

EFL Teachers' Use of Communicative Activities in Chilean Public Subsidized High Schools

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Abstract

The English language national curriculum bases, set by the Ministry of Education of Chile, claim that the English language subject in secondary education is designed to prepare students to be active citizens in a multicultural society; hence, they are expected to communicate and express themselves in the target language with efficiency and fluidity (Ministerio de Educación, 2019). These guidelines seem to be in line with recent developments in Sociocultural theories of SLA and communicative language teaching, recommending that teachers and students set up activities that are communicative and that engage students' purposes for speaking and writing in the language learning process. This study followed a mixed design and sought to discover how Chilean EFL teachers implement communicative activities out in the field and draw on language learning in the Zone of Proximal Development. The findings showed that communicative activities that better support students' language learning are mainly related to greetings routines and formulaic interactions, game boards and online games, role-play, gap-informational and multi-text activities, and social networking. Likewise, activities that incorporate students' interests, authentic materials, and students' elements from their daily lives seem to ensure communicative activities' effectiveness. It was also found that strategies such as modeling and imitating, reformulating questions, and the use of students' L1 are significant when assisting students; while strategies like body language and visual and written aids, adapted conversation patterns and code-switching practices are key to achieve communication.

Keywords: collaboration; communicative language teaching; foreign language learning; negotiation of meaning; zone of proximal development