FORWARD OR BACKWARD DESIGN IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: A PILOT STUDY

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Abstract: Given an absence of research regarding how EFL teachers design and align their syllabi with the national curriculum, this qualitative pilot study aims to describe the process of developing and piloting a semi-structured interview to discover initial insights into how teachers plan their English teaching programs. To this end, five Ecuadorian EFL teachers from five public schools were interviewed, and the resulting data were subjected to thematic analysis. Besides, eleven Ph.D. students and a university professor provided expert judgment, and two Ecuadorian EFL teachers participated in the back-translation process of the interview guide. The results show that all participants apply the Forward Model Design (FDM) when planning their syllabi. However, it was found that the participants integrate essential features of the Backward Design Model (BDM), such as curricular priorities, assessment evidence, instructional scaffolding, result-oriented teaching, and lifelong learning. The pedagogical implication of this study suggests that the application of the BDM in planning the English syllabus should receive more emphasis to help teachers highlight specific learning goals based on authentic scenarios and align teaching and learning activities based on these particular learning goals.

Keywords: EFL, syllabus design, Backward Design Model, pilot study, interview guide

1 Introduction

Syllabus design is one of the essential aspects when planning teaching courses in education. It determines the aims of the course and the specific learning outcomes by providing a general description of the course, needed materials, basic requirements, and general information about how the teaching-learning process will be conducted during a period of time. According to Richards (2013), designing and implementing language teaching syllabi can be addressed using the Forward, Central, and Backward Design Models. These three models differ concerning the way issues are related to the input (linguistic components), the learning process (methodology), and the output (learners' outcomes), which are all addressed when planning the syllabus.

Richards (2013) claimed that the Forward Model Design (FMD) is a linear sequence of stages that starts with planning the content to be taught, moves to the methodology, and finishes with evaluating students' learning outcomes. In the same vein, the author states that the Central Design Model (CDM) starts with planning the methodology applied in the instruction, and then input and output issues are specified in the syllabus. Lastly, the author explains that the Backward Design Model (BDM) begins with identifying the student's learning outcomes, determining the evidence of learning, and planning learning experiences and instructions.

The BDM refers to planning the syllabus, unit, or lessons by thinking backwards. Contrary to the FDM, in the BDM planning process, the main objectives of the course or unit are developed from assessment (Childre et al., 2009). The teachers start planning their instruction by focusing specifically on students' learning outcomes based on performance tasks. Afterwards, the teachers align and integrate the appropriate assessment to achieve those outcomes. Finally, the teachers choose the activities and materials to apply to the teaching process. Therefore, the BDM allows teachers to unify the students' learning goals, craft learning experiences, and prioritize the content to be learned by students to achieve the required learning outcomes (McTighe & Thomas, 2003; Sideeg, 2016).

Traditionally, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education has been linked to the FDM (Richards, 2013). In Ecuador, EFL teachers from primary and secondary schools plan their syllabi using the established curriculum requirements specified by the Ministry of Education. However, the teachers claim that these requirements are too technical, specialized, and sometimes inappropriate for the students' language level (Espinoza & Soto, 2015). In addition, the teachers argue that the EFL national curriculum is not contextualized and does not consider cultural, social, and economic aspects (Lozano Aguierre, 2019). Considering the mentioned reasons, this article aims to contribute to the sparse literature on the degree of correspondence between the national curriculum and teaching planning based on a specific context where the teaching process happens.

Due to the lack of research in Ecuador on what approach EFL teachers apply when designing their syllabi, the rationale for conducting this study is twofold. As a first stage, the present study aims to create and pilot a semi-structured interview guide to discover initial insights into which approach Ecuadorian EFL teachers from public secondary schools use to design and align their syllabi with the national curriculum provided by the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education. This study also aims to identify which approach they use when planning instructional design. The following research questions have been chosen for this study:

1. How suitable is the interview schedule to reach the aim of this study?
2. Which approach do Ecuadorian EFL teachers apply to design their syllabi?
3. What BDM features do Ecuadorian EFL teachers apply when planning their syllabi?

The following section will cover relevant literature, define the BDM and explore the Ecuadorian national curriculum requirements. Then, the method applied in this study will be described in detail, including the participants, the developed instrument, and the analysis of collected data. The results of the present study will be discussed in the next section. Finally, the last section will highlight this research's conclusions, limitations, and implications.

2 Literature Review

2.1 The Ecuadorian EFL National Curriculum and English Teacher Standards Domains

The education system in Ecuador is divided into pre-primary, elementary, and primary education (named Educación General Básica (EGB)); secondary education (mandatory and called Bachillerato General Unificado (BGU)); and tertiary education. Regarding teaching EFL, the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educación, 2014) established that the EFL subject is mandatory for the public, religious, and private institutions from the second grade of primary school to the last year of high school and is taught for three 45-minute lessons per week.

Between 2007 and 2016, refining education became a priority public investment in Ecuador. As a part of these changes, EFL was established as a compulsory subject in primary and secondary schools. The Ecuadorian Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educación, 2012) issued the Ecuadorian in-service English Teacher Standards Domains and the English Language Learning Standards document. This document was developed by Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), and it is divided into five domains that fit with the national curriculum standards (Ministerio de Educación, 2012). The mentioned document introduces Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as the fundamental approach in the Ecuadorian EFL context and provides general indications for evaluating students' English proficiency levels. The main aspects of the teacher standards domain are language, culture, curriculum development, assessment, professionalism, and ethical commitment, while the primary language standards are listening, reading, speaking production, speaking interaction, and writing.

In Ecuador, a reformed Ecuadorian EFL national curriculum for primary and secondary schools was officially issued in 2016 by the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education, emphasizing developing 21st-century skills through learning English, such as critical thinking, collaboration, and digital and media literacy. Also, achieving justice, innovation, and solidarity are the fundamental values to be attained in general education. According to Ministerio de Educación (2016), the curriculum contributes to the exit profile of Ecuadorian high school students in their preparation for successful participation in a globalized society by enhancing different life, academic, and social skills. The core principles of the Ecuadorian EFL National Curriculum are the communicative teaching, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), the learner-centered approach, and international standards for language acquisition. Furthermore, the national curriculum provides teachers with a coding system to plan their syllabi. This coding system focuses on the mandatory and desirable learning objectives, skills and performance descriptors, and indicators of performance criteria teachers must use when planning their syllabi.

The Ministry of Education regulates the Ecuadorian EFL national curriculum and planning requirements. However, teachers design their syllabus at the classroom level by establishing and discussing the main objectives, strategies, methodologies, and activities according to their teaching reality and their students' needs. Despite the continuous endeavours of the Ministry of Education to improve EFL education in Ecuador, the expected results have not been obtained due to different constraints. Compared to other Latin American countries, Ecuadorian students from secondary and

university levels received the lowest English proficiency score in a standardized international exam provided by the *English First Organization* in 2022. Therefore, the ineffective connection between the EFL national curriculum principles and teaching practices and the existent disconnection between language curriculum, policy and actual classroom reality are essential factors that seem to affect teaching EFL (Salinas, 2017). Wiggins and McTighe (2005) recommend an approach to syllabus planning and teaching instruction that supports teachers in connecting the established national content standards with teachers' syllabus planning by reflecting and prioritizing the content to achieve authentic and meaningful students' learning outcomes.

2.2 Syllabus Design and the Backward Design Model

Espinoza and Soto (2015) describe syllabus planning as the core of schooling to transform education. They assert that the syllabus decisions depend on different levels, such as national, regional, state, district, school, and classroom contexts. Hence, each level has its hierarchy to make critical choices to improve educational settings. In this study, the term syllabus will refer to the overall plan or design for a course and how the content is transformed into teaching and learning, which enables the learning outcomes to be achieved (Richards, 2013).

The three main subcomponents of planning are syllabus design, teaching methodologies, and evaluation (Nunan, 2015). Regarding syllabus design, Dündar and Merç (2017) stated that it is based on teachers' decisions regarding approaches, methods, strategies, activities, and techniques to apply to reach the intended student outcomes. Therefore, teachers must better understand syllabus design to improve their pedagogical practices (Cirocki & Farell, 2019).

The BDM proposes an approach to syllabus planning and teaching instruction. Wiggins and McTighe (2005) argued that the BDM is a plan designed by teachers that involves thinking first about the students' desired learning outcomes and then the evidence of such learning. They explained that the BDM is divided into three systematic stages: identifying desired results, determining acceptable evidence, and planning the learning experiences and instruction. Figure 1 shows how syllabus planning based on the BDM is conducted.
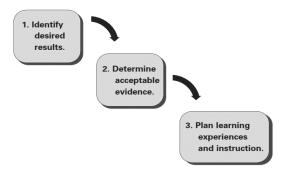

Figure 1. UbD: Stages of the Backward Design Model

The BDM supports teachers in connecting the established national content standards with teachers' syllabus planning by providing a BDM design template. This template allows teachers to plan their teaching instructions systematically by following the three stages of the BDM (Yurtseven & Altun, 2017). These templates help teachers develop their syllabus based on reflecting and prioritizing the content to achieve students' learning outcomes. In the first stage of the BDM, the "design process calls for clarity about priorities" (Wiggins & McTigue, 2005, p.18). Goals, content standards, and a review of curriculum expectations are considered in this stage. In the second stage, collected assessment evidence is applied to document and validate the desired outcomes during the course. The primary evidence relates to developing authentic performance tasks, where students demonstrate their knowledge, understanding, and skills by transferring their knowledge to simulated tasks or authentic scenarios (Jozwik et al., 2017; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Finally, in the third stage of the BDM, the most appropriate activities, content, and materials are chosen to help students perform effectively and achieve the desired results.

Even though EFL language education has traditionally been linked with the FDM, Brown (2004) claims that teachers, whether they have or have not experienced applying the BDM, have integrated some features of this model. These features relate to prioritizing content from the curriculum, using formative and summative assessment, providing scaffolding and learner-centered teaching, integrating a performance-based approach, and using authentic materials and activities in the teaching process (Grooms, 2010). The Common European Framework of References is one example of the application of the BDM in teaching languages because it is designed to provide a "common basis for an explicit description of objectives, content and methods of the study of modern languages, within a wider purpose of elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks across Europe " (Richards, 2013, p.26).

3 Method

The current pilot study followed a qualitative research approach. The data were collected through a semi-structured interview to understand how Ecuadorian EFL teachers design and connect their teaching practices with the national curriculum. The interview was piloted by the researcher in line with the four-phase process to develop and refine an interview protocol (Castillo-Montoya, 2016), the process of validating a long qualitative interview (Prescott, 2011), and ethical data translation in qualitative educational research (Qoyyimah, 2014).

3.1 Participants

This study proposes investigating how Ecuadorian EFL teachers design and associate their teaching practices with the national curriculum. The participants were purposefully selected to obtain practical and essential information for the study (Taherdoost, 2016). The participants, who contributed voluntarily to this study, were two male and three female Ecuadorian EFL public school teachers aged 30-35. The pseudonyms Diana, Johanna, Maria, Andrés, and Leonardo, were used for the participants. They all speak Spanish as their mother tongue and hold a bachelor's degree in teaching English as a Foreign Language. They have more than five years of experience working as English teachers in public schools in Ecuador, and they are familiar with the EFL

national curriculum and language standards established by the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education. It should be mentioned that 11 Ph.D. students and a university professor participated in the process of this pilot testing by providing expert judgments on the constructs and questions of the interview guide. Furthermore, two more Ecuadorian teachers contributed to the translating process of the instrument of this study from English to Spanish.

3.2 Instrument

Due to the particular purposes of the current study and based on relevant literature, the researcher designed a semi-structured interview. Castillo-Montoya (2016) suggested that the first stage of writing the interview is establishing its constructs in order to align them with the research questions the study will attempt to answer. The interview guide was designed following Dörnyei's (2007) and Legard et al's (2003) recommendations. Thus, the interview has a flexible structure for interaction; it contains a topic guide and the constructs of the issues to be covered during the interview, initial questions, follow-up questions, and probes to obtain a deeper understanding of the interviewees' answers. Finally, as Patton (2015) advised, the instrument asks questions for specific information by promoting inquiry-based conversation about the topic of this study.

The interview guide comprised five constructs to encompass the three research questions established for this study. They were the opening script, opening questions, instructional design questions, assessment-related questions, and questions about the learning activities and materials applied in the EFL classrooms. After finishing the interview guide, to ensure validity, it was distributed to eleven Ph.D. students and a university professor to ask for constructive feedback. This process helps the researcher avoid biases and make changes where over-analyzing data could occur (Turner, 2010). After making the changes suggested by the experts, two Ecuadorian EFL teachers carried out a back-translation of the instrument. Back-translation is a process when one source in one language is translated into another language, and then a second party translates it back blindly (Brislin, 1970). When the two versions of the target language are identical, the instrument can be applied as a tool for inquiry. The interview schedule was translated into Spanish, the native language of Ecuador (Appendix A). The back translation was conducted without any problem. Only a few changes were made to the interview guide; most were based on synonyms for the technical words (Appendix B).

The next phase of this study consisted of pilot testing the interview schedule to determine flaws, limitations, or other issues within the research instrument (Kvale, 2007; Teijlingen & Vanora, 2002). This phase confirms, adjusts, and redefines the instrument's content based on the information provided by participants (Creswell et al., 2007; Creswell & Poth, 2016). The instrument was piloted with five participants; after the first interview, probing was added to elicit elaboration on particular topics. After the third interview, it was confirmed that the instrument was suitable for eliciting data to answer the research questions of this study. The participants provided sustainable and meaningful information about which approach and features of the BDM they applied when designing their syllabi.

3.3 Data collection and analysis

The interview schedule was systematically conducted with the five teachers in December 2021. The interviews were carried out in Spanish, the native language in Ecuador, which generated a comfortable and relaxing discussion of the interview's topics. The interviews were conducted online through Skype and lasted 30 to 45 minutes each. The answers from participants were transcribed using Google Docs. Furthermore, in each interview, its main objective was mentioned, as well as the time that the interview will take and some ethical issues such as anonymity and confidentiality of interviewees' answers for each question.

After finishing the interview process, the obtained data was transcribed using Google Docs; the five interviews encompassed 16,540 words in total. Then, by applying Word, the codification of the findings was carried out by linking data with conceptual frameworks and broad concepts to identify common and emergent themes and later draw conclusions and offer explanations (McAlister et al., 2017).

4 Results and discussion

4.1 Suitability of the interview schedule to collect data to reach the aim of this study

The first research question investigated the suitability of the interview schedule to reach the aim of this study. After creating and piloting the interview schedule, it was revealed that minor wording issues based on synonyms for the technical words, such as Backward Design Model, performance tasks, and scaffolding learning needed to be addressed. All the participants answered the interview questions without any problem, and the information they provided resulted in emergent themes that helped the researchers to modify the instrument.

Furthermore, the research instrument allowed the discovery of initial insights into which approach EFL Ecuadorian teachers apply when planning their syllabi and how they align their teaching practices with the requirements established in the Ecuadorian EFL National Curriculum. Thus, the participants' responses show that the interview schedule provided necessary and consistent information that will lead to a further investigation related to the application of the BDM in teaching EFL. The codification resulted in the following common themes: curriculum planning, assessment, learning objectives, teaching materials, and teaching activities. The emerging themes were curricular priorities, result-oriented teaching, scaffolding learning, and final projects.

4.2 EFL teacher's pedagogical practices, the Ecuadorian EFL curriculum, and the Backward Design Model

4.2.1 Teachers' application of the BDM and its features

The second research question aimed to investigate which approach Ecuadorian EFL teachers apply when planning their syllabi. The BDM is a process of syllabus design which

involves first determining the final outcomes, then planning assessment strategies, and finally choosing the methods of instruction (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). It was found that none of the participants use this model to plan their syllabi. When asked about how they plan their syllabi, all the participants indicated that they started planning by focusing on the general objectives provided by the Ecuadorian EFL national curriculum. Afterwards, they select the content, activities, and materials to be applied in the learning process. Finally, they chose the instruments to evaluate their students' outcomes. Because they follow a linear sequence of stages based on the input, process, and output of planning and delivering instruction (Richards, 2013), it is implied that teachers use the FDM when designing their syllabi. This is illustrated in the following examples:

> Planning is the most relevant process before starting teaching. I plan the units following the Ministry of Education guidelines and the parameters established by the institution where I work. I check each unit's objectives and choose the activities to achieve students' English outcomes. (Maria).

> I plan according to the general objectives and the content students must cover during each unit. I analyze the textbook's topic in each lesson and find authentic materials to help students achieve their learning objectives in each unit. (Diana).

All of the teachers provided almost the same answers regarding this aspect. When planning their teaching instructions, they focus more on the general objectives and content to be covered rather than the students' language outcomes. Regarding the BDM, it was found that teachers do apply some of its features when designing their own syllabus related to curricular priorities, instructional scaffolding, result-oriented teaching, assessment evidence, and lifelong learning.

4.2.2 Curricular priorities

The teachers indicated that they prioritize the content to be covered in each unit by checking the content from textbooks rather than from the national curriculum. The BDM emphasizes the importance of establishing clear curricular priorities to avoid planning with aimless content coverage and applying isolated activities that are disconnected from learning objectives (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Thus, establishing curricular priorities is the teachers' first aspect of the BDM when designing the syllabus. Most of them focus on students' needs and the English skills they want to achieve at the end of the unit. They indicated,

> When planning, I always establish priorities based on students' needs and which English skills I want to focus on in each lesson. Besides, I check the English textbook and start planning the vocabulary, grammar, and the four primary English skills students need to improve by the end of the unit. (Diana).

> When planning, the priorities I always consider are the students' knowledge, which they will apply in different real-life situations. Moreover, I plan in a way that I can integrate the four main English skills. (Johana).

4.2.3 Instructional scaffolding and result-oriented teaching

One of the pillars of the BDM is the teacher's role in helping students achieve English learning outcomes. Grooms (2010) states that teachers who integrate the BDM tend to be guides or facilitators of the learning process. In this study, all the teachers mention applying a scaffolding teaching process to support students in achieving their learning outcomes. Furthermore, these findings show that teachers consider themselves guides and facilitators of their students' knowledge. This is shown in the following teachers' statements:

> When I teach, my role as a teacher is to be a moderator and facilitator of my students' learning. I also consider myself a guide to my students because I always help them develop their English activities in a logical sequence. Thus, I avoid creating anxiety or demotivation in my students. (Johanna).

> When I start the unit, I always indicate to my students the final project they have to perform […], and after that, I involve my students in the learning process by guiding them through scaffolding teaching to achieve their final project working stage by stage. (Andrés).

4.2.4 Assessment evidence

The BDM establishes various assessment methods for gathering evidence that the desired learning has been achieved (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006). In this respect, Ecuadorian teachers apply different techniques and instruments to assess their students. For formative assessment, they use discussions, assignments, participation in class, and observations. On the other hand, they integrate final exams and projects for summative assessment. All the teachers claimed that integrating final exams is mandatory in Ecuador:

> I apply different techniques to be sure that my students learn the essential contents of the unit. I assess my students using weekly tests, a daily observation checklist, and class participation in a formative way. It is mandatory to take a students' final exam in a summative way, so I use it as a part of the final students' score; however, I prefer also using final projects such as poster presentations where students show the fundamental knowledge they acquired. (Leonardo).

> The instruments I apply to assess my students' learning are written and oral tests based on rubrics, observation checklists, and class participation. Students also take final exams to present their *final product*, which is based on delivering projects related to the unit's topic. (Johanna).

As an emerging theme, it has been found that teachers integrate final projects to assess students. Yildirim and Orsdemir (2013) argued that final projects are authentic evidence that demonstrates students' knowledge and proficiency in EFL contexts. According to Wiggins and McTigue (2005), performance tasks based on the BDM are authentic tasks where students demonstrate their knowledge in authentic or simulated scenarios. Consequently, in connection with the BDM, performance tasks can be associated with the final projects that teachers ask students to present at the end of the course or unit.

4.2.5 Lifelong learning

Brown (2004) indicated that the BDM emphasizes applying authentic activities, materials, and performance-based tasks to support students' lifelong learning. Consequently, students can continue learning, especially after completing tasks in the classroom. Besides this, by using performance tasks, students can transfer their knowledge, understanding, and skills acquired to solve problems and make decisions authentically in real-life situations (Wiggins & McTigue, 2005). As the following extracts show, the participants apply different techniques to ensure students' lifelong learning:

> I ensure that my students obtain lifelong learning by integrating authentic materials and classroom activities. Most of the materials are contextualized and based on my students' daily lives, and I also provide them with meaningful tasks to work cooperatively to connect their knowledge with real-world situations. (Diana).

> Another way to evaluate my students is by asking them to present posters or projects that cover the content learned through the unit. Hence, students can show what they have learned authentically, and I can also provide feedback on some mistakes or misunderstandings that students have. My students usually present final products by using PowerPoint presentations or posters. (Maria).

> I apply final projects to verify students' improvements. Using final projects is essential in EFL contexts because students can show what they have learned during the unit creatively and personally. Moreover, final projects allow students to apply their linguistic abilities and critical thinking skills to find the best way to solve problems in real-life situations. (Andrés).

These findings demonstrate that even though teachers do not mention performance tasks, they apply them to assess their students. The teachers indicated that final products or final projects were used as a way to check their students' improvements in their English skills. Additionally, they point out that critical thinking and problem-solving skills are essential aspects that students use to apply their knowledge in different authentic situations, which is one of the pillars of the BDM.

5 Conclusions

Even though this was a small-scale study, the findings will help the researchers to investigate the topic further. Various techniques such as expert judgement and back-translation, were used to increase the reliability and confidentiality of the research instrument. Internal testing, expert assessment, field-testing techniques, the back translation process, ethical considerations, and purposive sampling were applied in this research to develop and refine the interview schedule.

The study represents an exploratory first step in creating and piloting an interview guide for understanding how teachers plan their syllabi and align the National Curriculum requirements with their own instruction. Furthermore, this pilot study is a baseline for future longitudinal research associated with exploring the application of the BDM in Ecuadorian EFL secondary schools. The findings showed that all the participants planned their syllabi by first focusing on the

Ecuadorian EFL national curriculum's general objectives, then choosing the content to be taught, and finally planning how to assess students' expected outcomes, which is the sequence provided by the FDM (Richards, 2013). Therefore, based on the participants' answers, they do not apply the BDM when planning their syllabus.

However, although the participants plan their syllabus based on the FDM, they also apply some crucial aspects that underpin the BDM. The first characteristic is related to prioritizing the content to be covered. The teachers have mentioned prioritizing the content once they know the objectives and the content to be covered. Thus, they start establishing hierarchies of the topics they will cover in their teaching process. Most teachers associate their planning priorities with teaching grammar rules and vocabulary. The second characteristic is the application of final projects in EFL classrooms. The teachers agree that final projects or products are pedagogical tools that allow students to show what they have learned during the whole unit in a free and creative way. These final projects strongly connect with the performance tasks that the BDM establishes as an authentic way to demonstrate students' English achievements. The participants mention scaffolding to allow students to develop their final products by working stage by stage. They defined themselves as guides and facilitators of their students' learning.

Despite the contributions discussed above, this study has limitations. First, the current study used a convenience sampling method, possibly attracting the most enthusiastic teachers. Thus, for future research, the sample must be broader, qualitatively or quantitatively to obtain more specific results on how efficient the integration of the BDM could be in the EFL syllabus design.

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APPENDIX A

ENTREVISTA

Guión de Apertura:

Estimado(a) ………,
Gracias por su participación. Esta entrevista durará aproximadamente media hora e incluirá preguntas sobre sus prácticas pedagógicas y profesionales en el aula. Planeo grabar esta entrevista para fines analíticos. Si, en cualquier momento, desea suspender el uso de la grabadora o la entrevista en sí misma, no dude en hacérmelo saber. Todas sus respuestas serán confidenciales y no utilizaré su nombre en ninguna parte del estudio. El propósito de este estudio es describir a profundidad las percepciones de los maestros sobre la enseñanza del idioma inglés en Ecuador.

Su participación es totalmente voluntaria y no hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas. Si en algún momento necesita detenerse o respirar, hágamelo saber. ¿Tienes alguna duda antes de comenzar? Entonces, con su permiso, voy a comenzar a grabar esta entrevista, ¿de acuerdo?

Preguntas de apertura:

Primero, le haré un par de preguntas personales.
1. Lo siento, pero para fines de investigación, tengo que preguntarle sobre su edad.
2. ¿Cuál es su título?
3. ¿Cuándo obtuvo su título?
4. ¿Cuál es tu primer idioma?
5. ¿Cuántos años de experiencia como docente en EFL tiene?
6. ¿Cuál es la edad y el nivel de inglés del grupo de estudiantes que está enseñando?

Preguntas de diseño instruccional:

A continuación, haré algunas preguntas sobre la planificación del aprendizaje.
1. ¿Podría contarme lo que conoce del currículo ecuatoriano de EFL?
2. ¿Qué significa para usted planificar las clases de inglés?
3. ¿Cómo planifica cada unidad?
4. ¿Cómo distribuye el contenido que debes cubrir en cada unidad?

Preguntas relacionadas con la evaluación:

Ahora, continuamos con la siguiente parte:
1. ¿Cómo se asegura de que sus alumnos logren un aprendizaje para toda la vida en sus clases de inglés?
2. ¿Qué instrumentos utiliza para verificar el aprendizaje de los estudiantes?
3. Existen múltiples formas de evaluar a los estudiantes. ¿Cómo evalúa a sus alumnos?

4. ¿Cómo evalúas a tus alumnos de manera formativa?
5. ¿Cómo evalúas a tus alumnos de manera sumativa?
6. ¿Qué piensa sobre la evaluación de aprendizaje basada en proyectos?

Actividades de aprendizaje:

Finalmente, haré algunas preguntas sobre las actividades de aprendizaje que aplica a sus lecciones.
1. ¿Qué tipo de actividades y tareas equiparán a los estudiantes con el conocimiento y las habilidades necesarias para lograr sus objetivos de aprendizaje?
2. ¿Cuáles son los objetivos principales de las unidades curriculares?
3. ¿Cómo los estudiantes trabajarán para lograr esos objetivos?
4. Describa los materiales que usa para lograr los objetivos de aprendizaje de los estudiantes.
5. ¿Qué piensa sobre el aprendizaje por pasos o scaffolding learning?
6. ¿Cuál es su papel como maestro cuando enseña una lección?
¿Hay algo que le gustaría agregar?

Gracias.

APPENDIX B

The English translation of the interview schedule

INTERVIEW

Opening script:

Dear …………,
This study aims to describe in-depth the teachers' perceptions of English language teaching in Ecuador. Thank you for your participation. This interview will last approximately half an hour and include questions about your pedagogical and professional practicum within the classroom. I plan to record this interview for analytical purposes. If, at any time, you want me to stop using the recorder or to stop the interview itself, please let me know. All of your answers will be confidential, and I will not use your name anywhere in the study.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and there are no right or wrong answers. Let me know if you need to stop or breathe at any time. Do you have any questions before starting? Then, I will begin recording this interview with your permission, okay?

Opening questions:

First, I will ask you a couple of personal questions.

1. I am sorry, but I must ask about your age for research purposes.
2. What is your educational background?
3. When did you get your degree?
4. What is your first language?
5. How many years of experience as an EFL teacher do you have?
6. What is the age and level of English of the students you teach?
       Prompt: From those levels, which level are you spending more time teaching?

Instructional design questions:

Next, I will ask some questions about learning planning.
1. Could you tell me what you know about the Ecuadorian EFL curriculum?
2. What does it mean for you to plan English classes?
3. Could you describe how you plan the units you teach during the year?
4. How do you manage or deal with the content you must cover in each unit?
       Prompt: What are the priorities you consider when planning each unit?

Questions related to the evaluation:

Now, we will continue with the next part:
1. How do you ensure your students achieve lifelong learning in their English classes?
2. What instruments do you use to verify student learning?
3. There are multiple ways to evaluate students. How do you evaluate your students?
4. How do you assess your students in a formative way?
5. How do you assess your students in a summative way?
6. What do you think about assessing based on project-based learning?
       Prompt: Have you taught by using this strategy?
       Prompt: Which benefits/drawbacks have you found when applying scaffolding learning?

Learning activities:

Finally, I will ask some questions about the learning activities that apply to your lessons.
1. What activities and tasks will equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve their learning objectives?
       Prompt: Which meaningful or authentic activities have you applied in the lessons?
2. What are the main objectives of the units?
       Prompt: What is the final product/project of this unit
3. How will students work to achieve these unit objectives?
4. Describe the materials you use to achieve student learning objectives.
5. What do you think about scaffolding learning?
       Prompt: Have you taught by using this strategy?
       Prompt: Which benefits/drawbacks have you found when applying scaffolding learning?
6. What is your role as a teacher when teaching a lesson?
7. Is there anything you would like to add?