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Teacher-Educators' Conceptions about Materials in ELT Classes at LELE-ULS[1]

Abstract

This study looks for identifying the teacher-educators' conceptions of, and ways of experiencing, materials of English Language Teaching classes at the undergraduate program of Spanish and Foreign languages at La Salle University. The study is developed with three English language teacher-educators using unstructured interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and observations. The study follows a phenomenological research design. Results display that teacher-educators conceive materials as mechanisms that have an important role in class which in turn facilitates the teaching-learning process. Teacher-educators articulate their preferences in materials. When materials do not work, it generates students' disengagement and teacher-educator's agony. It is concluded that teacher-educators' conceptions are enclosed in three main concepts: resources, instruments and vehicles. Teacher-educators have the control on the materials and the class due to their guidance and instructions.

   Keywords: Materials, conceptions, teacher-educators, ELT classes.

Resumen

Este estudio busca identificar las concepciones de los profesores y las maneras de vivencian el material en las clases de inglés en el programa de Licenciatura de Español y lenguas Extranjeras en la Universidad de La Salle. Este estudio se desarrolla con tres profesores de inglés usando entrevistas no estructuradas, cuestionarios de preguntas abiertas y observaciones. El estudio sigue un diseño de investigación fenomenológico. Los resultados muestran que los maestros conciben los materiales como mecanismos que tienen un papel importante en la clase que facilita el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje. Los profesores articulan sus preferencias en los materiales. Cuando los materiales no funcionan, se genera un desacoplamiento en los estudiantes y la agonía de los profesores. Se concluye que las concepciones de los maestros se encierran en tres conceptos principales: recursos, instrumentos y vehículos. Finalmente, los maestros tienen el control sobre el material y la clase, debido a la guía e instrucciones que ellos le asignan.

   Palabras clave: Materiales, concepciones, profesores de inglés, clases de inglés.

Introduction

   According to A. Martiarena (2018), citing Enrique Tierno Galván, good didactics does not interrupt the other's thinking, but allows students to make decisions. The goal is not to generalize the students, but to make them aware of their condition as people, humans, and individuals. Even so, many educators may take all their students from a purely global

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[1] LELE-ULS stands for Licenciatura en Español y Lenguas Extranjeras – Universidad de La Salle.

perspective, in an overall meaning, and ignoring the fact that each student has particular variables. From this premise, didactics is born along with the idea of materials thanks to the need of teachers to teach and students to learn.

In this sense, it is pertinent to analyze the types of conceptions that English language teacher-educators may have, such as "everybody can learn," "teachers must think of the appropriate materials for their classes", or "students have different likes" (E. Rubio, personal communication, October 5, 2017). This analysis becomes fundamental in teaching English as a second language, due to the disengagement that it could generate with students in terms of materials that teachers present; this by considering materials as anything that can be used to teach and learn; teacher-educators' conceptions about them as the way in which teachers carry them out and present them in ELT classes.

Therefore, studying teacher-educators' conceptions about materials in ELT classes becomes relevant because this affects the students' learning in terms of attention, and, at the same time, their appropriation of the language. In this sense, ELT classes and materials are closely related because the latter allows developing the classes to the extent that students can learn, while teacher-educators fulfill their purpose.

An example of the above could have evidence during the development of an English class at La Salle University, in the BA program of English teaching of the Education Sciences Faculty. In this setting, for example, the teacher once showed a series of activities designed with a rather "childish" approach. Although activities intended to convey familiarity and comfort with students, the characteristics of the group were not in line with those activities. The reason could have been that those activities demanded to play with paper wads, as children do, to which students in the class showed an unpleasant attitude. With this, most of the students became distracted and uninterested by what the teacher was presenting at that time. In the interest to refine our research project, we checked it out and found that the

students of that class preferred to see their Facebook wall, talk with their partners, chat, or play video games on their cellphones.

Another experience happens when an English language teacher was to teach and explain a B1 level topic (modal verbs) in a high school class. On that day, the teacher came very excited to his class and began to write the objectives of the class on the board. When he finished, he began to speak only in English; but the students did not understand anything since they were just starting with their first English language classes. As the teacher was puzzled by how little his students comprehend what he had said, he did not know what to do, he did not think of any activity and dismissed the class, and his students did not seem to trust in him again. The teacher did not expect such inconveniences to occur, and he did not plan anything else. This situation leads us to think that a teacher cannot assume that student should have a certain English language proficiency. Teachers should always be prepared, plan different activities, and be more aware of the conditions that their students have and the place where they learn. With these two examples, we could notice that two students' variables emerged at planning and presenting a lesson, age and English level.

Therefore, our research interest is about the conceptions that English language teacher-educators have about materials when they are planning an English language lesson. This interest is very important for us since we consider teacher-educators' conceptions as primordial to the way in which they plan and develop a class. In this interest, student's variables can also emerge as relevant characteristics for planning and the development of an ELT class.

The research question that this study searches to answer is how teacher-educators conceive materials in ELT classes at LELE at La Salle University. The research objectives aim to identify the teacher-educators' conceptions about materials in ELT classes at LELE. With this identification, we will be able to establish the manner in which teacher-educators

experience materials in ELT classes at LELE. Our research study does not intend to repeat processes or create methodologies or theories that are used by different teacher-educators. Thus, with this information, we will determine to what extent those conceptions can be taken as core in understanding ELT materials.

The underlying reason in this whole process is to invite teachers (and we as future teachers) to rethink ELT classes and the way in which they are developed. English language teacher-educators cannot go on presenting the same contents and materials for each level and course in the same way. This interest represents for us the challenge of correcting ourselves and not falling into the same dynamics, but having extra tools to face them differently, it means, being creative and renovating the way how we are thinking our classes. This research interest is attracted to La Salle University ELT teacher-educators' work, aims to take into account the BA program of Language teaching in which they are immersed in an academic and curricular sense. It represents to rethink the way the BA program asks teacher-educators to develop their classes in terms of their own conceptions and to give benefits to the students.

Conceptual Framework

This research has the purpose of not only identifying the teacher-educators' conceptions about class materials, but also interpreting the way in which those materials are implemented. The main concepts that emerge in the understanding of these objectives are materials and conceptions. In this section, we introduce these two concepts.

Materials. Studies of material for ELT exist since few years ago. Educators, linguists, and writers have come to consider this concept as a central axis of their studies. Materials were usually shown as examples of methods in action but not as a means of procedures of their development. In order to develop this idea, we find support in Tomlinson (2001), Graves (2000), and Carter and Nunan (2001) as our primary references for this first concept.

Brian Tomlinson (2001, p. 66) argues, "Materials refer to anything which is used by teachers or learners to facilitate the learning of a language." He also states that, "Materials could obviously be videos, DVDs, emails, YouTube, dictionaries, grammar books, readers, workbooks, or photocopied exercises. They could also be newspapers, food packages, photographs, life talks with invited native speakers, instruction given by a teacher, tasks written on cards or discussions between learners" (Tomlinson, 2001, p. 2). He emphasizes that materials can be anything which is deliberately used to increase the learners' knowledge and/or experience of the language. With it, material developers can utilize as many sources of input as possible and can help teachers realize that they are also material developers and responsible for the materials that their learners use.

Tomlinson gives a leading definition of the concept since other scholars base their studies on this. He says, "Materials development, as a field, studies the principles, and procedures of the design, implementation, and evaluation of language teaching materials" (Tomlinson, 2001, p. 2). As a practical undertaking, it refers to anything that is done by writers, teachers, or learners to provide sources of language input, to exploit those sources in ways that maximize and stimulate purposeful output. In other words, "materials design refers to the supply of information about and/or experience of the language in ways designed to promote language learning" (Tomlinson, 2001, p. 2).

With those definitions, we can infer that B. Tomlinson sees materials as based on multiple resources that not only teachers but also learners use for learning a language in a practical and easy way. This author thus proposes a different perspective about materials: how English language teachers-educators should not generalize the idea of materials-equal-course books. Finally, we agree with the point about learners' participation in terms of materials development because, most of the times, English language learners have another

perspective as they are also important participants in the classroom. We cannot deny the idea that learners are the main reason by which somebody decides to be a teacher.

In the second place, Graves (2000) develops three definitions for materials. First, she says that, "Materials development is the planning process by which a teacher creates units and lessons within those units to carry out the goals and objectives of the course" (p. 149). Moreover, "Materials development takes place in a continuum of decision-making and creativity which ranges from being given a textbook and a timetable in which to 'covert it' least responsibility and decision-making to develop all the materials you will use in the class 'from scratch', most responsibility and creativity" (p. 149).

Hence, for Graves, "An important aspect of material development is making choices" (p. 156). Teacher-educators cannot target everything, then, they need to make choices based on what they want their students to learn according to the syllabus focus, its goals and objectives. To add, "For a teacher designing a course, materials development means creating, choosing or adapting, and organizing materials and activities so that students can achieve the objectives that will help them reach the goals of the course" (p. 150). Hence, Graves, talking about designing materials, lesson and units, implies creativity in every moment, in company with the objectives and goals of the course or lesson.

Finally, Carter and Nunan (2001) says that,

Proponents of a course book is the most convenient form of presenting materials, it helps to achieve consistency and continuation, and it gives learners a sense of system, cohesion and progress, and it helps teachers prepare and the learner revise. Opponents to this understanding points that a course book is inevitably superficial and reductionist in its coverage of language points. In its provision of language experience, it cannot cater for the diverse needs of all its users, it imposes uniformity

of syllabus and approach, and it removes initiative and power from teachers (Carter & Nunan, 2001, p. 67).

We agree with Carter and Nunan in the point of teachers not basing their classes on course books. It is real that course books can give continuation to classes but when teachers do not use them, they can also give continuation too. It happens so because course books do not define the classes nor the way how teachers develop them. For us, it is not relevant to take into account those reasons. It is because teachers can limit their autonomy and creativity: the class may become monotonous.

Therefore, we can say that Tomlinson (2001) has the leading definitions of the concept of materials development that are meaningful for our study. While for Tomlinson "materials refer to anything which is used by teachers or learners to facilitate the learning of a language" (Tomlinson, 2001, p. 2), for Graves, materials tell a teacher how to create units and lessons within those units to carry out the goals and objectives of the course (Graves, 2000, p. 149). It means that Tomlinson has a global view in terms of materials, but Graves summarizes materials into creating units, lessons, and textbooks based on teacher's objectives and goals.

Likewise, when Graves (2000) talks about textbook, she refers to the lack of pressure that teachers feel when a textbook is present; it happens because it provides everything (topics, activities, resources, assignments, and so on), while teachers' creativity not having place at all. Finally, Carter and Nunan's (2001) role in this conceptualization is to expose both negative and positive aspects in terms of implementation of the course books. In addition, he provides a discussion in those aspects and it is because, as an example, Graves (2000) argues that course books can subtract responsibility and decision-making in teachers.

Conceptions. Every time that the construct conceptions is in talk, the concept of "beliefs" comes on. It is so because conceptions are part of beliefs (Brown, 2002, p. 2). The

study of conceptions has been realized in the field of education because its importance is too relevant when planning and presenting a class. To have a broader idea about it, we present four authors that can explain it.

First, Thompson says that, teachers' conceptions of educational processes are "general mental structure[s], encompassing beliefs, meanings, concepts, propositions, rules, mental images, preferences, and the like" (as cited in Brown, 2002, p. 2). With it, Brown (2002) argues "what teachers do in their classrooms is oriented by their conception of teaching which are derived from their beliefs including a teacher's prior experiences, school practices, and a teacher's individual personality" (p. 2).

In regard to this, establishing the importance and the influence that teachers' conceptions have in the field of teaching becomes relevant. It is so because, as Thompson (as cited in Brown, 2002, p. 2) says, conceptions are a set of mental structures that can route the actions realized by teachers in the classrooms. We can say that conceptions are not something static, but it is something that moves among several human characteristics; those human characteristics interfere directly in the practice of teaching.

Then, Marton argues, "Conceptions act as a framework through which a teacher views, interprets, and interacts with the teaching environment" (as cited in Brown, 2002, p. 2). Marton presents the concept of conceptions as a mental process to follow when he talks about "framework." This mental process has to do with the 'internal rules' that teachers create by themselves and express to interact with their environment; the process then refers to the classroom and its outcomes.

Complementarily, Tilemma (2000) states that, "There is a consensus in the literature that the teaching is a complex cognitive activity and it is widely accepted that the teachers' conception shapes their instructional decisions in the classrooms" (as cited in Canbay & Beceren, 2012, p. 71). For this interpretation about conceptions, retaking the previous

assumptions is paramount to affirm that conceptions influence teacher-educators' decisions to carry out their classes. Noticeably, Marton and Tilemma do not provide reasons for this statement; however, we agree with this because we must give a look to conceptions to devise a class.

Research Design

The present study follows the principles of phenomenological research. According to Ponce, Creswell, Marshall and Rossman (as cited in Padilla, 2015, p.101), phenomenology is known as an educational qualitative research design. Guba & Lincoln, Denzin & Lincoln, argue that this research is contextualized in different philosophical paradigms which center on diverse conceptions of reality (as cited in Padilla, 2015, p.101). To embody this idea, the CIRT (n. d.) presents this contextualization in relation to the ideas that describe how human beings experience a certain phenomenon because it involves the participants' experiences with regard to social or cultural norms, traditions, preconceived ideas about the human experiences, feelings, and responses to a particular situation. As indicated by Padilla (2015), phenomenology refers to the study of personal experience and requires a description or interpretation of the meanings of phenomena experienced by participants in an investigation.

According to the CIRT, there are four steps in phenomenological research. In the following Table 1 (see below), we explain each step and how we use each one in our study.

As phenomenology studies human behavior, it is suitable for our research because we want to observe what the teacher-educators' behavior is and how they experience the phenomenon of conceptualizing materials in their classes, what make teachers with materials, and how do students react to those materials.

Data collection. As indicated in the steps above, we use unstructured interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and observations, documented by field notes, photos, recordings,

and our testimonies, to gather information about teacher-educators' conceptions about

materials[2].

Table 1		
Steps of phenomenological research in our study		
Steps	**Definition**	**Our Study**
Bracketing	In this process, the researcher "brackets out" any presuppositions in an effect to approach the study of the phenomenon from an unbiased perspective.	Making an unstructured interview we break out presuppositions about teacher-educators' conceptions of materials in ELT classes, in the BA program at La Salle University. In this interview they can express with their own words their lived experiences in terms of materials.
Intuition	This requires the researcher to become totally immersed in the study; likewise, it results in an understanding of the phenomenon.	Experiencing the phenomenon with the teacher-educator and student doing part of the class as active agents, thus we can establish the manner in which both teachers and students experience the materials in ELT classes.
Analysis	It is the process of categorizing to organize the data; its goal is to develop themes that can be used to describe the experience.	Categorizing data collected in each unstructured interview (recordings), the data of the teachers' answers in a questionnaire of four open-ended questions, field notes, photos, recordings and our testimonies (observations), we can describe the experience of the phenomena.

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[2] At the beginning, we had four participating ELT Teacher-educators; however, due to the availability of one of those participants, we only did the interviews, questionnaires, and observations with the three remaining. In total, we had three interviews and three questionnaires (one per participant respectively), and eight observations (three per participant, except for one teacher educator with only two observations).

Table 1		
Steps of phenomenological research in our study		
Description	This is the last phase of the process. The researcher will use his or her understanding of the data to describe and define the phenomenon and communicate it to others.	Describing whole the material including photographs and their respective characterization, according to our understanding in line with our point of view on the phenomenon.

Unstructured interview. Stated by Fontana and Frey (1994), interviews are a widely used tool to access people's experiences and their inner perceptions, attitudes, and feelings of reality. Based on the degree of structuring, interviews can be divided into three categories: structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and unstructured interviews (as cited in Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009, p. 1). As Yan Zhang and Barbara M. Wildemuth (2009) expose, a structured interview, is an interview that has a set of predefined questions and the questions would be asked in the same order for all respondents. Semi-structured interviews usually including both closed-ended and open-ended questions but, based on the context of participants' responses and the course of the interview, the interviewer can adjust the sequence and add questions (p. 1).

In unstructured interviews neither the question nor the answer categories are predetermined, it means, both the researcher and the participant have a certain degree of freedom at the moment to develop the conversation. Minichiello (as cited in Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009, p. 1) says that this type of interviews rely on social interaction between the researcher and the informant. In other matters, Punch (as cited in Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009, p. 1) described unstructured interviews as a way to understand the complex behavior of people without imposing any a priori categorization, which might limit the field of inquiry.

In our study, we use unstructured interviews to identify the three participating teacher-educators' conceptions about material in ELT classes since unstructured interviewing

provides a greater breadth than the other types, given its qualitative nature (Fontana & Frey, 2005). For this reason, unstructured interviews allow us to make a general question about the most strange or weirdest experience as teacher-educators at La Salle University, but we make more questions according to their answers (if their responses do not answer what we want to identify, we ask in a more direct way about their conceptions but avoiding be overwhelm). These interviews will be made in their available time, or in their classes, once.

Open-ended questionnaires. According to McLeod (2018), a questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. Questions can be close-ended or open-ended. Close-ended questions have fix choices or alternatives for the answer. Open-ended questions allow people to express what they think in their own words (McLeod, 2018). This type of questions allows the respondent to answer in as much detail as they like in their own words.

Questionnaires with open-ended questions will help us rectify, compare, and collect evidences about the three participating teacher-educators' conceptions of materials. The participating teacher-educators could say something in an oral form, and something completely different in a written form. Thus, this questionnaire will help us complement what the participant teacher-educators say in the interview with what they answer in the questionnaire. In our study, we create four open-ended questions about materials' conceptions and then we will apply the questionnaire in a printed copy to each teacher-educator; at the end we analyze their answers and what is relevant for our study.

Observation. The following authors define observation as follows: Marshall and Rossman, define observation as "the systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study" (as cited in Kawulich, 2005, p. 79). Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen (as cited in Kawulich, 2005, para. 2) indicate that observations enable the researcher to describe existing situations using the five senses, providing a "written

photograph" of the situation under study. We assume a participant role while observing. We were immersed in the classroom activities in which materials were used, thus, taking notes down, and collecting field notes, photos, recordings, and our testimonies during the activities. We act as members and participate as the others in a natural way to not, as Adler and Adler implies "alter the flow of the interaction" (as cited in Baker, 2006, p. 380).

In line with the present study, we use observations to establish the manner in which the three participating teacher-educators experience materials in ELT classes. (See data analysis of observations below).

Data analysis. By taking into account that phenomenological research points to describe how humans' beings experience a certain phenomenon and it is center on diverse conceptions of reality, as Guba and Lincoln and Denzin and Lincoln imply (as cited in Padilla-Díaz, 2015). We analyze data gathered based on discussions and reflections of direct sense perception and experiences of the researched phenomenon. The next are the manners in which we analyze each instrument:

Interviews. We listen to each voiced recorded interview, and transcribe each, to identify the three participating teacher-educators' conceptions about material. Then, we subtract relevant information by means of sub-concepts gathered from "conceptions" as the main concept; those sub-concepts are beliefs, meanings, concepts, propositions, and preferences. We identify each sub-concept with a different color. Thus, further questions, comments, and possible points of view emerged, which were synthesized in a matrix of analysis.

Questionnaires. We read each participating teacher-educators' answer to establish their coherence with the interviews. We used the same analysis as the interviews, underlying the most important ideas that we found in the sub-concepts. In this manner, in the course of coding, not only questions, comments, and ideas emerged, but relations between the different

answers, codes and also concepts. In the same way, we made a second table for generally coding each subcategory similar to the one of the interviews.

Observations. The analysis process in here is accompanied by taking notes and pictures as well as listening to the recordings; all about how the class was going on. It implies what the participating teacher-educators did, and how students reacted to those classroom activities. All this information was organized in a third table that gives evidences of material presentation and material worked. Each evidence has its corresponding picture, field note, or recording. We also used colors to make the codification of the events that we observed in the class.

Findings

In this section, we present the findings based on the data analysis procedures indicated above. We expose five relevant aspects: materials' conceptions, materials genesis, given materials' personality, what materials materialize, and teacher-educators' agony. In each aspect, we explain the teacher-educators' conceptions about materials in ELT classes and the way in which they experience material. At the end, we will close with a discussion of results.

Materials' conceptions. The findings in this section display the way the three participating teacher-educators conceive materials. The participating teacher-educators seem to conceive materials as instruments, vehicles or resources that work inside the classroom. The material is only useful in the classroom because it is the appropriate place in which it can work.

The participating teacher-educators conceive materials as instruments, vehicles, and resources. This conception provides a close definition about what materials is for teachers. Likewise, for the participants, materials are presented as instruments and resources adapted in exercises, guides, technological resources, and coursebooks. The following teachers' quote is an example of how materials are conceived in general terms.

1. e.i. "*Lo más típico pues son ejercicios, guías o los libros*" [Transcript 1, Teacher 1, Line 50].

2. e.i. "*Recursos tecnológicos*" [Transcript 3, Teacher 3, Line 18].

The participating teacher-educators conceive material as a set of exercises that are useful for teaching. This quote displays the conceptions that the three participants hold about materials, in which materials are connected to the classroom activities and topics.

Materials genesis. The origin of the materials and what the participating teacher-educators take into account when selecting them, are main roles of the teacher-educators' conceptions of materials; likewise, the manner in which the teacher-educators experience them, gives an evidence of this conception. The genesis of the materials happens before the classes when the participants are selecting or creating them by considering their own criteria. Materials genesis is perceived into two spectrums: students' variables and teacher-educators' likes.

Students' variables are part of materials design. This is an item that the participating teacher-educators take into account about materials design. Likewise, it is a phenomenon that the participants perceive and lead them to create the materials; this creation of materials takes under advisement student' different characteristics. The following quotes are samples of what two participating teacher-educators take into account.

1. e.i. "*Se hacía un plan diferente para ese estudiante*" [Transcript 1, Teacher 1, Line 3]

2. e.i. "*Brindarle una alternativa de trabajo para que pudiera adelantar el trabajo y no excluirlo. (Estudiantes que tienen características diferentes)*" [Transcript 3, Teacher 3, Line2)

3. e.i. "*Language Level*" [Questionnaire 2, Teacher 1, Question 2]

The participating teacher-educators create and select the material based on the students' different characteristics with the purpose that everyone is part of the class and no one is or feels excluded. Besides, language level is interpreted as a student variable too.

Teacher-educators' likes. Everything that can be meaningful or relevant for the participating teacher-educators, which is reflected in the material that they carry to the classroom, is known as teacher-educators' likes. In the three observations we did to the three participants, we perceived that all of them use images, games, virtual games, and platforms in their classroom activities.

In Photograph 1 below, we present a virtual memory game that Teacher 1 created in which students can practice and learn new vocabulary related with the TOEFL exam.
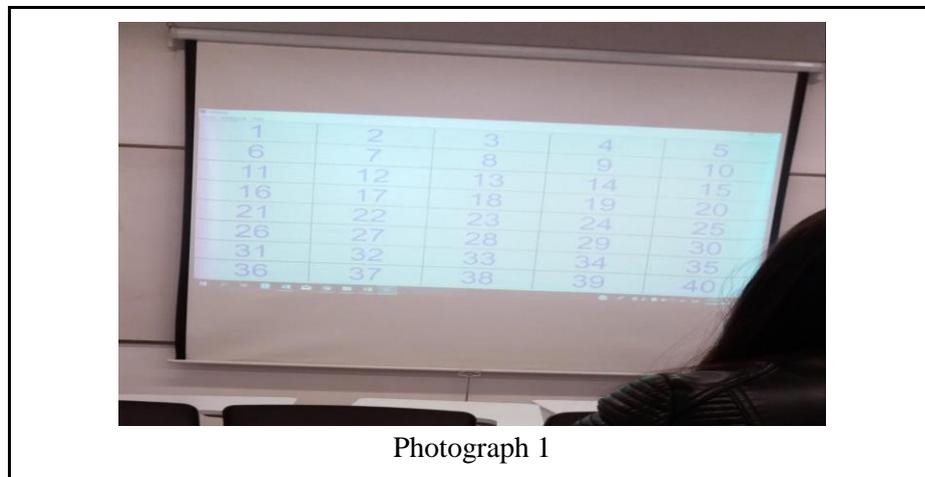
Photograph 1

Photograph 1 represents a sample of teacher-educator likes with respect to virtual games that are created by the same teacher in order to account for the students' needs for TOEFL exam training. In this activity, the students should say two numbers to find a word pair, when they found the word, they must say a phrase using that word in order to practice new vocabulary for the TOEFL exam.

Given materials' personality. Suitability, tangibility, reliability, and quality are the main characteristics that shape the materials from the three participating teacher-educators' conceptions. Materials personality represents the moment when the participants select and

create materials (which are part of the way the participating teacher-educators experience materials in ELT classes at the BA program). When materials come from other sources (such as internet), they are not reliable, but when they are created by the same teachers, they seem to be reliable. This given material personality arises because of teacher-educators' confidence in selecting teaching material. Tangibility and suitability are characteristics of this material personality.

Tangibility. Materials that can be touched or felt with the hands, are defined as tangible. The next teacher's quote is an example of one characteristic given by the participating teacher-educators in line with the construction of the materials concept and their personality.

e.i. "*Pues materiales físicos que son los que uno usa en clase (…) pero pues lo ideal en una clase es por lo menos traer algo sobre lo cual uno pueda trabajar. Lo más típico pues son ejercicios, guías o los libros de texto.*" [Transcript 1, Teacher 1, Line 29-31 48-49].

This participant not only demonstrates that materials inside the classroom must be tangible, but also this teacher-educator encloses and limits the idea of tangibility in three main concepts ("*ejercicios, guías o los libros de texto.*")

In Photograph 2 below, we present a workshop for practicing the form of the verb in the present simple, past simple, and future tenses of English. The teacher gave the students this workshop as a wrap-up of all the topics worked during the term.

Photograph 2 (see below) gives an account of given materials' personality in terms of tangibility because the students can touch and interact with them. To embody this idea, this photograph represents the manner in which teacher-educators' select one material that gather the three samples ("*ejercicios, guías o los libros de texto*" - Teacher 1).
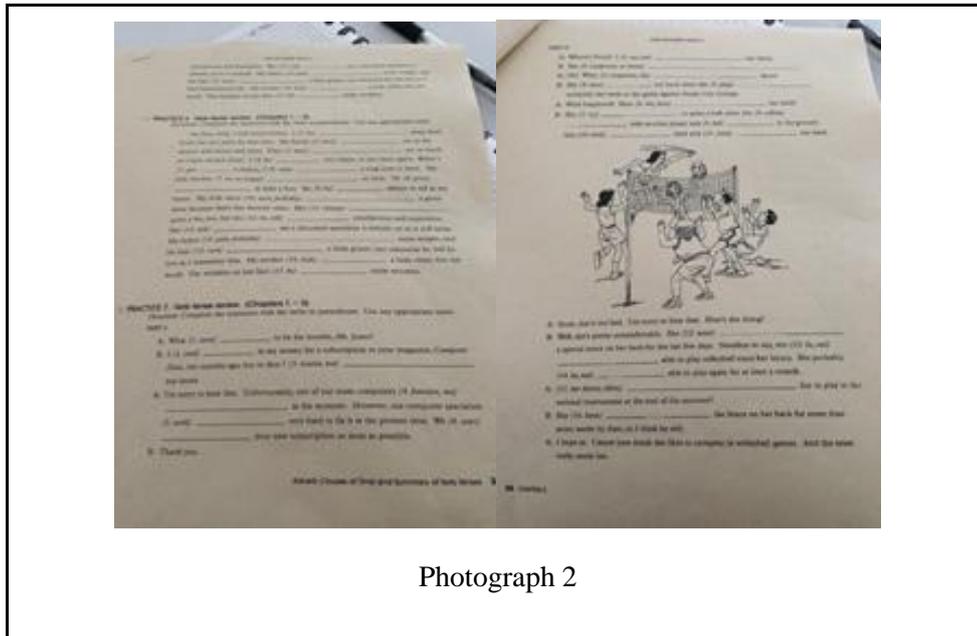
Photograph 2

Suitability, reliability & quality. In terms of materials, those concepts can be defined as the degree of acceptability, excellence, and manner in which materials well work for the same results, even on repeated trials. The next teachers' quotes are examples of given material personality mentioned in the questionnaires by the three participating teacher-educators about what they take into account when they select or create materials.

1. e.i. "*suitability, appropriateness, availability, quality*" [Questionnaire 3, Teacher 3, Question 2]

2. e.i. "*I look for reliable, accurate and current material*" [Questionnaire 1, Teacher 2, Question 2].

With these answers, we can infer that materials need to respond to different criteria that give account of the previous concepts mentioned by the participants. Those criteria are based on the teacher-educators' own perspective, in this case, materials should be tested and certified under the gaze of each teacher.

What materials materialize. It refers to the process in which not only the participating teacher-educators experience the material, but also how they guide it to facilitate

the teaching-learning process. It expresses teacher-educators' preferences in the classroom because materials materialize what they want to show (such as copies, videos, and computer). This process happens at the moment when they present and guide the work with the material in the class.

Guided material. It is the path that each participant teacher-educator gives in terms of use, management, and rules. In other words, it is the way in which the teachers present the materials to their students. The next two samples give an account of how the material is guided by the participants in different classes.

1. e.i. Teacher gives some instructions for the quiz of vocabulary (Choose the correct answer: A, B, C or D) [Observation 2, Teacher 3].

2. e.i. Each student has to read the list and then underlying the unknown words. [Observation 2, Teacher 1]

In these previous premises, it is noticeable that the participating teacher-educators are concerned about breaking down and guide the materials with the greatest care and precision possible.

Targeting the objective and the teaching-learning process. This aspect describes an issue that results to be disturbing for the participating teacher-educators in terms of class objectives. Targeting the objective and the teaching-learning process means that the materials that the participants present in their classes need to comply and materialize the requirement of an objective every single class. The following statements are samples of the degree of importance in terms of class objectives and teaching-learning process for the participating teacher-educators.

1. e.i. "*Depende del propósito de las actividades, del propósito de la clase, del propósito de los objetivos de aprendizaje que se tengan. Y pues generalmente también las estrategias de aprendizaje que se diseñen (…) son necesarios para*

gestionar las estrategias de aprendizaje, o llevar a cabo las actividades, pues

depende mucho de los objetivos de aprendizaje y de las estrategias mismas".

[Transcript 3, Teacher 3, Line 31-33 35-36]

2. e.i. "*The results of the application should target the objective*" [Questionnaire 1, Teacher 2, Question 3].

3. e.i. "*I take into account the course objectives*" [Questionnaire 2, Teacher 1, Question 2].

The above statements present the objectives as the core not only of the materials, but also of the classes. The way in which the participating teacher-educators express the importance of the class objectives and the teaching-learning process materialize the idea that those concepts are the base of the materials.

Teacher-educators' preferences. It makes reference to the multiple options that a person has, but he/she chooses one because of its relevance, since it has appropriate characteristics for each one; in this case, the participating teacher-educators' preferences are materialized in the material. In the following example, we present the teacher-educators' preferences seen in the observations.

e.i. *videos, computer, blackboard and virtual platforms* [This happens in general terms in the observations]

The previous example shows the preference of the participating teacher-educators for using those resources in their classes, since they used them repeatedly. Likewise, this premise represents the teacher-educators' preferences in line with the use of technology and technological resources too.

In Photograph 3 below, we show an explanation-activity in which Teacher 2 uses the blackboard as an instrument to explain one topic of the class.
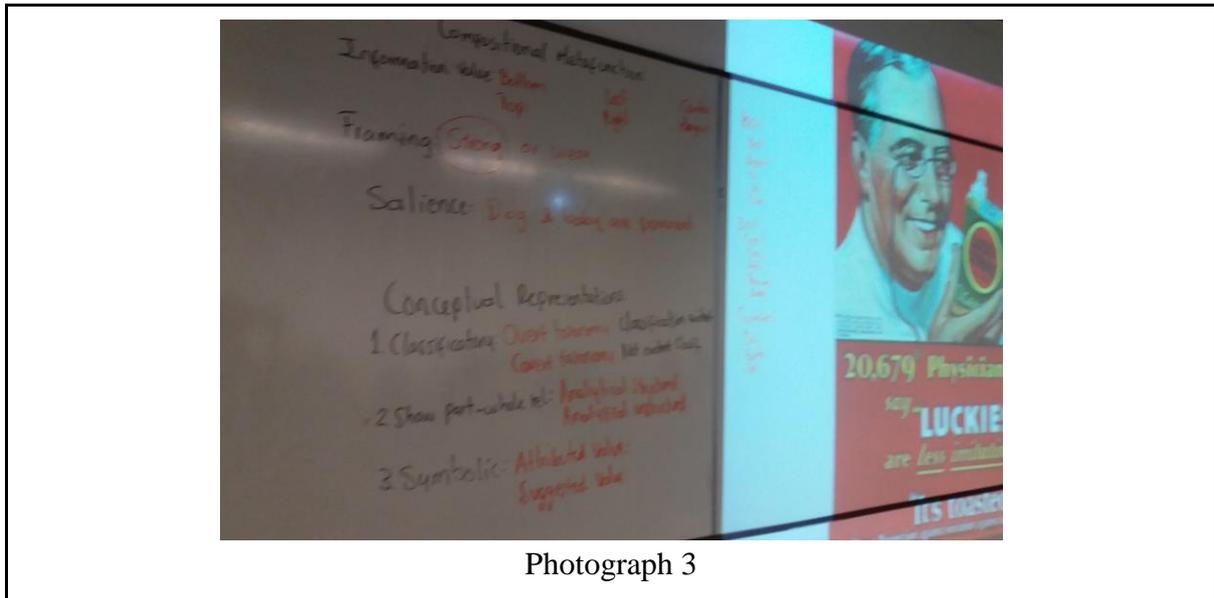
Photograph 3

Photograph 3 gives evidence of the way in which Teacher 2 uses the blackboard not only to write the principal steps to make the correct analysis about Grammar Visual Design topic, but also to project an image that seems to support what this teacher-educator has explained thus far. In here, the teacher's use of the blackboard materializes the preference for it to display both own written explanations and what has to be projected about it.

Teacher-educators' agony. This finding exposes the uneasy situations that materials generate in terms of their characteristics and engagement. It happens at the moment when the participating teacher-educators feel lost when they notice that students are tedious with the material, as a result the teachers decide to ignore the situation.

In Photograph 4 below, we present the students' behavior at the moment the material is worked in the class.

Photograph 4

In Photograph 4, it is noticeable that not only the teacher-educator's agony exists, but students' disengagement too; this disengagement is in display in the concurrent use of the students' mobiles, lack of attention to the material, and parallel conversations. In this manner, the students do not work with the material or do not focus on the contents of the session, and this makes that the participating teacher-educator agonizes. As consequence, teacher-educator's agony also happens because, due to previous situations, the teacher does not know what to do about it and ends up preferring doing nothing at all.

Discussion. The participating teacher-educators seem to conceive materials as instruments, vehicles or resources that work inside the classroom; thus, we can infer that materials only work during the specific activities for which they have been thought within the classroom. It seems that, a dichotomy comes into play between the theoretical foundation that each participant has and the idea that those conceptions are constructed by the experience that they have had as teachers.

Subsequently, the genesis of the materials happens before the classes when the teacher-educators are selecting or creating them by considering their own criteria. While a group of participating teacher-educators create the materials by considering their background, needs, and likes; another group creates them according to the students' needs, or because they trust in themselves and in the validity of their material.

We also highlight the idea that, when the materials come from other sources (such as internet), they are not reliable, but when they are created by the teacher-educators, they are reliable. We can interpret that the participating teacher-educators have more confidence in materials that are created by themselves as a result of their own likes, and the manner in which they plan each topic. However, if materials come from another source, it is difficult to think that they can be reliable thanks to their interrupted edition and the negative implications on learning process since these materials can be harmful in their essence.

Nevertheless, when the tangibility concept appears, we can infer that, for the participating teacher-educators, this tangibility is encapsulated in three main concepts only ("*ejercicios, guías o los libros de texto*"). Nonetheless, the definition of this concept presents a broader view about materials; it means, tangible materials can be everything that is perceived through touch. As a random example, we have that newspapers, food packages and photographs are tangible materials too, and those materials confronting the teacher-educators' idea expressed before.

Finally, teacher-educators' agony exposes the uneasy situations that materials generate in terms of their characteristics and engagement. Notwithstanding, it is difficult to think that the participating teacher-educators are able to predict when the materials are going to work for the students or not, since the core is to develop the whole class, and avoiding the idea of an uneasy class. Consequently, the participating teacher-educators prefer do nothing and ignore the uneasy situation, affecting the students' learning process and the sympathy

that the students can feel in line with the subject or the class. Teacher-educators' agony is lived and incarnated when the teachers are not that able to prevent this situation.

Conclusions

We can say that the participating teacher-educators conceive materials as aids used into the ELT classes at LELE at La Salle University. These are expressed through/as instruments, vehicles or resources with the aim to embody a series of components such as suitability, reliability, quality, and tangibility. Those components are relevant for the participating teacher-educators at the moment to create or select the material. Materials are experienced as an aid that facilitates the teaching-learning process. Although we visualize a broader definition about teacher-educators' conceptions, our participating teacher-educators summarized them in three main words: instruments, vehicles, or resources.

On the other hand, when the materials are always guided by the teacher-educators, they generate dependence in the students because they cannot start to work the materials by themselves without the teachers' giving way. Even if the materials already have the instructions, the students do not work without the teacher's guidance. Significantly, the one which has the biggest role and power of the class is the material, provided the teacher guides this. It is important to mention that, materials can generate uneasy situations because their performance during the class result into disinterested and indifferent attitudes in the students; thus, materials can provoke a completely disengagement along the rest of the class.

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