in the classroom, while Student 1 feels empowered by seeing the interest of students in class, Student 2 shares how they feel empowered by giving students a different view of the world and thinking about the general importance of teaching. To conclude, Student 3 denies feeling empowered as a teacher by repeating they don't like teaching.

In the last question, students share what makes them feel unpleasant in the classroom, this feeling may encourage pre-service teachers to change aspects about the class in order to improve their lessons. Student 1 argues they have trouble acting as an authority in the classroom, Student 2 shares they feel unpleasant when they feel limited in the classroom and Student 3 expresses a discontent about not being able to show emotions while teaching.

The findings of this brief introductory interview allowed the researchers to recognize the different perceptions pre-service teachers have when it comes to their practicum, as it can be seen in the answers, while two of the pre-service teachers were enthusiast about their experiences, the other one expressed their unconformity in their assigned classrooms, arguing they did not see themselves as teachers since that was not in their plans for their future. Teachers' identity and the perception that pre-service teachers have of a practicum environment can be permeated with many situations and responses to the difficulties, motivations and personal attitudes of each individual. It could be considered a non-generalizable spectrum but in which patterns related to the context of the practice and other characteristics to be discovered can be generated.

Eventually, the beginning of the teaching process is crucial to determine the attitudes the pre-service teacher considers more pertinent in order to feel comfortable inside the classroom, and the methodologies which help them the most based on reflecting on their experiences and feedback on their own practicum. In consequence, the importance of conducting research in this field lies on the indispensable need of discovering pre-service teachers' identity through these interaction spaces in which themselves, the pre-service teachers, are aware of their teaching skills abilities as well as their own weaknesses, allowing themselves only through experience,

the opportunity to build and deconstruct on their perceptions, beliefs and attitudes in their teaching work.

On the whole, the dimensions explored before work as tools which approve the significant relevance of this problem of study, given the fact that pre-service teachers can become more in tune with their sense of self and with a deep understanding of how this self, fits into a larger context inside their practicum experiences which involves others by recognizing their own identities.

Rationale

The purpose of this research is to explore the different forms of teacher identity presented on pre-service teachers from 5th, 6th, and 7th semester from the BA languages program at UCEVA University during their immersion practicum. Practicum development has been regulated by the Colombian government through Resolution 18583, (2017). Within the document the specific practicum features of Bachelor Programs are established and the way the higher education institutions should implement them. These scenarios turn out to be exercises from which pre-service teachers conceptualize from observation practicum, intervene from immersion practicum and investigate from research practicum in an assigned context. Bearing that in mind, this research will focus only on the immersion phase since it addresses the first encounter that pre-service teachers have in a classroom as teachers.

As pre-service teachers move on with their practicum and are introduced to the immersion phase of the lastly mentioned, they get to start molding the way their identities are formed as teachers while enacting their lessons in the manner they feel the most comfortable. In other words, in this phase the pre-service teachers “interpret, evaluate and continuously

collaborate in the construction of their own early identity development” (Oruç, 2013). Also, as mentioned by Timoštšuk & Ugaste (2010), teachers tend to portray their identity based on experiencing, which is highly related to emotions and, in most cases, is linked to personal social context. This is why it is strongly needed to conduct a study which connects the way pre-service teachers learn to perform the act of teaching based on their different identities and its diverse dimensions through their practicum empirical knowledge.

For instance, Nghia & Huynh (2017) affirm that “the pre-service teachers’ identities can be developed through their studies at the teacher college, supplementing their aspirations or expectations that they have prior to entering the teacher education program” (p. 2). Since they are allowed to be the main characters of their immersive practicum scenario by embracing the teaching role for the first time; this project will attempt to analyze the portrayed identities by the BA languages program at UCEVA University pre-service teachers, and the identification of scenarios within the practicum that enable or limit the development of their identities.

The importance of this project lies also in getting a clear picture of how the identities of pre-service teachers from the BA languages program at UCEVA University are presented within the immersion practicum scenarios developed from fifth to seventh semester. Furthermore, this document aims to give way to future research related to the discovery, description and understanding of the identities that can be present in any stage of pre-service teachers’ practicum since this topic has not been so explored, and how all the processes carried out during these phases affect the way their identities evolve or devolve according to their prior experiences and new knowledge being acquired.

It is expected for the practicum scenarios to have the capacity to be enriched due to the apprehension and understanding of what identity represents for a pre-service teacher in their practicum contexts. In addition, it is also expected to generate possible changes and improvements in the approach to certain aspects from the practice subject in the participant, which is a leading part of the teaching task since it is the first teaching encounter pre-service teachers have with the scholastic scenario, which allows them to develop their own classes as a collision between the theory and the practice.

Moreover, the project benefits the BA in Foreign Languages program from the aforementioned acknowledgement of what it means to be a teacher to its students and how each practicum context, regarding its differences and similarities eases the way those teaching identities are shaped and lead the pre-service teacher to bring to light the kind of teacher they are, as well as which practices give meaning to their teaching practicum by taking into account not only the contents or methodologies but also their values, attitudes and emotions in order to respond to the research question: How do pre-service teachers from the BA languages program at UCEVA University portray their identity within their immersion practicum?

General Objective

To analyze the pre-service teachers from the BA languages program at UCEVA portrayed identities within their immersion practicum.

Specific Objectives

1. To identify the perceptions towards identity reported by the pre-service teachers.
2. To describe the teacher identities reported by pre-service teachers within their immersion practicum.

3. To establish the practices that facilitate or inhibit the teacher identity during the immersion practicum

Chapter II: Reference Framework

Pedagogical Practicum

To speak of pedagogical practice, it is necessary to bear in mind it is a complex concept because it refers to an environment where there are subjects who interact according to their environment and each practice is shaped and influenced by the meanings that have been built on it. Teaching practicum is a mandatory scenario within bachelor's degree programs in Colombia according to the General Education Act, art 115 (1994). The article 109 states that the purpose of teacher training is to have high scientific and ethical teachers' quality, as well as to develop pedagogical practice as part of the knowledge of the future educator. Within this framework, pedagogical practice is then conceived as a space to reflect on how concepts, experiences and other factors that imply being in a real teaching context are addressed.

Zuluaga (1996) understands pedagogical practicum as a way of being, a way of functioning that allows the appropriation of knowledge, insertion in production and research that facilitates conceptualizing and generating positions inside the classroom. On the other hand, Diaz (1990) states that pedagogical practicum refers not only to procedures but also to strategies and practices that regulate interaction, communication, the exercise of thought, speech, vision, of the positions, competitions, and dispositions of the subjects of the school. While Brittin (2005) considers it is a process related to planning, so it brings with it aspects such as the use of material and strategies to be used in the teaching and learning process. According to his definition, it is understood it has not only to do with teaching but also in the communication that permeates the subjects of the learning community.

Moreno (2002) offers a characterization of what is pedagogical practice from three perspectives on the teacher. These perspectives are: the traditional of the trade, which is essential

for the acquisition of techniques of the trade of being a teacher; the personalist, where the individual can contribute to the integral development of the teacher, to approach the reality of educational institutions and to influence them; with corresponding practice, capacity to analyze behaviors, beliefs, and implicit theories that underlie the activity.

Despite the fact, all teachers and pre-service teachers have the same training as indicated by The Colombian Ministry of National Education, under the Resolution 18583 (2017), every experience turns out to be different. The document establishes that the Foreign Languages Bachelors, Bilingualism and Modern Languages programs must guarantee, through the curriculum, the normative components and academic spaces dedicated to educational, pedagogical research and practice, with due supervision in support of the evaluation and learning that are being promoted.

According to Resolution 18583 (2017) the knowledge of teacher training consists of four components which, however, based on the framework of university autonomy, each institution can determine the competencies or aspects to be developed. In first place, the general foundations component includes general meanings that make up an academic community, related to reading, writing, arguing, researching, foreign language proficiency as well as mathematical abilities, citizenship training and use of ICTs. In the second place, the component of specific and disciplinary knowledge includes the domain which must be consolidated by the pre-service teacher over the updated knowledge in their action field. A series of aspects must be taken into account in which the pre-service teacher can appropriate the historical trajectory and specific foundations or knowledge of the training program in addition to mastering references and ways of researching on the disciplinary field as well as developing dispositions regarding academic work and training.

In order to guarantee the efficacy and use of knowledge, the BA on Foreign Languages from UCEVA must have a pedagogical component in which the pre-service teacher tests their mastery of the theories, traditions, and pedagogical trends, as well as didactics in a given context, taking into account a wide spectrum of physical, intellectual and sociocultural characteristics of students. For this reason, the BA on Foreign Languages from UCEVA has during its course three specific scenarios in the development of teaching practicum which allows the pre-service teacher to perform their teaching work from the knowledge learned.

As stipulated in the Master Document of the BA on Foreign Languages from UCEVA, the program has a total of fifty academic credits of the Teaching Practicum subject, which within the curriculum is part of the Pedagogy, Didactics and Educational Sciences area. The practicum scenarios are present from the first semester and continue throughout the entire training process. It is made of three different scenarios, observation practicum, immersion practicum and investigative practicum.

In accordance with the aforementioned document, observation practicum takes place from the first to the fourth academic semesters and as its name implies, it allows pre-service teachers to observe the classes in a specific context whose purpose varies depending on the semester. Immersion practicum responds to the need of the pre-service teacher to make use of the learned tools during the first practicum phase and link theory to practice in an assigned context. Immersion practicum scenarios are carried out from the fifth to the seventh academic semesters.

As part of its aim, teaching practicum address a third scenario from eighth to tenth semesters, related to the research process also known as undergraduate work, these ones are

known as research practicum, in which the systematization of the practicum process and the selection of possible situations to be investigated are proposed, putting into work the designs studied in the previous semesters regarding pedagogical studies and practicum.

The established teaching practicum scenarios allow the exercise of dynamics in various teaching contexts through experience. Immersion practicum, according to the stipulations of the Master Document of the BA Languages Program (2017), are then the ideal scenarios for: a) promoting the ability of designing pedagogical materials for teaching English as a foreign language, b) analyzing the context on situations of local educational institutions and managing innovative projects for real situations contextualized in their professional work and c) refining the gaze on the different objects of study and knowing how to analyze the demands and needs of people, groups or organizations in different educational contexts.

Through the teaching practicum pre-service teachers are allowed to introduce themselves to a real English Language Teaching context and to understand the implications of current classroom practicum, thus improving teacher engagement, attitudes, and dedication to the teaching profession (Fajardo & Miranda, 2015). Immersion practicum scenarios allow pre-service teachers to make use of strategies and tools for the creation of pedagogical material that they consider suitable for the context in which they are, Also the design and application of possible pedagogical proposals as institutional projects in his time as pre-service teacher within the institution.

Since pre-service teachers must keep track of the practicum development, a portfolio is used to register their teaching process in their assigned grade. In this folder, students must carry their lesson plans, which are done before the class takes place, as well as their field diary, in

which they write their real outcomes of the classes, reflecting on students' behavior and asking some questions to keep in mind when making the next lesson plan. This portfolio is revised by teacher advisers, who read the documents and also listen to the pre-service teacher about their doubts or special experiences they encountered in their practice by receiving personalized tutorship.

The experience during these semesters generates enrichment and growth in the pre-service teachers, not only from the selection of the method they consider appropriate to carry out the classes, but also other fundamental aspects as group management, assessment methods and traits related to themselves such as beliefs, attitudes, and choices, from a theoretical perspective, is what is known as Teacher's Identity. Then, the nature of identity implies to be consistently co-built in circumstances, utilizing numerous assets including individual memoir, interactional aptitudes, information, knowledge, and social capital (Miller, 2009).

Teacher's Identity

However, pedagogical practice arises a new aspect within teachers that will start defining the pre-service teacher behavior during class and that will be constructed from the start, this is known as *identity*. The concept of identity differs according to the author, to some, identity is not something that one seems to have, but something that changes throughout one's life (Beijaard et al, 2004), while others think identity refers to "people's concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others" (Hogg & Abrams 1988).

On the other hand, the Real Academia Española dictionary would describe the term as the "set of characteristics of an individual or a community that characterize them compared to others". All these come together illustrating identity as a transforming term that alludes to the

behavior and customs that people adopt according to their environment and preferences, building their self-image and character. Nevertheless, as said by Izadinia (2013), without understanding the meaning of a self-identity people will not have an idea of where they are going, and therefore, they will not be able to accomplish what they want effectively, therefore it is essential to differentiate the various forms of identity as well as deciding which is the one that will be deeply discussed in the present study.

Various kinds of identity remain according to different types of environments and categories a person may fall on or attribute themselves to reach conformity within one-self. For instance, Day & Kington (2008) argue that identity itself is a combination of personal, professional, and situational factors that interact, and these can go in different directions such as: professional identity within a given school, department or classroom, situated or socially located identity and personal identity. Professional identity includes variables such as reflective activities, learning communities, context and prior experiences which influence the growth and the changes teachers experience within their own discovery of their identity regarding their workplace, as it was mentioned to be reported in various studies (Izadinia, 2013).

Moreover, in their current or anticipated professional life, professional identity is created through one's beliefs and attitudes, values, motives, and experiences through which individuals define themselves. The compilation of symbolic resources, including status and esteem, mastery, sense of belonging and attachment which are related to one another (Tsakissiris, 2016). Bearing this in mind, this research will correspond to the professional identity of teachers, best called: Teacher's Identity.

Fajardo (2013) talks about Teacher's Identity being an area of study and theoretical interest that entails the imaginations of academics from fields such as information, perception, abilities, attitudes, positions, ideologies, values, or policies, among many others, to reveal their own reality. In a rather dualistic approach, Akkerman & Meijer (2011) define a teacher's identity as "simultaneously unitary and multiple, continuous and discontinuous, and individual and social" (p.8). As teachers engage in a community of their kind, this identity is developed, influenced, or transformed and develops abilities and teaching skills that are central to understanding professional identity (Fajardo, 2014). On the other side, Gómez (2015) states that emotions are referred to as an influential identity component in the perception teachers have on themselves, which can influence motivation and commitment to professional practice, therefore, on the way the professional self is perceived and displayed in practice.

Moreover, the identity of the teacher is not an identity that is attributable to all educators in a similar way. It is formed by continuous interaction between the person and the context (Canrinus et al., 2011). In this same nature, it must be mentioned that the complex link between the private and personal selves of a teacher must be considered in understanding teacher identity. The interplay of emotion as part of self and identity, the narrative and discourse elements of self and the shaping of identity, the role of reflection in understanding self and identity, and the relationship between identity and agency are some of the complex factors involved in this relation (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009).

Evidently, every author has a special way to interpret teacher's identity, Rodríguez (2017), on a similar note, talked about how uncertainty seems to be the fundamental law, and how change appears as a "sine qua non" condition since teachers face the paradox of recognition of their key role in learning processes, while also dealing a growing devaluation of their daily

work, subjecting them to identity tension. In the long run, one might argue that Teacher's Identity is an individual construction that refers to the history and social characteristics of the teacher, but also a collective construction linked to the context in which the teacher works (Valliant, 2007), this concept being adaptable and suitable according to the context. However, it is essential to mention that research into teacher identities is needed as a way to encourage comprehension of the teaching job and what it means to be a teacher in various political and personal contexts and different times (Day & Kington, 2008).

Literature Review

In the search for both national and international literature related to teaching practicum and the construction of teaching identity in pre-service teachers' pedagogical practicum, it is considered important to highlight the following research documents.

First, in the Colombian context it was possible to find Aguirre & Castañeda (2017) in their research *Pre-Service English Teachers' Voices About the Teaching Practicum* allow to get a reflective view of what practicum is for a group of pre-service teachers from first semester of teaching practicum at Universidad de La Salle in Bogota, and how from this reflection they are aware of the context in which they develop this process in accordance to their perceptions of the classrooms during their practicum and their voices about every emerging situation. The document is relevant to this research because it offers a systematization of the pedagogical experiences from three aspects associated with the most frequent concerns of pre-service teachers: (a) understanding their own classroom, (b) learning from their mentor teacher, and (c) mastering the art of language teaching in general (Brinton & Holten as cited in Farrell, 2001). This classification may give an idea of which terms the teaching identity could be taken into account for the pre-service teachers of BA Languages program at UCEVA.

As well as Diaz (2013) who reports in the document *The Way Student-Teachers Construct Their Identity at School* a study that aimed to explain how ten pre-service teachers from a public university in Colombia develop their identity from their school experiences. This research—as well as the aforementioned—is important to our present study because of the assertion that student-teachers represent their identity through the actions and choices they make in school as a result of their everyday experiences with the background during their work, as well as using observation, field diaries and group meetings to collect the data, which results optimally. Both documents from their conclusions and positions present perspectives of what may or may not be found in the teaching identity of pre-service teachers.

Then, Mican (2019) in *Understanding EFL Pre-service Teachers' Professional Identities Construction Through Narratives at a Public University in Bogotá*, analyzes the construction of teaching identities of nine participants of the Department of Languages of Universidad Pedagógica Nacional. The present master's thesis is useful for this developing project since the selection of data collection for this research serves as a guide to use semi-structured interviews as well. It highlights the importance of giving voice to pre-service teachers to speak from their experience what constitutes the construction of their identity through data gathering.

On the other hand, in the international context it was possible to find more documentation related to the object of study of this research. Ayala & Salinas (2017) at *EFL Student-Teachers' Identity Construction: A Case Study in Chile*, aim to explore from a sociocultural perspective, the process of building the professional identity of two students of pedagogy in English as a foreign language. The present document is relevant to the research since it contributes from its theory to the characterization of the teacher's identity. It explores

identity from a perspective that covers professional environments may affect teachers' identities both positively and negatively (Day et al, 2006) from cultural aspects and identities.

Sarasa (2015) in *Procesos de Construcción de la Identidad Profesional Docente de los Estudiantes del Profesorado de Inglés*, inquiries about the processes of construction of teaching identity through stories narrated by twenty-four undergraduate students (pre-service teachers) from the Languages Program of the Faculty of Humanities at the Universidad Nacional del Mar del Plata, Argentina. The contribution done is related to the way identities derived from the narratives consider some terms —as other researches did— such as: reveal the desire to be a teacher, the love for teaching languages, the imagination that sustains the permanence in the career and the still valid transit towards an identification with the profession of teaching through the creation or building and re-building of they found identities.

In addition, the study *English Pre-Service Teachers' Identity During Teaching Practice: Narrative Research* (Hapsari & Ena, 2019) asserts that teaching practice is also important in the creation of the professional identity of pre-service teachers, which, due to the nature of this project, is relevant and demonstrates that pre-service teachers are provided opportunities to learn professional knowledge, teaching skills, and teaching skills through doing teaching practice.

A research that highlights teachers' professional identity as an important research field is *The Influence of Field Teaching Practice on Pre-service Teachers' Professional Identity: A Mixed Methods Study* (Zhao & Zhang, 2017), which defines it as a “core element of teachers' professional lives”, this being essential to our study given the roles of professional identity, pre-service teachers' professional commitment in the practicum and the intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions.

Furthermore, the investigation *The Emerging Identity of Preservice Teachers During the Practicum Component of Second Language Teacher Education* (Díaz, 2017) argues that learning and identity development for preservice teachers are interconnected and are crucial to professional growth, and this is especially important due to our wants to examine how realistic interactions impact professional identity creation and the factors that support this process.

To conclude, the document *Becoming English teachers in Thailand: Student teacher identity development during teaching practicum* (Prabjande, 2019) focuses on the questions of study “How was the development of teacher identity shaped by the teaching practicum? How do student teachers overcome the challenges of the teaching practicum?” which is significant in view of the fact that affective factors, practice, theory and other elements continuously form identity, because of all these variables, learning to teach is demanding.

Overall, different research projects were consulted, three of them were national while the rest responded to the international research category, no local studies were found. These documents help the researchers have a clear picture of what has been done before with the main objects of study geared toward the facilitation of the work to be done ahead.

Chapter III: Methodological Design

Approach

This research methodology is framed in a qualitative approach. It corresponds to the nature of this research since it is based on the understanding of a phenomenon in its natural context. As stated by Ary et al (2010), “qualitative inquiry seeks to understand and interpret human and social behavior as it is lived by participants in a particular social setting” (p. 420). Therefore, it was expected to analyze pre-service teachers’ identities based on their own experiences and their teaching practicum context. This kind of approach offers details about an issue's "human" side – that is, the individual's occasionally conflicting attitudes, values, thoughts, feelings, and relationships (Mack et al, 2005). Through this methodology it was possible to collect data at different times and through various instruments to have a clear photograph and to deepen on aspects related to pre-service teachers’ emerging identities in the development of their teaching practicum.

Design

While Stake (1995) defines a case study as an integrated method that values the different standpoints and interpretations researchers and participants have about an issue, Simons (2011) stated that the purpose of a case study is to understand a subject completely, so there is not generalization but there is an interpretation, diagnosis, and view proposal of the research problem. On the other hand, Stake (1998) states that the intrinsic case study is not chosen because it is representative of other cases, but it has value in itself, and seeks to achieve an understanding of the specific case to be studied. Even though identity is a common study object in BA Languages Programs and practicum scenarios, this case study is particular, since it fits a determined amount of time in which transposition from theory to practice is applied.

Design Phases

The present case study was conducted through Stake's (1998) steps:

1. Bounding and Conceptualizing the Object of Study

To concretize the case study a revision was done. Thinking on a problem within UCEVA University was the first step, then adjusting the focus to the BA Languages Program to have a specific context. In accordance with what is explained in this project rationale, practicum is a crucial aspect in pre-service teachers' formation that is why this case study focuses on it, specifically on immersion practicum scenarios and its relation with teachers' identity.

2. Developing the Research Questions

After the specific scenario was established, the research question was developed:

How do pre-service teachers from the BA languages program at UCEVA University portray their identity within their immersion practicum?

3. Seeking Patterns of Data to Develop the Issue Identified by The Research

Question:

This case study was composed of three data collection instruments. First, observation of the pre-service teachers' practicum was performed, and it served to know the class dynamics. These observations were made of the virtual video-classes led by pre-service teachers in their practicum subject during COVID-19 emergency. The data were collected by means of an open field diary. Maxwell (2012) argues "observation can enable you to draw inferences about someone's perspective that you couldn't obtain by relying exclusively on interview data" (p. 94).

Then, a semi-open interview acknowledged students' thoughts from the developed question which come from the actual observations and theoretical characterization of teacher identity. One of the main goals of interviews is the active involvement and learning of the interviewer and the interviewee that the interview can favor in the identification and analysis of the issues (Simons, 2011). The semi-structured interview was conducted with the purpose of finding the pre-service teachers' perceptions about their own practicum process, as well as their sources for their tools, approaches and materials used in their classes. Such interviews may consist of a dialogue that will happen across the topics on the agenda and can come down to completely unexpected issues (Adams, 2015).

Afterwards, a set of questions for a focus group were created. Morgan (1996) gives a concise yet interpretable definition of what a focus group is. He defines it as “a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher” (p130). It was conducted to deepen the understanding of how identity is portrayed by pre-service teachers based on all the discovered features surrounding their identity on the previous instruments.

Some pre-categories were established based on the analysis done after finishing each one of the applied instruments in which raw data went through an analysis software called Atlas.ti. An open-coding process was performed to obtain emergent pre-categories from all the data collected. Open-coding is used to define the act of discovering concepts but also to expose thoughts, meanings, and ideas behind the words on a document (Strauss and Corbin, 2002). The open coding process allowed the conceptualization of the meanings contained in pre-service teachers' narratives of their identities (Holton, 2007).

To obtain pre-categories, the content was revised from the conceptual density and repetition within the texts. Saldaña (2003) defines codes as short words or phrases that contribute by repetition or captivating a portion of the language included in the data.

4. Triangulating the Data for Various Interpretations and Selecting Alternative Interpretations to Pursue:

Once the pre-categories were established, an axial coding process was carried out through which the final categories were obtained. According to Scott & Medaugh (2017) axial coding provides a template in which codes can be organized into more coherent, hierarchically structured categories that are interspersed with the emerging dimensions and their relationship with other aspects of the project's framework.

The final step was to triangulate the final emergent categories with the background studies and theory, this process enabled to systematize from the various interpretations a whole view of pre-service teachers 'reality itself. According to UNAIDS (2010) data triangulation concedes any finding weakness to be corroborated by the strengths of other data, thereby increasing the validity and reliability of the results.

5. Developing Generalizations about the Case

The conclusions and recommendations of the case study were made, considering the scope of the research and possible future references of the document in the field studied.

Study Subjects and Sampling Setting

The participants of this study were the pre-service teachers of BA languages program at UCEVA, specifically between the fifth and seventh semesters since they are in their immersion practicum. The sampling selected is purposive and of a non-probability nature. Yin (2011)

defines purposeful sampling as “The selection of participants or sources of data to be used in a study, based on their anticipated richness and relevance of information in relation to the study’s research questions” (p. 311).

The criteria followed in pursuance of this selection were four fifth-semester students, three sixth-semester students and three-seventh semester students. Finally, the only approach that the participant pre-service teachers must have on teaching is their immersive asynchronous practicum, implemented online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Scope and Limitations

The focus of this research was the analysis of how the pre-service teachers of BA languages program at UCEVA portray their teaching identity. The investigation was conducted as a case study. It is only limited to the interpretation of the forms of identity that may arise from pre-service teachers in the development of their teaching practicum. According to Elliott (1999) it allows the understanding of the phenomena in their right.

The project can serve as a basis for future research related to the role of teaching practice in the development of the teaching identity of pre-service teachers as well as helping the participants discover their own identities as teachers and use them as a tool to perform their classes in a more practical way.

On the other side, some limitations regarding the research may include the access limitation to some research documents. Unfortunately, many studies are under platforms which require a subscription or certain payment to read the papers, this obstacle to the research can affect the way the study is carried out and the authors to be mentioned as well as what goes

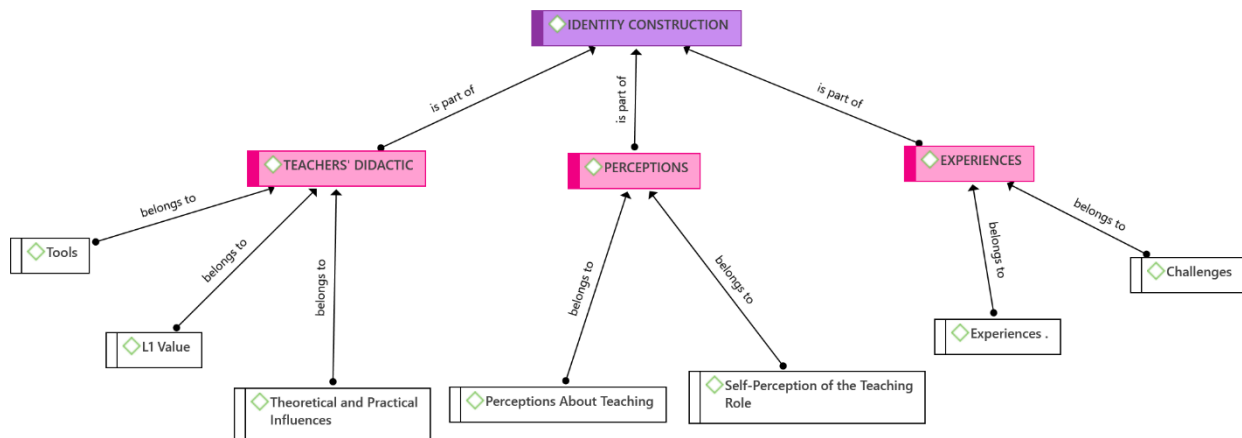
inside the document. An alternative found to this was referring to sites where different research papers are published without any need for a payment.

Chapter IV: Results' Analysis and Discussion

To provide a broad understanding of the identities portrayed by the BA Languages Program's pre-service teachers in the context of this research, it was necessary to frame the results on three categories that cover different parts of what they constitute part of their identity: *Teachers' Didactic, Perceptions, and Experiences*.

Figure 1

Categories: Identity Construction



Teachers' Didactic

Didactics are a key point in Education since it focuses on the teaching and learning processes in particular. It differs from other educational disciplines in that it focuses on how teachers, students, and expertise communicate and help one another (Diaz, 2012). This first category emerged from the pre-service teachers alluding about the instrumental resources used on their practicum and the importance they hold in order to carry on their classes, mentioning their own didactic choices as an important aspect in the developing of their identities. The codes contained in this category are: *Tools, Theoretical and Practical References, and L1 value*.

Tools.

According to Bušljeta (2013) tools can be defined as teaching resources that enable teaching and learning by its presentation and transmission. Bearing that in mind, it was possible to identify pre-service teachers take into consideration different aspects of their teaching work for the creation, adaptation, and application of their tools. To carry out their planning and classes, it was possible to profile the participants based on the tools they use in their practicum, which allows them to be totally understood and to feel comfortable while teaching.

They expressed how they preferred to make their own material in order to match their students' level as well as their social context. At the same time, they prefer their class resources to be understandable, according not only to the grade, but also to students' motivation since it is important for them that students feel that the use of L2 can be done in their local context and participation because the interaction itself is the aspect that measures how much the chosen material was useful for the development of the class.

The tools chosen by pre-service teachers are not limited, among the preferred techniques and resources the following were identified: chat, slides, chronometer, images, examples, music, videos, and coloring pages. As expressed below:

I like to catch my students' attention, so I am always trying to work on activities that are... that involve their speaking skills because I think that when they have to give an opinion of what they think they can feel more involved with the topic... Like, my criteria are always based on the needs of my context”.

Also, the use of internet resources during the pre-service teacher practicum seems to be relevant, the pre-service teachers talked about how they would rely on websites that provided

materials and didactic tools to implement in their classes according to the topic or the level of the language, it was also mentioned how sometimes they would adapt the material found if they considered it was needed. It was also expressed that the use of games during their practicum helped the pre-service teachers to maintain students' attention during their classes as well as guaranteeing participation and a pleasing environment.

Based on what is stated above, authors like Brittin (2005) establish that teachers require the creation and organization of a learning environment in which students can learn effectively and for this, planning, selection of materials, strategies, methods, and timing are needed. In this particular case, the preservice teachers take into account the situational aspects of their practice to select their classroom work tools because they consider that this material should be not only original to suit the needs of their teaching context but also conceive the creation of their own material as a way to strengthen their creative skills and to give a personal touch to the way they present content.

Theoretical and Practical Influences.

Theoretical and practical references refer to the authors, methods, and background to which pre-service teachers come to develop their classes. As expressed by Kawulich (2009), theories are made up of plausible relationships between concepts and sets of principles, and they serve as a structure for logically interpreting a phenomenon as well as a foundation for thinking about how the unknown can be structured. This allows the recognition of the perspectives under which the pre-service teachers perform their practicum.

Bearing in mind the pattern of specific steps to follow applied by the pre-service teachers allowed for inquiry into the methods and researched authors and the preference they may have

over some. Initially, there was little recognition of authors, some of the mentioned by them are Jeremy Harmer, who proposed a practical guide for teaching English and introduced a method for teaching called the ESA Method, which Harmer (2001) defined as: “The Engage, Study, and Active method is a method to be presented in a language classroom to help the students’ to learn effectively and not make them bored”. Piaget's ideas are concerned with growth and learning. Development focuses on the learner's skills, whereas learning focuses on the realization of certain capabilities, and education is extrinsic throughout the theory. The cognitive theory, or actions, represents the development of different psychological systems, organized units, or thought patterns that have an impact on how children think (Lefa, 2014) while Vygotsky theory recognizes the importance of teachers' input practices to students' work.

The underlying motivations and drives of teachers in providing specific input can be revealed. Similarly, the forms in which students react to feedback provided to them could be examined (Storch, 2018). Sauveur, the creator of the Direct Method, which is: “a technique of foreign-language teaching in which only the target language is used, little instruction is given concerning formal rules of grammar and language use is often elicited in situational contexts” (Nisar, s.f) and Skinner, who had more of a psychological view and claimed that ostensibly involuntary behavior is regulated by incentives and punishments. Skinner claimed that the world shapes individuals rather than the other way around (Zhou and Brown, 2015) were also mentioned by the pre-service teachers. However, it was possible to infer that for them it is important to know the method with which they are working but it is even more important to recognize that the methods as they are presented sometimes do not work and it is necessary to make modifications. As manifested:

“I think it is important to have those authors in your mind and to know the advances they made in the educative field of action but I think it’s better just to follow your heart and to create your style, because all contexts are different and if you get married to a method it would be hard for it to function everywhere, If I don’t follow my heart I am not being myself”.

Pre-service teachers consider the most relevant methods in the development of their practices and how these have advantages over the educational process. As said by Wiseman (2018), Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is an approach where students learn a subject and a second language at the same time. The pre-service teachers that chose this method talked about how language becomes a tool to work on a topic, but it is not necessarily the goal. On the other hand, according to Millsaps (2020), the Direct Method relies heavily on total immersion in the classroom setting, with no consideration of the students' native language. The pre-service teachers expressed they liked this method because it made the student speak in the foreign language at all times and in this way, they can familiarize the language. Finally, even if it is not exactly a method, but rather an approach, gamification of education is a growing approach to rising learners' motivation and participation in educational settings by integrating game design elements (Dichev and Dicheva, 2017) on this category, the pre-service teachers mentioned Gamification helped the students learn while playing and think of the class as a “fun place”.

This is related to what Moreno (2002) states in the results of his research regarding how the reflection on the methods applied in class avoid routines and customs, it is also suggested that the selection of methods is a constant dialogue between knowledge and practice. This responds to the need of pre-service teachers to choose from reality the applicable methods and

how they should be modified to obtain real results, as considered by one of the pre-service teachers:

“...It is not necessary to develop every activity taking into account one method or methodology or author in specific, you can develop it through things in your environment, if you it is necessary to change or adapt the theory to your plan, you can do it but the idea is not to base every class or every situation that you teach on one specific author because not all the situations are the same”.

However, besides any adaptations and changes the pre-service teachers wish to make during their practicum, they must all comply with guidelines established not only by the national government as tools to standardize teaching, but also by the university. The pre-service teachers demonstrated that mandatory documents had a big importance while carrying out their process, as well as expressing how useful these booklets and papers were in order to plan and reflect about their practicum. They consider these tools are essential to carry out their classes because they do not "start from scratch", as expressed:

“I remember when I started my practices I was asking myself, how do I start this class, what are the topics that I should teach, where can I find that information? Because I didn't know how to start teaching English... and for example with Guia 22, you can find everything as my classmate said, you just adapt it, it is really useful... I only had to think of my context' needs”.

L1 Value.

Participants showed interest in the different ways L1 can be used inside the classroom while teaching L2. For them it is necessary to recognize under what context' circumstances code-switching is allowed. Code-switching is understood as alternating two languages in the

same interval of time by a bilingual speaker (Bullock & Toribio, 2009). Some of those aspects are shaped by the methods they prefer to perform their classes through, that would be the case for direct method enthusiasts, they consider L1 is valuable, but it must be avoided. This was evidenced in the next contribution:

“Well, I do believe that in order for you to learn a language it is very good to be in the native environment, you know, to get into that sense that you’re going to be talking, listening, reading, doing everything in the foreign language that you’re trying to learn... I give L1 a really big value but when it's necessary, when I see that the student didn’t understand or like it's a new word for him or her in that case I do use the mother tongue”.

On the other hand, most of the pre-service teachers consider code-switching as a decision to communicate certain aspects of the class. L1 can be a means for core social functions or to speed up things during the class (Macaro, 2005). Some of the scenarios in which the pre-service teachers consider pertinent to code-switch are explaining a topic in depth, based on students’ age or students’ L2 level as well. As manifested:

“Well, I think that it depends, it depends on the context, right? Because if you are in contact with people that have, for example, level A1, you cannot express all the information in L2. And I think that it is based on the context. If you are teaching in a classroom with B2 or maybe in a college that you already know they are proficient in, you can use only the L2. (...) I think that it is a better idea to find a balance in the mother tongue and L2 instead of avoiding Spanish”.

However, another aspect mentioned by pre-service teachers that determines whether or not it is necessary to code-switch within the classroom, is due to the uttered vague demand of the

Colombian educational system, which from their perspective has very little connection to bilingualism that would allow students to perform better in a foreign language. This perception suggests that speaking in the classroom in the mother tongue is almost a requirement, because otherwise the educational process cannot take place in accordance with this report:

“As a pre-service teacher I found something pretty interesting (...) I found that reality is far below than descriptions in curricular guidelines (...) I think the mother tongue is still fundamental to communicate with those students... if we just don't speak in the mother tongue students won't understand anything and we'll find it even harder and even worse to carry on with the process of learning a second language”.

Those aspects reveal that pre-service teachers are focusing and reflecting on different features of their teaching process to know from which they can or cannot make use of the mother tongue by also referring to the guidelines the ministry of education provides and developing their own opinions on the matter while carrying out their practicum.

Perceptions

As said by Qiong (2017), perception is the method humans use to discern and recognize the presence of various stimuli through the sensory organs to evaluate and assign meaning to them in order to make sense of reality, as well as to maintain reassurance. The category was created due to the importance of the pre-service teachers' perceptions within their environment which affect the way they become conscious of their own practicum and teaching process. The codes of this category are: *Perceptions about Teaching and Self-Perceptions of the Teaching Role.*

Perceptions about Teaching.

Canrinus et al. (2011) refer to the identity of a teacher as a not generalized identity to all educators at the same time, it is formed by the permanent interaction that the person has with the context. It is clear that for the pre-service teachers from the BA Languages Program at UCEVA, the role played by the context in which they operate determines not only the perception they have about teaching, but also their behavior within the process.

While some of the pre-service teachers think of teaching in a positive way because they consider they can make a change on students and have an impact on their lives, some others perceive it as a very difficult task to develop, similar to Tsakirissiris' (2016) position regarding pre-service teachers' identities, in which their attachment and sense of belonging to the teaching task determines the construction of themselves as teachers. Based on this perception, it can be inferred pre-service teachers bear in mind simultaneously several facets that constitute the role of a teacher inside and out of the classroom. As well on the research background provided by Díaz (2013), He asserts pre-service teachers consider their practicum to be permeated with the particular context in which it is developed, and they also recognize factors beyond classroom practices that can affect the way they view their practicum setting.

The variety in the perception of teaching by the participants is also evidenced in the background study by Micán (2019) in which identity is revealed as a continuous, unstable and constantly changing process, this means that all participants can experience changing processes in their identities according to the factors that influence their context, the relationship they establish with their students and the way they feel in the development of their practicum, clearly expressed through their discourse:

“Okay, I always thought that the job of a teacher was to teach and no more, but through experience in my practices I realized that a teacher is also a friend and even a psychologist. Sometimes I feel I am not a full-time person but a full-time teacher because of all the things I need to do, I am always working on something different, some planning, some reading... I don't know, we got to do plenty of stuff. It is such tiring work, I thought it was easier”.

The pre-service teachers additionally expressed mixed thoughts about what a teacher does or what it means to be a teacher, most of them have expressed frustration about finding out all the responsibilities a teacher has besides just conducting a class, among the most notorious aspects material creation, classroom management and being the authority inside the classroom are included. All of these are still part of what Izadinia (2013) considers components of the teaching identity, in which the reflection on the work carried out is present, as well as the understanding of the contexts and understanding of the constant changes that being a teacher entails.

According to the described above, the results show their perception of teaching flourishes around considering themselves as teachers, since they are responsible for reviewing aspects foreign to classroom practices that are expected from an educator. Day & Kington (2008) think of identity as a composite of three different points of view that complement each other, the first, is called professional identity, the second is known as situated or socially located identity and finally, personal identity. The position discussed above is part of the situated or socially located identity because it is determined by the specific context that is modified and affected by the conditions of the environment.

Self-Perception of the Teaching Role.

The pre-service teachers agreed that identity was an individual aspect they felt comfortable with and made them feel sure within themselves and the environment, complying with Fajardo's (2013) view relating teachers identity among with the class surroundings and the context. But, since identity is something that constantly changes, the pre-service teachers expressed a challenging vision of themselves by trying to constantly overcome the situations that come within the profession and try to do their best constantly.

Moreover, pre-service teachers agree that their actions within the classroom allow them to show a bit of who they consider themselves to be, both in the choice and variety of their activities, the tools to develop such activities and the attitude of their person in the classroom. In addition, to use creativity as the most outstanding tool in their role as teachers and practices, from the approach of the topics to the activities themselves.

Once again, Diaz (2013) describes how participants go from being dependent on the decisions they make in their practicum to making their own decisions, this happens owing to the fact that teaching is considered a social process and sensible to school realities. In addition, their self-perception meeting the teacher role is satisfactory based on what they think of teaching as a profession, as experienced:

“Well, I think that... to be a teacher is one of the most beautiful experiences... I really love it. I see myself as a teacher who can do so much for students, and I love to see how much they are learning. It's an amazing feeling, I feel attached to this profession, so I love when students see me as a teacher because I am”.

Otherwise, some other participants think of themselves in a different way since they don't relate to teaching at all, they feel comfortable at all about being considered a teacher, so the perception they have about the profession itself is not good, so their self-perception seems to be far apart from what a teacher does, this position can be evidenced below:

"I don't see myself as a teacher, everything has been like a big challenge for me, really, just like I was telling you before I never wanted to get into this career... but, hm, things happen, but especially subjects like pedagogy and didactics, it has been like really difficult for me because I don't like it, I don't feel passion for it and it's really hard to do things you don't like".

Experiences.

Dewey (1939) expressed the importance of experiences within his own philosophy, defining the experience as something continuous throughout someone's' life, however, an experience is only achieved when the moment and the environment are enjoyed and lived to full extent, without distractions or dispersions. The pre-service teachers input about their experiences in their practicum and also their prior experiences in the education field, the challenges they have encountered and the way they overcame them. The codes in this category are: *Experiences and Challenges*.

Experiences.

The experiences and closeness the pre-service teachers have had with teaching can affect the perceptions they have about being a teacher and how they perform within their practicum context but also enable the pre-service teacher to conceive their own ideas and structure their path as a teacher. Pre-service teachers spoke their minds about negative experiences they have encountered while doing their immersion practicum, agreeing on the importance of experiences

and circumstances within their practices as well as their identities and aptitudes in the classroom Miller (2009). These included encounters with violent contexts that, despite its nature, allowed the pre-service teacher to identify it as valuable.

“Well... yeah, I think it was in sixth semester, I was doing my practices at a very dangerous neighborhood in the city, it is a place with a lot of issues and situations...that are bad, it has a high index of violence and drugs. Teaching there was very... rough... It was difficult because the teachers there were sorry that I was there, they were always saying I had to be careful, students’ both parents were in jail, some students were in gangs, a teen years old student had like 8 tattoos over his body, it was shocking for me to see a kid with tattoos. He was in a gang and by the time I was performing my classes he would be looking through the window and his classmates told me it was because he was protecting the classroom from other gangs and bad people around there. Those situations were relevant to me; those students were disconnected in the class... It was really bad. I was afraid. It was shocking...”

As seen on the previous quotation, violent means within the teaching environment create a not-so-grateful experience not only for the students who are living their reality in first person but also affect the pre-service teacher who is discovering themselves during their practicum and don’t hold an extended information or who aren’t given a manual on how to deal with this kind of situations during teaching, nevertheless, these cases are not that frequent and there are also spaces in which harsh events can help the pre-service teacher grow.

“My experience in school was a little rough and I hated a lot of things of English class so I tried to change those things into make to my students that English learning is a... ok, to make

English learning a better experience, so I think a lot myself who I am is reflected on that perspective into that approach to education, into my way of teaching”.

The subject expresses how they took prior academic experiences and used them in order to become a teacher who would try to avoid the mistakes they had to endure when they were students, reflecting these practices into their teaching method and their identity in the profession.

Differently, experiences also come from college context, the pre-service teachers consider the advisory teacher as a fundamental support in their practicum process, they consider it a necessary figure to which they can turn to receive advice, ideas and help when they feel doubt about some aspect of their teaching practicum. In addition, this figure provides them with the necessary ideas and tools for the resolution of conflicts in the classroom or problems around their work, as gathered in this answer:

“Yes, they are very valuable... If I have some trouble at my practice place I can ask them about it, some advice, something I could change, something I am not doing fine... If you want to improve your teaching and you want to get advice, it is really useful”.

This result was also evident in Zhao and Zhan's (2017) research paper, the authors share in their results that the participants consider that the role of the advisor teacher is very important since it allows them to focus more on their teaching work and to rely on their ways of carrying out the processes to do the same in their practicum. It was initially considered that the most important thing was the content of the class, but with the guidance of the advisor teacher it was possible to understand that also aspects foreign to language such as communication help the student to feel more interested in learning.

“Well I think that this experience of the pandemic and the COVID-19 in this year, made the experience even worse for me because, as I’ve said before, one of my biggest challenges is to be organized and being all day at home I think that helped me procrastinate a lot and be more disorganized so I maybe if I took this experience in its “natural way” I mean... In a normal or in a normal situation or normal scenario it would be way better and way smoother to me...”

There is a need to mention how the COVID-19 outbreak affected the pre-service teachers’ practicum process due to the sudden change to virtual classes, a lot of them expressed this was highly unfortunate since they were not prepared for a situation of this matter. However, in contrast to the last quotation, some pre-service teachers also expressed how this allowed them to be more creative with their material and gave them some kind of freedom.

“ (...) but I also think this pandemic has a lot to do with it... like, we’ve been feeling like this the whole time. But it is very different but nice, because it is easier in terms of material creation, and creativity can flow a little more through these electronic tools...”

Without a doubt, the pandemic process reconfigured the identity of the pre-service teachers given that they got to understand the need to be diverse inside their approach to their classes, it also gave them a new vision of education from the virtual environment, the fact that there was a constant absence of students also modified their identities and changed their practicum experience.

Challenges.

According to the participants' discourse, it was possible to recognize that their fears and challenges regarding their role as a teacher during their practicum are due to insecurities about the control of the dimensions of classroom practices and their speech in the foreign language.

Despite that, pre-service teachers overcome these obstacles by taking risks in their practicum and in this extended process of conversation (Zuluaga, 1996), as well as recognizing by themselves that these issues come from insecurities regarding their foreign language skills, having enough time for classes and activities, planning, decision-making, and support for students outside and within the classroom, as reported by one pre-service teacher:

“Uhm, well... I think maybe one of the biggest challenges for me has been my insecurities regarding the way I perform my English skills and I still struggle with that but the only way to overcome it is by trying.... It is not about how many theoreticians you know, it is more about how the decisions are made and the way I help my students... Lately I have felt very confident, so it is like the time gives you the reason, that was like the only... challenge I have overcome those problems”.

Contrary to what was evidenced in the research by Prabjande, (2019), in which its results establish that the participants overcome these challenges through two support mechanisms, the first, psychological support and the second, technical support. For the first one they received help from their colleagues and advisor teachers and the technical support was through actions carried out by their teacher advisor in which this figure helps one of the pre-service teachers to be recognized as a teacher within the classroom.

The difference between both researches could be established by the approach given to the problem, however, given as well that the experiences of practices are not generalizable processes. For the pre-service teachers of the BA Languages Program from UCEVA, overcoming their challenges comes more from intrinsic motivation than extrinsic, so recognizing their fears and challenges is the first step to improving their practice process. Among some other

facilitating tools that pre-service teachers find to carry out their practicum it was possible to find the following ones: receiving more tools from the educational institution, curriculum flexibility, and even the existence of the pandemic that stands in the way of the usual development of face-to-face practicum.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The perceptions identified by pre-service teachers according to their identity in the teaching task is shaped by an attitude which is dependent on their practicum context, through which they communicate their biggest challenges and fears while performing as preservice teachers who are constantly evaluated by advisor teachers. Nevertheless, it was possible to understand that for pre-service teachers it is important to perform their practicum in the way they consider to be the right one, completing the task successfully, not only because it brings satisfaction to themselves as individuals in the teaching field, but also because it allows them to enhance their creative abilities and offer tools to their students that are really useful to them, based on the failures that they experienced on their experiences as students.

Evidently, the identity of the pre-service teachers was analyzed from a deductive perspective which allowed to discover the features that make part of their identity, the results allowed to establish that pre-service teachers from the BA Languages Program at UCEVA frame their identity based on the context in which they find themselves while performing their practicum, depending not only on their skills they have mastered in the foreign language, but also on the relationship they establish with their immediate practicum environment, this resulting in a very instrumental identity since the pre-service teachers based their choices on their surroundings and their tools to shape their classes, using these resources as an armor within their own identity to counter practices that inhibit their performance associated to the reported negative experiences evidenced in the contexts in which they are assigned, said inference arises from the pre-service teachers selection of theoretical references.

As a recommendation, it is expected that for possible future inquiries on the identity of the pre-service teachers from UCEVA's BA Languages Program, aspects unrelated to the instrumentalization of the teaching task should be investigated, enabling the understanding of other factors that may shape the participants' identity processes.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Open Field Diaries: Observed Videos

Figure 1.

Open Field Diary 1.

THE WAY PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS FROM THE BA LANGUAGES PROGRAM AT UCEVA UNIVERSITY PORTRAY THEIR IDENTITY WITHIN THEIR IMMERSION PRACTICUM.

OPEN FIELD DIARY

DATE: Video Class #2	VIDEO DURATION: 27 minutes
EVENT: School Supplies	SUBJECT: 4
DESCRIPTION OF THE OBSERVED EVENT: <p>The teacher shows excitement and says hi with a big smile when the class begins, she tells the students that she hopes they're okay and then introduces a puppet which she calls Camilo and says it will help in order to explain the subject and make the class interactive, the teacher includes background music in her videos and as a warm up exercise uses a song and encourages students to sing along by singing herself, this song is related to the topic since it's the song of the numbers from 1 to 50.</p> <p>The teacher switches to Spanish when the song is over, the teacher explains the topic in a precise way, expresses the importance of learning the numbers and asks students to write their age in the comments and moves on to various activities, one of them is a worksheet that consists in the students matching the names of the numbers in English with the written numbers, she helps solving some questions on it for the students to understand the instructions, in this activity she continues switching from English to Spanish and includes some singing too, she mentions that the students must continue this activity on their own with the help of their parents later.</p> <p>After this, the teacher moves on to an interactive game in a webpage in which students have to jump from the numbers 1 to 50 using the computer's mouse, she completes it first to show the students how it is done and repeats the numbers while she's playing. As the next activity, the teacher plays a video with a puppet counting from 1 to 50 in both Spanish and English, she mentions the puppet looks like Camilo, the one she used at the beginning of the class, the video also contains some activities like showing a certain quantity of balloons and asking how many are there, the teacher solves these activities by answering the numbers in English. When the video is done, the teacher shows another worksheet, in this activity the student has to color the objects in the page, follow the sequence of the numbers and complete the names of the numbers in English. The teacher uses code switching to explain this activity.</p>	

Note: In this field diary, it is seen that the pre-service teacher from 5th semester took an active role in the class, used code switching between Spanish and English as well as implemented didactic tools to maintain the class dynamic, some of them were songs, games, worksheets to color or even a puppet to connect with students while teaching the subject, which was the numbers from 1 to 50.

Figure 2.

Open Field Diary 2

THE WAY PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS FROM THE BA LANGUAGES PROGRAM AT UCEVA UNIVERSITY PORTRAY THEIR IDENTITY WITHIN THEIR IMMERSION PRACTICUM.

OPEN FIELD DIARY

DATE: Video Class #1	VIDEO DURATION: 20:01 minutes
EVENT: Social Values – Third Conditional.	SUBJECT: 9
DESCRIPTION OF THE OBSERVED EVENT:	
<p>The pre-service teacher at the beginning of the video presents Colombia's National Anthem to give a hint of the topic that they are going to cover during the class. Then she greets the students kindly (in English) and introduces the topic of <i>Social Values</i> by asking a question about its definition, then she gives them thirty seconds to think of an answer. She uses visual sources to keep the class interesting (Chronometer on the screen). Once the time is over she asks once again if they know the definition and gives them the answer. She suggests her students take notes of her presentation in which she hands out the definition of social values such as: <i>Peace, Honesty, Dignity, Equality, and Inclusion</i>. She uses slides in which the content is clear and accompanied by a song and some images. Once it is over, the pre-service teacher gives instructions about what they got to do to practice and then she shares her computer screen to indicate and exemplify how a crossword should be done on a specific virtual platform. The pre-service teacher approaches a grammar topic from the previous activity by saying: "If you hadn't taken notes, you would have not done the activity".</p> <p>She makes an explanation in Spanish to be as clear as possible of what the third conditional is. She uses proper vocabulary in her explanation and provides some tips to memorize the structure to build up the sentences using the third conditional (Condition: <i>prohadverb</i> and Result: <i>promohaverp</i>). She offers some examples that were used in the beginning of the class explaining step by step how the sentence was created by using her own tips. <i>Pro: Pronoun, Had: Had, Verp: Verb in past participle</i> then <i>Promohaverp: Pro: Pronoun, Mo: Modal, Have: Have, Verp: Verb in past participle</i>. This explanation is done in both Spanish and English. The pre-service teacher presents a worksheet in which students must complete the sentences using the third conditional and she explains how it must be done and which form of the verbs must be used by providing a list to her students. Finally, the pre-service teacher says goodbye and the video is over.</p>	

Note: This diary shows the class made by a pre-service teacher from 7th semester and the approach they took to teach this class, the teacher code-switched to explain the topic (To Be verb) and then presented the instructions in the same way, making sure to leave everything clear for the students to understand, the exercises consisted on a speaking activity and then a short grammar activity about the subject.

Figure 3.

Open Field Diary 3

THE WAY PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS FROM THE BA LANGUAGES PROGRAM AT UCEVA UNIVERSITY PORTRAY THEIR IDENTITY WITHIN THEIR IMMERSION PRACTICUM.

OPEN FIELD DIARY

DATE: Video Class #1	VIDEO DURATION: 17:31 minutes
EVENT: To be verb	SUBJECT: 6
DESCRIPTION OF THE OBSERVED EVENT:	
<p>The pre-service teacher greets the students in English and explains in both Spanish and English what the class will be about by asking the students a question: "Do you remember the personal pronouns?". She is smiling in front of the camera. She uses again English as well as Spanish to introduce the topic and then presents slides with the pronouns and makes a clarification of its importance to communicate. The pre-service teacher sets a goal for the class: <i>The most important thing right now is that you guys can match which pronoun goes along with verb "to be" particles in the present.</i> She is clear with the instructions presented, She is also paused in her explanation and repeats some information to clarify possible doubts. Once she has finished her explanation on how "to be" means both ser o estar, she proceeds to do a practice activity, using English and Spanish the whole time. She proposes several sentences and examples for students to see the right way to proceed in the sentence creation as well as the words that must be used in English.</p> <p>"Yo soy alto y fuerte" and "Ellas son buenas amigas" are some of the exercises proposed during the activity in which students were supposed to answer in English. The pre-service teacher pauses between each one of the exercises for students to answer when they watch the video. Once she finishes with the practice activity, she plays a five minutes video in which a girl explains again what the pre-service teacher already presented. Afterwards, she makes a short assessment activity of what has been learned through new examples and exercises, giving students the space to answer after each exercise and uses words such as: <i>nice, you did great, very good.</i> She assigns a short assignment to be mailed to her and thanks her students and says goodbye to them.</p>	

Note: The pre-service teacher, as shown in this field diary, used a song as a warm up activity to get the students to guess the topic of the day which was the Third Conditional along with Social Values, the pre-service teacher tries to maintain the class in a lively way by including the students and asking them some questions as well as code-switching and worksheets.

Appendix 2: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Questions adapted from previous studies.

1. How has your perception of what a teacher does changed during your student teaching experience?
2. What are some examples that you can think of where what you did as a teacher reflected who you are?

Reference: Lerseth, K. A (2013) Identity development among pre-service teacher candidates

3. What was the biggest challenge for you in this profession? Why? Please explain with examples.
4. What could have been done to make this process smoother for you?
5. If you describe your first year of teaching with adjectives, which adjectives would you use?

Balban, S. (2015) Reflections on teacher identity: A case study of novice language teachers.

Questions created from observation:

6. As a pre-service teacher, what value do you place on the mother tongue in your English class?
7. What are your theoretical and practical references when building and developing your English class?
8. What are the criteria you take into consideration when choosing the work material for the development of your classes? Why?

Appendix 3: Focus Group Questions

1. How has your perception about teaching changed with your practices?
2. Have you had any meaningful situations regarding how you feel as a teacher during your practices? Please mention some of them.
3. How have you overcome any of the challenges you mentioned in the first interview we had?
4. Based on your recent experience, what advice would you give yourself when you first started your immersion practices?
5. Where do the tools to cope with the challenges in your pedagogical practices come from? College autonomous search? Mention some of them
6. Can you describe your practices during last semester with three words?
7. What importance do you give to carrying out your practices through digital platforms? Is it relevant or not?
8. If you had to choose one of the ELF teaching methods applied in your practices, which would it be and why?
9. What value do you give to the mandatory documentation to develop your immersion practices? For example: lesson plans, area plan, journal.
10. How important is the advisory teacher in the development of your practices?
11. If we had to construct a definition of identity for pre-service teachers, what would it be?