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PRESENTED BY:

HÉCTOR RAMÓN FERNÁNDEZ MONTIEL

ACCOUNT NUMBER: 1224434

ADVISOR:

DR. MARÍA ESTELA ESTRADA CORTÉS

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Dedication

To my beloved wife Nancy Anguiano for all her support over the years.

To Cora Fierro, for making the inhuman human, for seeing the best in every teacher.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this essay is to provide elements from Littlejohn (2012) and Crookes (2011) enabling teachers at Interlingua to build their own philosophy of their teaching activity and develop a social view. It deals with theoretical contributions that social science and philosophies of education can give to any professor at an English language school like Interlingua intending to define his mission in institutionalized contexts characterized by strong uniformity. It analyzes the Interlingua educational system under the perspective of the four philosophies of education (i.e., essentialism, progressivism, perennialism, and reconstructivism) as well as the perspective of Littlejohn and Crookes's views. In doing such an analysis, it resorts to the three conceptualizations of syllabus by Casarini (formal, real, and hidden). Going through the concept of McDonaldization, it shows evidence based on its syllabus that the Interlingua system is definitely permeated by such an ideology inasmuch as the way its teaching methodology is built creates language instructors who only need to stick to detailed manuals on what to say and how to teach. Following Littlejohn's views, it portrays the social context that has made possible the existence of institutions that deem the role of a teacher to be that of a deskilled worker with just the minimum required to comply with quality standards to provide similar and uniform results, in the same way that a McDonald's restaurant works. It advocates that McDonaldization overall destroys professionalization, creativity, and innovation in teaching practice and must be avoided at all costs. It concludes that any Interlingua teacher taking this analytical path has more chances of emancipating themselves and becoming a better professional.

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INTRODUCTION

Why teach English? To teach the lesson efficiently and ensure that students pass the subject, which has become compulsory since the recent educational reforms, a teacher with an instrumental vision might think. To enable students to achieve communicative competence, since upon graduating from university they will have greater opportunities to find better-paid jobs, those who teach at the higher level might say. So that they can pay their biweekly salaries and obtain bonuses by re-enrolling a certain percentage of students, those who work in the private sector might say.

Whatever the argument presented, there will always be social factors that shape the reasons for teaching. Often, however, precarious working conditions and the pressures of the job create teachers who do not have time to look outside, question the external forces acting around their activity, or cultivate a critical and social vision. For many, worrying about the social factors that affect what they do as teachers is a waste of time. A large majority will think that all that is needed are teachers committed to good academic results, since, after all, academics are what count, as essentialists would say.

However, according to authors such as Littlejohn and Crookes, such reasoning is fallacious. There are, in fact, academically legitimate reasons for teachers to become critical not only of their own activity but also of their social environment. Failure to do so is, in fact, having a negative impact on the academic quality of both students and teachers. This paper revolves around such issues: the legitimacy of an English teacher working in a school such as Interlingua acquiring a critical and social vision.

We will begin by stating the problem, indicating the objectives of the essay, and posing the respective research question with its hypothesis and justification. Chapter one will address the contribution that educational philosophies and elements of social paradigms have on teaching, particularly the concept of McDonaldization. Next, in chapter two, we will discuss the research methodology. Chapter three will analyze the elements of the formal and real dimensions of the Interlingua curriculum in light of educational philosophies and McDonaldization. Chapter four will propose the construction of a critical and social paradigm for Interlingua teachers after comparing the ideas of Littlejohn and Crookes from the perspective of this school's hidden curriculum. Finally, the conclusions will be presented, revisiting the main points seen in each chapter. It is hoped that, upon finishing this essay, the legitimacy of a teacher, such as one who works at Interlingua, developing a critical and social vision of their professional activity will be appreciated.

To pose the problem specifically, the question is asked: what is the mission of a teacher who works at a private school such as Interlingua? The question may seem obvious, since, as an institution dedicated to teaching English as a foreign language, the immediate answer would, of course, be to teach this language using its method and materials. But if its teachers were asked to make a statement of their mission, more than one would undoubtedly be received. Among the most likely would be to meet the objectives of the curriculum, to ensure that students speak with good grammar and fluency, to follow the steps of the method, to maintain a high re-enrollment rate to guarantee the continuity of the business and a constant source of work, or simply to teach classes in order to receive a steady biweekly paycheck.

Every language teacher should rethink the purpose of their work, regardless of the institution in which they work. This relates to the crucial issue of the teaching philosophy that each teacher constructs for themselves. Graham Crookes, from the University of Hawaii, in an article entitled *Language Teacher's Philosophies of Teaching: Bases for Development and Possible Lines of Investigation*, emphasized the validity of the search for such a philosophy by saying that "language teachers can and should articulate principles or higher aspirations concerning their professional activity" (Crookes, 2011: 1126).

In this article, he broadly addressed three lines from which to develop a philosophy of teaching. The first is based on reflection on the main currents of the philosophy of education; the second, on the analysis of the major branches of philosophy and their relationship to language teaching; and the third, on the use of philosophical tools by the teacher himself to find meaning in his work. Crookes' intention in this article is to invite teachers to make a statement of their mission as professionals based on the theoretical developments of these lines of research, not as a one-time event, but as a continuous process of proposing, redefining, and reinventing their mission day after day.

In this context, it is worth asking: what do teachers at a private school like Interlingua really think? What are their aspirations? Are they guided by a set of instrumental principles, or does their vision go beyond the pragmatic achievement of teaching objectives? Would there be any benefits for them if they were aware of the roots of the philosophy of education and the social dimensions that permeate the method they use every day? If the academic department of this school obtained answers to such questions, it would have invaluable information for implementing improvements in its system.

However, rather than focusing on the philosophy of an institution's staff, Crookes (2011) refers to the importance of each teacher individually searching for their own philosophy and asking themselves questions such as: *What am I doing*? *What are my goals? (as a teacher and as a specialist in this field)*, not only in terms of the mere instrumental perspective of teaching but from a broader vision that includes the social spectrum and the educational philosophy that shapes the profession of language teaching and the institution for which they work (Crookes, 2013).

The specific research question is: How can Graham Crookes' proposal on the development of a philosophy of teaching (2011) and Littlejohn's analysis of its social dimension (2012) help Interlingua teachers to reinvent the meaning of their work in order to have a critical and social vision of their teaching activity?

The general objective of this work is to reflect on how the lines proposed by Graham Crookes (2011) and Littlejohn (2012) can contribute to Interlingua teachers developing a critical philosophy of their activity in order to reinvent the meaning of their mission and develop a critical-social vision. The specific objectives are as follows:

- To analyze the Interlingua method from the teaching philosophies outlined by Graham Crookes (2011).
- To reflect on the teaching practice of an Interlingua teacher in light of the social dimensions identified by Littlejohn (2012)
- To propose ways forward through a dialogical analysis between these two authors that enable the construction of a critical philosophy of teaching for an Interlingua teacher in order to help them reinvent the meaning of their work.

The hypothesis to be proposed is that teachers working in English schools such as Interlingua can find useful tools for constructing a critical philosophy of their work by analyzing how educational philosophies and social factors have shaped the academic and institutional contexts in which they work, all of which will enable them to reinvent the meaning of their mission by developing a critical-social vision.

The expansion of English language schools in the public and private sectors in Mexico has been increasing in parallel with the growth of globalization and the consolidation of the market economy.

English has become the lingua franca, conventionally accepted as the international language of communication in economic, political, scientific, and educational spheres. This makes proficiency and communicative competence in English a requirement not only for work but also for academic pursuits. However, what does it mean to have adequate communicative competence in English that allows its users to adequately integrate into the challenges of a globalized world? The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* or CEFR (Council of Europe, 2002) states that such competence includes not only the linguistic factor, but also the sociolinguistic and pragmatic factors. It is not enough to know and use the language from a structural, lexical, and semantic perspective; it is also necessary to interact in different scenarios, relating to native and international speakers with sufficient fluency to defend points of view on various topics. In other words, at least a B2 level is required according to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2002).

Thus, the CEFR paradigm can undoubtedly influence foreign language teachers to adopt the belief that the most important reason for their profession is to achieve communicative competence in their students.

At this juncture, what has been observed in the way English schools currently operate to achieve this goal? Andrew Littlejohn (2012) is one of the authors who has brought to light the existence of a very marked trend in teaching materials, which is characterized by the implementation of practices aimed at uniformity of methodologies to achieve standardized results at all costs, conceiving the phenomenon of language study and learning from a unilateral and Westernized perspective, neglecting the fact that the differences and local educational backgrounds of the millions of English learners around the world should also play a relevant role in decision-making for the development of teaching programs.

Littlejohn (2012) is not against standardization per se, as he himself recognizes the achievements of such systems, which have been part of the spirit of the decades following World War II. His criticism focuses rather on the fact that excessive standardization in the development of materials has led schools to become McDonaldized.

Here he revisits the concept proposed by Ritzer (2015) of the McDonaldization of society. This situation is having a negative impact on creativity in teaching practice and, similarly, on that of students when using a second language.

The decline in the creative factor of teaching and learning undoubtedly plays an adverse role in preventing students from acquiring a level of communicative competence that meets the demands of the globalized world. But more importantly, this trend toward *McDonaldized* uniformity has imbued teachers

with the philosophy that to be a good teacher, they must strive to always achieve standardized, measurable, and pre-established results, relying on textbooks and materials sponsored by large publishers or following to the letter the methodological practices of the language institute for which they work.

Considering the phenomenon of McDonaldization in English language teaching is a good starting point for reflecting on the social dimensions of the work of a language teacher and also provides ground for analyzing the ethical perspectives involved in this occupation, which helps teachers formulate their own philosophy (Littlejohn, 2012).

It is entirely justifiable for language teachers to be concerned with questioning the social factors related to the exercise of their activity, as Crookes has pointed out:

> ...If teachers do not see themselves as historically and socially located within trends in the development of mass education, they are more likely to be victims of a commonly encountered individualist and ahistorical conception of teaching that weakens the field as a whole (Crookes, 2011:1129).

Teachers' lack of awareness of the social and historical trends and educational developments that have shaped their work places them in a victimized position, as it prevents them from adopting a critical and autonomous philosophy and leaves them at the mercy of individualistic and ahistorical paradigms that ultimately diminish and weaken the language teaching profession.

The aim of this paper is to analyze some of the proposals of the philosophy of education outlined by Crookes (2011) and the social dimensions of language

teaching addressed by Littlejohn (2012) that enable an Interlingua teacher to have the tools to construct a critical and social philosophy of their profession.

The relevance of this research lies in the need for English teachers in the current era to develop the ability to construct a critical philosophy in order to counteract the negative effects of homogenizing trends on institutional decisions. We will reflect on what happens in a model school such as Interlingua by analyzing its teaching materials and methodologies and attempting to elucidate the set of educational philosophies that shape its way of operating. Interlingua is an important case not only because of its national presence in Mexico but also because it is a representative example of the prevailing homogenizing practices in modern education, which tend to promote the idea that the more standardized the activities in a teaching system are, the better the results in student learning.

Similarly, this paper will reflect on the phenomenon of the McDonaldization of teaching in the materials and methods of this school in light of the arguments put forward by Andrew Littlejohn (2012) in order to allow Interlingua teachers to have an emancipatory vision, contrary to the mistaken idea that there is an ideal method for learning, since language teaching, as a constantly changing social phenomenon, cannot be pigeonholed into a single paradigm.

CHAPTER 1. THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION

This chapter will explain the generalities of the four main currents of the philosophy of education. It will address the social dimension of English language teaching, as well as the importance that the communicative paradigm has acquired in this regard. Finally, it will highlight the factor of McDonaldization, its influence on materials, recent methodologies, and the work of teachers.

1.1 Epistemological paradigms

In the field of philosophy of education, four major currents can be identified, without claiming to be absolutely deterministic: *progressivism*, *reconstructivism*, *perennialism*, and *essentialism* (Crookes, 2011).

1.1.1 *Progressivism*

Progressivism is characteristic of modernity, which emerged during the Renaissance and was consolidated with the triumph of the French Revolution, in which the individual is revalued as the center of instruction.

Its goal is to develop their abilities to the maximum within the objectives of the curriculum. Among the practical manifestations that can be found in the history of second language teaching methodologies that follow this orientation are approaches such as suggestopedia, Gategno's silent way, and community learning, among others, which focus on enhancing the personal abilities of the learner (Crookes, 2011).

1.1.2 *Reconstructivism*

Reconstructivism emerged as a postmodernist discourse that criticizes the progressive view for being too individualistic and proposes a holistic approach that takes into account not only the individual but also their interaction with their constantly evolving social environment (Crookes, 2011).

The philosophy of reconstructivism is the antithesis of modernist paradigms that see social evolution as a constant upward trend. From a progressive and positivist perspective, science, the free market, technology, and the natural growth of wealth all together form part of a destiny to which humanity is subject. This philosophy maintains that since the Renaissance, scientific reason has forged a future for humanity in which a utopian culmination will be reached, where economic freedom and competition will lead societies to an era of unlimited material prosperity.

Problems such as poverty, economic inequality, enormous gaps in development, wars, and segregation are viewed from the perspective of social Darwinism, in which the strongest are imposing themselves on those who are less able to adapt. The major social crises generated by this system are a natural part of that process.

The individualistic development of man, even to the detriment of the masses, is more valuable and perfectly legitimate. It is the ambition for progress and material wealth that works to the benefit of the evolution of the human species (Crookes, 2011).

In contrast, reconstructivism is a critique of this positivist philosophy. Unlike the apology for the establishment advocated by modernism, reconstructivism harshly criticizes the inequalities created by the free market. It in no way justifies the exclusion of millions of human beings from the march of this positivist and Hegelian progress. It questions the very foundations on which modernity itself is based. It even takes a critical stance towards regimes that claim to have a social development perspective but in practice accentuate inequalities (Crookes, 2013).

While modernism consolidates ideals such as science, meta-narratives, high culture, and material progress, reconstructivism adopts a relativism and skepticism towards such paradigms.

Culture and the vision of the imaginary of societies are seen under this premise as a product of social relations of power, economic distribution, and ideological domination. There are no longer any absolute criteria of any kind, not even if they are legitimized by scientific discourse.

Pedagogically, the origins of reconstructivism in education can be traced back to the contributions of John Dewey. Although he was initially one of the most prominent representatives of progressivism, at the dawn of his career he leaned decisively toward a critique of modernist postulates. As such, he conceived that the goal of education was not only to promote the individual development of the student, but also to strengthen their interaction with the environment. There could be no legitimate education without raising awareness of social problems among people, who, upon leaving the institution, could apply what they had learned to improve their environment, alleviating the suffering caused by inequalities (Crookes, 2013).

In the first category, a reconstructivist pedagogy would offer materials and topics that address social problems and seek to awaken students' critical stance toward the economic system and the great imbalances it has generated.

From a more radical perspective, the second category of this pedagogical reconstructivism, according to Graham Crookes (2013), would not be limited to raising awareness of the problems, but would also encourage activism through the formation of student groups or the organization of various sectors of society to demonstrate against injustices, lobbying, marching, protesting on social media, etc. Some examples of the manifestations of the reconstructivist paradigm in second language teaching can be seen in the more open and recent versions of the communicative approach, which seek to ensure that individuals not only learn the language for the sole purpose of self-improvement or communication per se, but also to integrate into global society through constant, critical, and tolerant communicative interaction with all people.

1.1.3 *Perennialism*

The *perennialist* paradigm is characterized by conceiving education as an activity through which the best values in a given society should be transmitted. An example of this trend is reflected in the English as a foreign language teaching programs instituted in Asian countries.

In such curricula, alongside language instruction itself, only Western values originating mainly from English-speaking countries that are beneficial in the local Eastern context are promoted, while those that do not fit in with what is considered appropriate are rejected (Crookes, 2011).

1.1.4. *Essentialism*

The essentialist paradigm conceives of teaching as an activity whose pragmatic goal is to teach the "essential" or necessary things for students to be able to integrate into the labor market (Crookes, 2011). Students need to learn the technical, interactive, and theoretical skills so that once they have completed their courses, they will have the abilities required by the economy.

One of its main proponents, William Bagley (1905), pointed out that students need to learn relevant things and not just strengthen their thought processes. The curriculum should be rich in "useful" content and developed in an educational environment where strict teachers carry out their work with discipline.

The essentialist ideal is opposed to progressivism, which it accuses of placing greater emphasis on the individual development of each student to the detriment of teaching them the skills and knowledge they actually need to strengthen productivity and the economy.

In an essentialist system, the role of exams, obtaining high grades, competitiveness, efficiency, among others, is crucial in determining the quality of teaching practice. It is a system that, above all, focuses on the student's performance according to quality standards. The importance of being aware of educational philosophies is crucial to contextualizing what is currently happening with English language teaching from a social perspective.

Among the broadest fields of philosophical analysis that can be related to English language teaching are epistemology, metaphysics, and axiology (Crookes, 2011). Epistemology could broadly raise questions about what language learning is, what can actually be learned when studying another language, what cognitive processes come into play that enable a learner to acquire communicative competence, etc. Metaphysics would contribute reflections on the purpose of second language acquisition and the essential reason behind the role of a teacher, among other things. And axiology would address questions about the aesthetic perspective and ethical categories of teaching, the function of the curriculum, the legitimacy of language schools in their contribution to the construction of certain values, etc. This last topic related to ethics deserves further development. In this regard, Crookes mentions:

> This topic can be extended further. Particularly important is the idea that societies or society as a whole can be subject to ethical scrutiny, or to criticism that stems from adherence to an ethics (Crookes, 2011: 1131).

In line with this admonition, this paper will attempt to provide a critical-ethical analysis of the social dimension of English language teaching.

1.2. The social dimension of English language teaching

The profession of teaching English, like any other teaching activity related to any other field, is a phenomenon that cannot be separated from the social context, since education has always developed in parallel with the needs of societies, whether economic, political, cultural, etc. In the particular case of teaching English, the question posed by Julian Edge is entirely valid:

> ...is it (not) reasonable to see the whole operation of teaching English to speakers of other languages (and this is how the acronym TESOL is to be understood

throughout the collection) as one strand of the USA-led globalization process that adds up to a new age of empire, with English as the imperial language and teachers of English as imperial auxiliaries?..(Edge, 2006: xiii)

It makes perfect sense to conceive of the spread of English language teaching to all corners of the globe as a consequence of the political and economic expansion of US power in the current context of globalization. People do not learn English for pleasure, but for compelling social reasons.

Similarly, there are sociocultural factors that permeate its teaching, as can be seen from the following comment:

...The increasingly pervasive use of celebrity in pedagogic materials is congruent with the values of the neoliberal world-view and is directly traceable to what ELT publishers describe as 'aspirational content'. Such content, focused largely on spectacular personal and professional success, celebrity lifestyles, cosmopolitanism, and travel, is held by the ELT industry to be inherently motivating for language learners... (Block, Gray, and Holborow, 2012: 87)

Professional success, the lifestyles of celebrities in the English-speaking world, the ideal of cosmopolitan life, travel, among other things, have led publishers of English language teaching books to focus on the development of 'aspirational' content, spreading the notion that learning and mastering the language can confer status and allow people to achieve social mobility.

There is therefore no doubt about the relationship between the demands of the educational phenomenon and what is happening in its environment. However, in the current economic and social context, Mexico has been living for more than two decades under a free market economy which, especially since the Washington Consensus, has governed the way in which social forces act, from the public sector with the downsizing of the state to the private sector with its unlimited expansion. Banks, railways, the energy industry, security, health services, and education are being privatized. The underlying argument in

support of privatization is to achieve organizations that provide efficient services and results. In the education sector, the central idea is to equip individuals with the necessary qualifications to integrate into the corporate world and meet the demands of competitiveness in the global environment. Privatization in educational institutions has resulted in the emergence of competency-based education (CBE). In this regard, Jesús Guzmán points out:

> ...One of the causes that led to the emergence of CBE was the desire to link the world of work and education more closely, following widespread dissatisfaction with the results obtained by educational institutions, since what graduates learned was generally of little use to them in terms of adequate job performance... (Guzmán, 2003: 146)

Due to the continuous arrival of foreign companies seeking to maximize their profitability in a challenging global world, there is a need to provide them with skilled workers who possess the appropriate job skills, which is a triggering factor for EBC. and one consequence of this is that English has become the primary tool of interaction for which communicative competence is required, since proficiency in this language increases the chances of obtaining a promotion, growing in the corporate world, and becoming internationalized. The educational philosophy that permeates EBC is that of essentialism, which emphasizes the "primacy of knowledge" (Crookes, 2011), justified by the needs of commerce, industry, labor demand, etc.; that is, the things that schools should teach are those that will enable students to find a job. This has made the language teaching industry a thriving business in our country for several years now, as can be seen with the emergence in Mexico, since the late 1960s, of private language schools such as Harmon Hall and Interlingua, some of which have managed to survive to this day in the national market, striving to build their brand and teaching systems as the panacea for people to become bilingual and competently communicative in English.

1.3. The communicative paradigm of English language teaching

Communicative competence in a second language, as defined by the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2002), mainly includes three determining factors: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, and pragmatic competence.

It would be of little use to be only linguistically competent if one is unable to interact with society in the second language or to have strategies for dealing with challenging communicative situations.

In relation to linguistic competence, the CEFR points out that this involves other sub-competences, such as grammar, lexicon, semantics, phonology, spelling, and orthoepy. The user needs to know the system of grammatical rules that govern the language in order to express themselves with the minimum clarity and accuracy required to achieve intelligible and successful communication. They also need to have a sufficiently broad vocabulary and semantic comprehension skills to be able to differentiate between the full range of meanings of the words and expressions they hear, which may have different concepts in use and interaction with other speakers. They need clear pronunciation so that their interlocutors can understand what they are saying. They must be able to write with spelling and syntax such that their readers can respond favorably to their requests. In other words, linguistic competence encompasses the fluent use and correct integration of the four language skills for communicative purposes.

Sociolinguistic competence, defined by the same framework, "comprises the knowledge and skills necessary to address the social dimension of language use," including "linguistic markers of social relations, rules of politeness, expressions of popular wisdom, differences in register, dialect, and accent" (Council of Europe, 2001:116), that is, the user's ability to interact with the social group that uses the second language they are studying.

In this area, learners' ability to negotiate meaning (especially when dealing with speakers with different accents and slang), reach agreements, show tolerance, accept external opinions, and make formal requests, among other things, plays an important role.

Pragmatic competencies, on the other hand, address students' knowledge of the principles according to which messages are:

a. are organized, structured, and ordered (discursive competence)
b. are used to perform communicative functions (functional competence)
c. are sequenced according to interaction and transaction patterns (organizational competence) (Council of Europe, 2001:120)

In other words, pragmatic competence refers to users' abilities to resolve real-time communication situations for which there are no pre-established scripts, it is not possible to know in advance the difficulties with interlocutors, and there is no way to predict the most appropriate course of action. It is about being able to make the best decisions at the moment the interaction takes place in order to achieve success in unexpected situations.

Given the breadth and importance of English language communication skills, which are necessary to meet the challenges of globalization, it is to be expected that the vast majority of English teachers will adopt the philosophy that the ultimate goal of their work is to help their students achieve an optimal level of communication skills, that is, to acquire a purely instrumental view of the purpose of language teaching.

1.4. The factor of *McDonaldization* in English language teaching

By 2016, Mexico had twelve free trade agreements with other countries, thus inserting itself into the free market economy (Ministry of Economy, 2016).

This situation has resulted in the expansion of a phenomenon identified by sociologist George Ritzer in the 1980s: the *McDonaldization* of society, which is defined as:

> ...the process by which the principles of the McDonald's fast food restaurant have come to increasingly dominate sectors of American society and the rest of the world... (Ritzer, 2015:1)

McDonaldization means that institutions follow a path, in their way of operating, similar to that of the fast food company McDonald's. In this establishment, you see young, enthusiastic workers taking orders from customers, doing their utmost to have them ready in a few minutes. The hamburger preparation systems are precise, punctual, and standardized. If you go to a McDonald's in Mexico, Singapore, France, China, or the United States,

you will find a uniform production and preparation system, the same practices and processes, fast service, and reduced waiting times. This uniformity, order, standardized work, and speed give customers the feeling that they are getting quality food, made by an efficient company, that is worth consuming.

When organizations incorporate strategies similar to those of the global conglomerate McDonald's into their practices, factors such as calculability, predictability, efficiency, control, uniformity, and mass production, among others, become the most important objectives. The belief is adopted that the ultimate goal is to survive and expand in a market environment where competitiveness and the pursuit of profits are the means to achieve this.

This approach has also permeated educational institutions, and one of its main consequences has been the implementation of models that tend to conceive of education as something uniform and standardized that occurs in the same way everywhere, disregarding the particular and cultural factors of each social group.

In the field of English language teaching, the activities of private institutes in Mexico are not exempt from McDonaldization. By providing information at their facilities, private schools sell their method to prospective students as a guarantee of learning to become bilingual. They have the recipe, the answer, the best option for achieving this: it can be found in their books and materials.

In practice, the role of teachers in terms of autonomy and preparation takes a back seat, as success in learning English will depend more on the method used by the institute in question.

In this corporate context, the teacher is just another tool that develops a philosophy of their profession as someone who merely implements methodological activities, ensuring that the institute's teaching formulas are applied so that students achieve their learning objectives (Block, Gray, & Holborow, 2012).

The teacher is seen as a simple worker who does not need to have much theoretical knowledge of language teaching, since success in their performance will consist more of putting the particular school's method into practice. Therefore, anyone who is sufficiently competent in the language can be recruited, even if they have neither experience nor academic credentials. In terms of profitability, this idea is very convenient because teachers can be paid much less in such circumstances and higher profit margins can be obtained, as is the case at McDonald's, whose workers do not require specialized job skills (Littlejohn, 2012).

Another factor resulting from this phenomenon is the curriculum itself, in which the discursive structure of topics, content, communication skills, and learning and teaching strategies focus more on a product-based approach than on the process. The aim is for students to learn to put a functional linguistic corpus into practice in order to interact in communication in specific contexts. Discovery and reflection activities are not encouraged as much in learning and acquisition processes (Block, Gray, & Holborow, 2012). The assumption is that English needs to be learned exclusively for functional purposes. Little priority is given to the experimental, creative, cultural construction, and comprehension aspects involved in learning a second language.

There is a tendency to place importance on obtaining a score on tests such as the TOEIC or TOEFL rather than on interacting creatively and naturally in bilingual communication contexts. Although on paper the programs mention that they apply activities to strengthen the acquisition processes, in practice, the time factor and the need to obtain results in a short period of time end up limiting these activities to a minimum. As these are private institutes that operate as business entities, commercial criteria in their methodologies and materials take precedence over genuine learning, as Andrew Littlejohn points out:

> ...Although materials are aimed at use inside a classroom, they will always bear the hallmarks of the conditions of their production outside the classroom. This is particularly the case with materials which are produced in a commercial context, where the need to maximize sales, satisfy shareholders, and achieve corporate goals may have a direct impact on the design of materials, quite distinct from their pedagogic intent... (Littlejohn, 2012: 284)

In the current Mexican context, this problem is not exclusive to English language schools, nor does it originate there. It is a social phenomenon embedded in a country that has lived under a free market system in recent decades, which has been decisive in shaping educational institutions and programs.

The so-called structural reforms implemented in this second decade of the 21st century even emphasize the phenomenon of the McDonaldization of education in all areas, not just in English language teaching.

In such a situation, how can a teacher at a private English school like Interlingua find meaning in what they do? Has the profession of teaching English become something that no longer requires any specialized training, but only the ability to follow materials and methodologies predetermined by institutions? Does a teacher at a school like Interlingua not need to research beyond the teaching guidelines dictated by their institute? Is the sole purpose of teaching

another language to help students become communicatively competent? Could there be more transcendent reasons for aspiring to be a language teacher?

As a partial conclusion, it can be said that teachers who focus primarily on essentialist and perennialist perspectives will be more influenced by the training paradigm, that is, prepared to adhere to books and methodologies of a purely instrumental nature rather than developing an autonomous stance in which they develop a creative form of teaching capable of dealing with uncertain situations outside the prescriptive framework of McDonaldized systems. This situation is undesirable, as it undermines the professional growth of the teacher and the learning of their students. On the other hand, teachers influenced by progressive and reconstructivist paradigms will reflect an approach oriented towards the training paradigm, in which they will have aspirations that transcend extreme instrumentalism, will be concerned with reinventing their teaching, increasing their pedagogical skills, constantly updating themselves, and becoming better professionals, thus benefiting their students.

CHAPTER 2. DESCRIPTION OF THE ENGLISH PROGRAM AT INTERLINGUA

This chapter will discuss the professional profile of the academic faculty, that is, the requirements that Interlingua asks of candidates to work at its institute. It will also discuss the Interlingua course program, its levels, and its equivalencies in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*. The resources and infrastructure available to this school will be highlighted, as well as its regulations. Finally, the research techniques and conceptual and analytical paradigms on which this essay is based will be explained.

2.1. Professional profile of the academic staff.

Interlingua, the language institute chosen to carry out this research, requires that teachers have at least a high school diploma when recruiting teaching staff. A bachelor's degree or specialization courses in English language teaching are not required. As will be seen later, this profile, which is not specialized in English language teaching, is entirely appropriate for this school because its system is characterized by strict uniformity.

The less teaching experience and training a newly hired teacher has, the easier it is to mold them and instill the Interlingua method in them, so that they are more likely to apply it without question.

No certification is required in terms of English proficiency. This aspect is evaluated through a test divided into three sections: listening comprehension, structure, and written and oral expression.

Candidates are expected to pass these assessments and demonstrate an advanced level of language proficiency. Although metrics related to the *Common*

European Framework of Reference for Languages are not used, the minimum level required in terms of oral expression is in the B2-C1 range.

2.2. Interlingua course program

The Interlingua curriculum consists of two introductory levels: *Preliminary* and *Introduction*; ten serial levels ranging from *Essential English 1* to *Essential English 10*; and six advanced levels numbered from *Level 11* to *Level* 16. Each of these levels has a textbook published by Interlingua.

According to its website, the correspondence between Interlingua courses and the levels of *the Common European Framework of Reference* (2002) is as follows:

MCERL	*INTERLINGUA*
<A1	Preliminary
	Introduction
A1	EE1
	EE2
	EE3
	EE4
A2	EE5
	EE6
	EE7
	EE8
	EE9
B1	EE10
	EE11
	EE12
	Advanced 13
	Advanced 14
	Advanced15
	Advanced 16
B2	FCE

(Interlingua, 2013)

The website also mentions that as part of their regular Interlingua courses, at the end of level 16 all students take the TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) exam, justifying the relevance of this decision by referring to the wide acceptance of this certification by thousands of companies worldwide.

2.3. Resources and infrastructure

In terms of teaching materials, the Interlingua website states that the textbooks and support materials (digital material, cards, and posters) for its essential and advanced levels are designed and written by its academic department. Upon completion of the institution's courses, i.e., upon completion of level 16, the table above shows that students are at the beginning of an upper-intermediate level of proficiency. Therefore, for other specialized courses, such as preparation for Cambridge University or TOEFL exams, materials from various publishers available on the market are used (Interlingua, 2013). The school has some forty-eight campuses distributed throughout the Mexico City metropolitan area and in several states of the Republic. Depending on the area, the branches can have from ten to twenty-five classrooms. The layout of all classrooms follows the same pattern: a rectangular table surrounded by chairs in front of a blackboard, where the teacher stands. In addition to classrooms, each branch has a reception area, offices for commercial and administrative coordination, a break room for teachers, bathrooms, and, in most cases, parking. Some are two stories high. They are usually located in busy areas, such as main avenues, but recently they have been opening in shopping centers (Interlingua, 2013).

2.4. Regulations

The regulations for Interlingua students can be consulted online on its website. It consists of seven chapters and thirty-seven articles. It deals with the

facilities, the obligations and prohibited behaviors of students, the requirements for admission to courses, payments, how courses are conducted, evaluations, and accreditations (Interlingua, 2013).

2.5. Analysis techniques for conducting the study

This paper will analyze Interlingua's methodology based on the educational philosophies outlined by Crookes (2011). It will also reflect on the teaching activity of a teacher at this institution in light of the social dimension developed by Littlejohn (2012). Similarly, a dialogical reading of both authors will be carried out in order to provide elements that will enable an Interlingua teacher to develop a critical and social philosophy of their work.

In order to analyze the theoretical and epistemological bases of the Interlingua system, as well as those of the authors Littlejohn (2012) and Crookes (2011) aimed at developing a critical philosophy, we will resort to the concept of curriculum under the three dimensions presented by Casarini (2010): the formal, real, and hidden curricula. Specifically, for the epistemological analysis of the Interlingua method, the formal and real curricula will be considered, while for the comparative analysis of Littlejohn and Crookes in relation to the creation of a critical and social vision, the contributions of the hidden curriculum will be used.

According to Casarini (2010), the formal curriculum refers to the official plan that establishes the institutional learning objectives outlined for students. It is the set of knowledge that is set as goals to be achieved, at least on paper.

The actual curriculum has to do with what really happens in the classroom, that is, the actual teaching practice and the performance shown by students, regardless of whether they adhere to institutional objectives or whether the results are achieved or not. The hidden curriculum involves the paradigms and beliefs that influence teachers, that is, their culture, values, and vision of life and their profession.

To carry out the analysis of the formal curriculum, we will use the books and lesson plans published by Interlingua; for the actual curriculum, we will observe classes; and for the hidden curriculum, we will interview teachers who are currently working at the institute or who have experience working there. In these interviews, the identity of the teachers will be kept confidential, so each of them will be referred to as *Teacher 1, Teacher 2, Teacher 3*, etc.

By analyzing the Interlingua system considering the four philosophical currents of education and comparing the ideas of Crookes and Littlejohn from the perspective of the types of curriculum presented by Casarini, ways will be proposed that contribute to the creation of critical philosophy and social vision in the Interlingua teacher.

CHAPTER 3. THEORETICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL BASES OF THE INTERLINGUA SYSTEM

In this chapter, we will analyze two of the dimensions of the curriculum identified by Casarini (2010), the formal and real curricula, in the Interlingua school system from the perspective of the four main philosophies of education, namely essentialism, perennialism, progressivism, and reconstructivism. Finally, we will detail how McDonaldization has a considerable impact on the materials, methodology, and activity of teachers at this school.

3.1. Elements of essentialism

3.1.1. Formal curriculum

In order to carry out an analysis of this school's system, we will use the Method Kit manual (Johnson, Cox, & Van Der Werff, 2012), the textbooks for the different levels that make up the curriculum, and observations of classes as a basis.

The Method Kit (Johnson, Cox, & Van Der Werff, 2012) is a small compilation of the characteristics and objectives of the methodology, which describes in detail examples of how teachers should apply each of the steps that make up the different types of classes.

The Interlingua methodology strives to fit in perfectly with essentialism. First and foremost, the role of grades is fundamental. At the beginning of each level within the curriculum, on page five of the textbooks, students are given an

explanation of this. At all levels, two types of grades are used: oral and written. Oral grades are a set of continuous assessments that teachers carry out in each class and which ultimately result in a grade that reflects performance throughout the course. The grades 10 (Excellent), 9 (Good), 7 (Minimum), and 5 (Fail) are used. On the written assessment side, there is an exam consisting of thirty-three questions. Each error results in -2 points. A maximum of fifteen errors, or -30 points, is allowed in order to achieve the minimum of 70 and pass. If the student does not achieve a minimum of 7 in the oral grade and 70 in the exam, they fail the course and will have to repeat it.

With regard to the idea of teaching from the utilitarian perspective characteristic of essentialism, the website invites the public to learn English in order to get a job, as stated in the slogan *"Say Yes and get the job of your* dreams" (Interlingua, 2013).

When discussing the requirements for English and integration into the labor market, the Interlingua website (2013) states that at the end of level 16, students will achieve the goal of becoming bilingual by obtaining TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) certification. This exam, developed by Educational Testing Services Inc. (2015), is widely used by thousands of companies around the world to determine the English level of employees. Unlike the TOEFL, which assesses a candidate's suitability for studying at universities abroad, the TOEIC is primarily business-oriented, as it uses its results to provide a kind of metric for the candidate's abilities in the workplace. Interlingua's constant emphasis on TOEIC certification is therefore a sign that essentialism is present in its teaching system.

Both teachers and students can clearly see that the system and its curriculum focus on specific and *useful* content, so to speak. And, in this context, grammar plays a fundamental role. In the Interlingua system, linguistic competence, that is, the ability to use the language correctly and appropriately, to *understand and use* the structures covered in each class, is fundamental, following the idea that "it is impossible to conceive of a person being communicatively competent without being linguistically competent" (Faerch, Haastrup, Phillison, 1984:168).

Another element of the philosophy of essentialism that was found is the instrumentalist approach to developing reading and listening comprehension strategies. In the case of levels 11 to 16 of Interlingua, several of the concepts of Adler and Van Doren (1972) on how to read efficiently are constantly revisited. These authors gained importance after the preponderance that reconstructivism acquired in the United States with John Dewey.

The common thread of protest from both writers was that schools, in their eagerness to be progressive and fight for educational emancipation, had placed too much importance on the development of critical social awareness, neglecting essential factors in the skills of American students, such as the ability to read all types of material effectively. They argued that students had become lazy and did not fully understand what they read. In short, their skills as good readers left much to be desired.

In their book *How to Read a Book* (1972), they highlight this problem and discuss practical strategies for developing reading skills, such as scanning techniques for finding specific information; skimming, to get a general idea of the content of a text; the use of inference to make hypotheses about the meaning of

unknown words based on context and understand what the author means indirectly; practices aimed at increasing reading speed; among others.

These techniques are found in Interlingua books 11 to 16, where the students' level is already B1, according to *the Common Framework*. In these courses, the approach used is a combination of various techniques from communicative task-based teaching.

Notably, the materials abound in authentic and adapted texts that allow students to work with the essentialist techniques mentioned above.

3.1.2. Actual curriculum

The Method Kit (Johnson, Cox, & Van Der Werff, 2012) states that in each class, the teacher must indicate the lesson objectives, which are notions and communicative functions expressed through the target grammatical structure, in harmony with essentialism.

At the beginning of each class, from the *Preliminary* to *Essential English 10* levels, the teacher should conduct a kind of opening ritual in which they ask students questions to direct their attention to the goals.

In a basic level class that was observed, the teacher and students had the following dialogue at the beginning of the class:

Teacher: What is a goal in English?
Students: Goal
Teacher: The goal for this class is to understand and use, repeat "Understand and Use."
Students: Understand and Use
Teacher: Past actions with irregular verbs, repeat
Students: Past actions with irregular verbs
Teacher: for example I went to the movies yesterday, repeat

Students: I went to the movies yesterday
Teacher: Another goal is to learn new vocabulary, repeat "vocabulary"
Students: Vocabulary
Teacher: And remember it is important to do all of this with grammar and fluency, repeat "grammar and fluency"
Students: Grammar and fluency

This is how teachers should always begin their classes, as prescribed in the Method Kit (Johnson, Cox, & Van Der Werff, 2012). The rationale for this ritualistic opening is that students will know the specific goals of what they will learn, which conveys the message that they will study concrete, useful content.

But the emphasis on goals is not only given at the beginning of each session. When a new course begins, similarly, at all levels from *Preliminary* to *16*, students are asked to turn their attention to the beginning of the textbook, where they will find the goals. The teacher will normally read them together with the students.

Such is the emphasis placed on the notion of *goals* that students inevitably relate them to specific topics or grammatical structures, thinking that by mastering them, they will have the ability to perform communicatively, which is a requirement for passing to the next levels.

For example, in an observation made in a basic Essential English 2 class (Johnson, Cox, & Van Der Werff, 2012) during the penultimate class before the final exam, the teacher and student began the dialogue as follows:

Teacher: Okay, Luis, can you tell me two goals of this course?
Student: err, past actions, err, future, object pronouns...

Although the details of the feedback will be explored later, for now it should be noted that the purpose of such a conversation is to provide the student with

feedback on their performance in the course. This dialogue took place outside the classroom, with only the teacher and the student participating, since according to the Interlingua system, feedback should be given to each student separately (Johnson, Cox, & Van Der Werff, 2012). Once the dialogue was over, an oral grade was assigned based on how well the student performed in using the *goals*, as can be seen from the way the conversation was initiated. The notion of goals as clearly delineated objectives and requirements that must be mastered by students is part of the backbone of Interlingua.

One of the theoretical assumptions of second language acquisition that is closely related to essentialism is the behaviorist view. According to this paradigm, human beings develop through what happens in their natural environment and are at the mercy of external stimuli to which they must respond, adapting in order to survive (Crookes, 2011). In the essentialist classroom, the behaviorist philosophy is very present, as it is conceived that the teacher is the provider of knowledge and acts as a role model for students. The teacher's way of speaking, performing, calculating, and reasoning is seen as that which must be imitated in order to achieve success in educational life. The teacher has the answers. All that is needed is to achieve the most perfect imitation possible of the model they provide.

In this approach, second language learning is seen as an activity that results from the conscious efforts of students to constantly repeat, through practice activities or *drills*, the elements of the topics that make up the curriculum content. In the case of English class, these are the grammatical topics called target structures.

In the basic level class observed at Interlingua, this behaviorist tendency was evident in the way drills were handled. The topic, the past simple tense, was presented with an explanation and then handled through repetition exercises. The teacher used visual material consisting of a poster. On the left side, across the length of the poster and in three rows, there are three drawings corresponding to three different grammatical subjects: *they, she*, and *he.* Below these, in columns, are the headings of five simple past tense expressions: *3 years ago, 2 years ago, last year, last month*, and *yesterday.* Below each time expression, verbs appear, as shown in the following image:

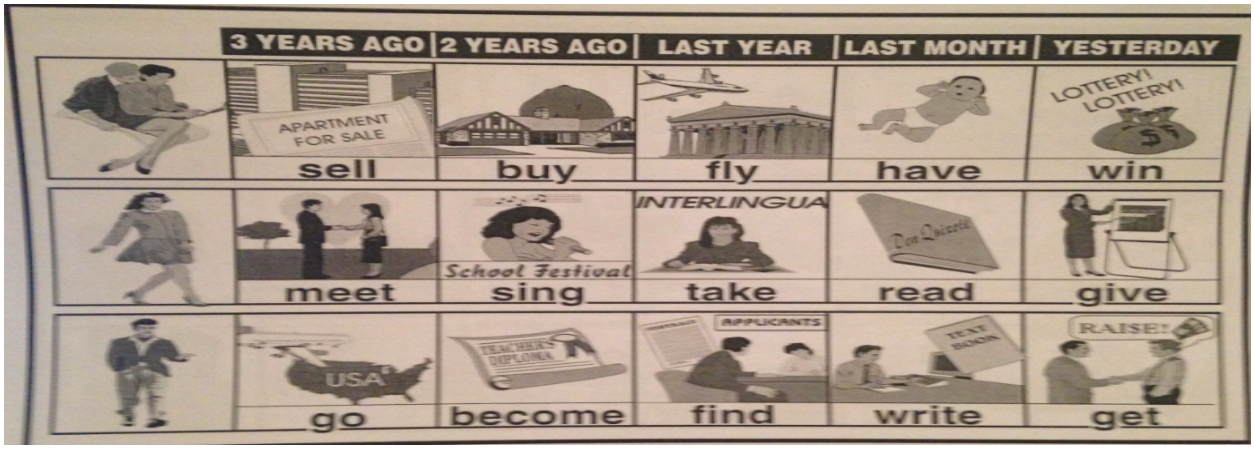

Image of the poster used to do drills with the simple past tense. Level 2 of the Interlingua program.

Figure 1, the teacher said: *They sold their apartment three years ago*. Then all the students repeated the same sentence in its entirety. The teacher proceeded in this manner with three other examples, having the students repeat the sentences in unison. Second, the teacher conducted substitution drills in which he pointed to or used cues (as they are called in language teaching jargon) to

indicate a subject, a verb, and a time expression. For example, the cueing was something like: *she / at the school festival/ 2 years ago*, and the group had to say the complete sentence, conjugating the verb correctly: *she sang at the school festival 2 years ago*. This step was repeated three more times as a group. Thirdly, the teacher proceeded individually, asking each student to respond to the cues to produce the correct and complete sentence.

When a student said the sentence with grammatical or pronunciation errors, the teacher corrected them immediately, mentioning the correct sentence and having the student repeat it in the same way.

Observation of this stage of the class, in which the simple past tense grammatical structure was worked on, shows the relevance of behaviorist ideology in the Interlingua teaching system. Students have to imitate and repeat the sentences correctly, just as the teacher utters them. It is a model in which stimulus and response dynamics prevail. Reinforcement comes in the form of immediate correction, through which the student has to get used to speaking correctly and memorizing the grammatical structure taught in each class through constant repetition. Although these exercises were followed by semi-controlled and free activities, the role of the teacher as a role model remained fundamental.

3.2. Elements of perennialism

3.2.1. Hidden curriculum

As noted above, the perennialist framework seeks to promote the values of Anglo-Saxon culture that can fit within the host country of the English as a foreign language course.

In Interlingua's materials, the perennialist imprint can be seen in the contents of several units of its curriculum. For example, in 2015, in the book published as level 9, unit 7, there is a lesson focused on helping students improve their listening comprehension strategies. This model of teaching such strategies is not exclusive to this level, as they are promoted in other courses as well.

What stands out about this unit is the theme on which the listening comprehension exercise is based. It revolves around the principles of good listening outlined in Stephen Covey's book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (2014).

Its content deals in detail with the factors that inhibit communication while listening to the speaker, such as asking questions, making suggestions, or praising.

According to Covey, when we ask questions, we don't give the other person the opportunity to express themselves openly and we end up dominating the conversation, taking away their chance to be heard.

When we start giving them recommendations, we are depriving them of the opportunity to find the answer to their problems themselves. By praising them, far from benefiting them, we give them the impression that we do not want to listen to them and that we are only agreeing with them.

So, according to Covey, what should be done to achieve effective listening? One tool is the use of expressions called *door openers*, which consist of phrases

such as *"Would you like to talk about it?"* or *"How about you tell me about it?*", as well as non-committal responses.

For example, as mentioned in the Level 9 unit of Interlingua, if someone approaches us saying, "*I'm not good at languages*," we should give responses such as*, "Hmm, it sounds like you're very concerned about your progress in English*." Covey mentions that these strategies, rather than taking away the speaker's control and ability to express themselves, will give them the confidence to open up to us. At this point of openness in communication, we should always pay attention to what is being said without interrupting the speaker.

Such effective listening techniques are examples of proposals from American marketing experts that reflect the ideological pragmatism characteristic of free market advocates such as Stephen Covey. Reading his book shows us that this author never questions the roots of today's social crises, such as income inequality, the voracity of corporate domination, political corruption in collusion with the business sector, the lack of regulatory control over volatile markets, etc.

Covey (2014) mentions that all crises are attributable to what each individual does, in the sense that if they do not cultivate the habits to fit into the free market framework, they will fail. This author believes that as each person develops a proactive attitude to influence their immediate environment, the situation will improve. Conceiving of real change that comes after modifying the status quo is just a waste of time, like complaining superfluously about what others do. You have to think about yourself and get to work hard on your own. And one of the best ways to do that is by practicing the art of effective listening.

This philosophy is evident in Stephen Covey's (2014) global bestseller, which can be found in the content of the unit in question in Interlingua Level 9, where the weaknesses of the ultra-pragmatism of modern American marketing authors are not questioned at all.

In fact, at the end of the unit, students are asked to do an activity in pairs in which they must listen carefully for a few minutes to what one of their classmates says and strive to avoid communication barriers, putting into practice the principles outlined by Covey. Afterwards, there is a space for feedback on how effectively the writer's advice was applied.

Another course in the Interlingua curriculum where the influence of the perennialist paradigm can be seen is in level 10, unit 4, where the same dynamic as in the example described above is used to teach listening comprehension strategies. In this case, students listen to a presenter talking about parenting.

However, the recommendations provided actually come from the book *Laying Down the Law: The 25 Laws of Parenting to Keep Your Kids on Track, Out of Trouble, and (Pretty Much) Under Control* written by American sociologist Ruth Peters (2003), who specialized as a counselor in the upbringing of children and adolescents.

The essential message of this unit cites Peters' conclusions about parent-child relationships, in the sense that they are not equal, but rather that clear boundaries should be established to consolidate parental authority, discarding the flexible views that advocated a friendship-like relationship.

Peters proposes the concept of benevolent dictatorship, a family arrangement in which parents do not act as friends to their children but as authority figures who set rules aimed at promoting their well-being.

In fact, Peters was very famous in the United States as a family counselor and even appeared with Oprah Winfrey, contributed segments to NBC's *Today* show, wrote a weekly column for parents in MSNBC's *Today* digital magazine, and appeared on ABC's *Good Morning America.* She also worked as a consultant for companies such as America Online, Target Stores, Sylvan Learning Systems, Cingular Wireless, Coldwell Banker, and Texas Instruments. As can be seen, Peters was considered an expert counselor in the family and corporate areas in the United States. And in this unit of Interlingua Level 10, she is referred to on the subject of parenting to include her in a series of activities aimed at improving listening comprehension.

These two examples, in which the Interlingua program uses the ideas of Stephen Covey and Ruth Peters, writers who represent core values of American culture, as a source of information, show the influence that perennialism has on its methodology. And they are not the only ones.

Students may not be aware that their books contain references to American ideals, nor is it the case that the members of the Interlingua academic department have the primary intention of promoting them in their high school

classrooms, but the fact is that there are constant allusions to them, which is evidence of the perennialist philosophy in their system.

3.3. Elements of progressivism

3.3.2. Formal curriculum

Another important feature of this school's system for focusing students' attention on their own learning is the constant presence of self-assessment activities. At levels ranging from *Introduction* to *Essential English X*, at the end of each unit, students are asked to work on a section called *Check your progress*, in which they have to reflect on the topics they feel they can understand and use. They also have to answer questions such as *What can you do to use these structures better? In your own words, when do we use passive voice? What are some vocabulary words that I still don't use very well and why? How do I feel about the progress I have made during this course? etc.*

This approach, in which they have to analyze their own strengths and weaknesses, helps them develop strategies for learning to learn and not always depend on what the teacher can give them, which is in line with the progressive paradigm.

However, from the point of view of creating a curriculum that fully takes into account what the individual thinks and needs, as is the case with the more open approaches of the communicative tasks paradigm, the Interlingua methodology falls short, since the planning of classes and programs, as will be discussed later when talking about the impact of McDonaldization, tends to be too rigid and uniform.

There is no room for the teacher to deviate from the program content in order to address the particular needs of an individual student, unless the student pays for an extra help session, which is a class just for him or her or for students who need reinforcement on certain topics they are struggling with.

Thus, within this school system, the progress of topics is subject to pre-established dates, with student learning being conceived as a uniform phenomenon. For example, if the curriculum specifies that topics C and D must be taught in sessions three and four, then in sessions six or seven, if there are students who have not yet fully grasped these topics, the teacher can no longer stop to do activities to reinforce them, even if the students request it, since there would not be enough time to cover the following topics that correspond to the current sessions.

In this situation, it is mistakenly assumed that all students taking the classes will achieve the same level of content advancement, or at least one that is in a similar range, which in reality does not occur, since each student has different backgrounds and learning styles.

The above situation is far from fully fitting in with the progressive paradigm, as the presence of unilateralism in the development of the curriculum is evident. It is the student who has to adapt to the progress of the Interlingua program and not the institute to the student, at least in the classes within the branches, which has resulted in groups with members whose linguistic competence differs significantly. Thus, even at advanced levels, such as 14 or 15, there are those who are still unclear about topics covered in courses 5 or 6.

3.3.1. Actual curriculum

One of the characteristics of progressivism is the creation of a curriculum with the aim of developing the potential of individuals. It opposes traditionalist conceptions of education in which the teacher is seen as the provider and source of knowledge, in a context where pupils only have to passively receive information, memorize it, understand it, and apply it.

In this regard, the Interlingua system includes elements that encourage the empowerment of each student, mainly within the postulates of applied linguistics aimed at developing communication skills.

In the classes observed, the importance of feedback was evident, with the teacher speaking to each student individually, pointing out their strengths and weaknesses during their oral participation in the course. The primary objective is to personalize help and attention.

According to the guidelines of the Method Kit (Johnson, Cox & Van Der Werff, 2012), there are two essential moments in which feedback should be given. The first is halfway through the course, when the teacher should let the student know how they have performed so far and offer suggestions for improvement.

The second occurs at the end, prior to the exam, when the teacher provides comments on the student's participation throughout the course, as well as recommendations. It is at this same time that the student is assigned their grade for oral expression. If they have to repeat the course, they are also informed of this.

The exceptional circumstance in which the teacher is required to provide feedback outside of the two situations mentioned above (midway and at the end) occurs when a student's performance has not been sufficient to obtain a minimum passing grade of 7 in a particular session. According to the Method Kit (Johnson, Cox & Van Der Werff, 2012), a student is considered to have scored 5 when they constantly confuse and forget the correct structures when speaking, lacking the minimum fluency to express themselves using the topics covered.

In such a case, if the teacher notices that a student exhibits these characteristics, at the end of the class they should inform them that they received a grade of 5 and provide specific suggestions on what they need to do to improve. According to what was observed in an Interlingua level 2 class at the end of the course, the dialogue was as follows:

Teacher: Okay, Luis, can you tell me two goals of the course?
Student: Err, past actions, future, frequency adverbs...
Teacher: Alright, well, in general during this course you used and understood the goals, but sometimes you forgot to use the correct form of the verbs when using negative forms in the past. For example, you said: I didn't took a shower yesterday, but you should say I didn't take a shower yesterday. At other times, you forgot to use the right verb form when you expressed habits with frequency adverbs. For example, you said: my mom always go to the movies, but you should say my mom always goes to the movies. However, I noticed you were able to use the structures with enough fluency. Therefore, your oral grade is 9. I recommend you write more examples with the structures we studied in class and you do all your homework assignments. Make sure to review the answers of the homework in your answer key on the back of your book. Are there any questions?
Student: No, I agree, but it is very difficult for me to understand the CD.
Professor: Well, in that case, I recommend you listen to the CD and then look at the script from your book. After that, you can close your book and listen to the CD again without looking at the script. Then, you can repeat the same steps again, until you have a clearer understanding of what the speakers say on the tracks. Okay?
Student: Okay, thanks teacher.

In this example, you can see Interlingua's interest in providing a personalized approach to help each student, making them aware of their strengths and weaknesses and the things they need to do to develop a better level of English.

3.4. Elements of reconstructivism

3.4.1. Formal curriculum

In the Interlingua system, elements from reconstructivist pedagogy can be identified. However, these are primarily limited to critical awareness of social problems. There is absolutely no attempt on the part of this school to incite students to activism or protest actions, as pointed out in Crookes (2013).

The elements of this philosophy are mainly evident from levels 8 and 9 onwards, precisely when students are at the end of level A2 and at the beginning of B1, which is perfectly natural, since it is upon entering level B1 that, according to the *Common Framework*, learners begin to have the possibility of acting more independently in their communication, being able to express reasoned opinions autonomously about their immediate and social environment.

In levels 11 to 16 of the Interlingua program, in fact, the reconstructivist perspective is much more abundant. One of the main reasons for this is that, as will be discussed later, the institute's methodology undergoes a considerable change, moving from a structural-communicative system (Presentation-Practice-Production) to one based on task completion, which attempts to integrate the four skills. In this latter didactic-methodological context,

there are ample opportunities for the exchange and use of various types of discourse registers that allow students to engage in debates on critical-social issues.

Delving deeper into the materials, it was observed that Unit VI of *Essential English 8* (Johnson, Cox, & Van Der Werff, 2012) discusses the problems faced by residents of large cities, such as environmental pollution, overpopulation, and traffic, among others. The main objective of this unit is to work with strategies that help students prepare a presentation, namely: choosing a specific topic, brainstorming, drafting, structuring the presentation into an introduction, body, and conclusion, among others. What is interesting is the list of topics on which they must prepare a presentation for the next class. Some examples are:

- *Is technology having a negative effect on society?*
- *Are genetically modified foods a threat to society?*
- *Are there currently inequalities between men and women?*
- *Can computers be detrimental to study habits?*

These are undoubtedly topics that can be used as a starting point for debates on social issues. But the point to note is that after the students finish their respective presentations, the teacher, according to the lesson plan, should lead a group discussion to encourage a free exchange of ideas. In the Level 8 class that was observed, the teacher adopted a neutral stance, that of *the Devil's advocate*, as they call it in their academic jargon. He did not censor any of the opinions that the students presented on social issues. At the end of the group discussions, he only corrected some aspects of the correct use of language structure during such discussions.

In the *Essential English 9* course (Johnson, Cox, & Van Der Werff, 2012), Unit VII addresses current social issues such as poverty, crime, unemployment, kidnapping, uncertainty about the future, the death penalty, etc. more directly. The objective of this unit is essentially the same as that of level 8. In the class observed, however, the dynamics were different. The presentation consisted more of the results of conducting a questionnaire on current social problems and applying it to at least three people to report the results and express a personal opinion on them. At the end of the presentations, debates were held among the students, in which there was a fruitful exchange of views. As with level 8, the teacher did not censor or favor any opinion over another, but merely guided the students in the correct use of language.

Similarly, in levels 11 to 16, there are many topics of social criticism where students have ample space to exchange their ideas, which is evidence of the influence that the reconstructivist paradigm of the philosophy of education has on the Interlingua system.

3.5. The mark of McDonaldization on Interlingua teaching materials, methodology, and teacher activity

Littlejohn (2012), referring to the concept of McDonaldization, states that English teaching materials influenced by this concept can be identified by their uniform presentation.

> ...the supply of teaching materials, at least, suggests that we are moving ever more towards the provision of packages with a plethora of components aiming to structure classroom time in considerable detail... standardized in structure, so that teachers and students are taken through a fixed plan of action... (Littlejohn, 2012:11-12)

Thus, these are books divided into units structured in a similar, repetitive way, as if they were manufactured and mass-produced goods, with defined times for class performance. Such is the case with Interlingua materials. From the *Preliminary* to *Essential English 10* levels, there is a uniform structure consisting of three review units (at the beginning, middle, and end) and five to six content units.

In the *Advanced* levels, from 11 to 16, the same trend is evident in the way the units are presented, which have a communicative task-based approach. It should be noted, however, that this quality can be found in the vast majority of textbooks used in language teaching institutions, as well as in educational materials for other subjects.

3.5.1. Formal curriculum

An analysis of Interlingua's lesson plans shows that classes in the Interlingua system follow the Presentation, Practice, and Production (PPP) teaching model. Lessons can be either *Introductory* or *Follow-up*. In the former, a new topic is presented, and in the latter, it is supplemented with additional topics, as well as activities to reinforce the core content of the unit in question. When teaching an *Introductory Unit* class, in line with the PPP model, it begins with a Warm up, in which the teacher introduces the characters in a story, some new vocabulary, and the target linguistic structure. This is followed by the teacher reading aloud and/or a recording of the reading, which the students have to listen to. In this section, they are exposed to a conversation where they can see how the participants in the communicative exchange put into practice the new linguistic elements that will be taught.

Next, the teacher asks them some comprehension questions, moving on to the section called *Concept and Structure,* which is where the new grammatical concept is presented by, once again, asking the students about the story and extracting the elements that contain the linguistic structure from their answers. Through additional questions, the teacher elicits the characteristics of the structure, rather than simply explaining them directly.

After a period of about thirty seconds in which students analyze and reflect on the form of the grammatical structure, mechanical *drills* are carried out using visual material, with the aim of memorizing it. Various types of drills are used, such as repetition, substitution, transformation, guided questions, combination, etc. This is followed by semi-controlled activities, so that students can develop fluency in the structure, expressing complete sentences with some discursive elements.

The final part of the class, which usually lasts 15 to 30 minutes, or sometimes longer, consists of activities where students work on communicative tasks, which can include role-playing, problem solving, debates, presentations, describing experiences, etc.

In *follow-up* classes, the same pattern of activities is usually followed, except that there are no warm-ups or story presentations as in the introductory lessons. If there are additional structural elements, such as interrogative or negative forms, they will be presented and controlled, semi-controlled, and communicative activities will be carried out, as appropriate.

A revealing aspect of Interlingua's lesson plans is that even in the drills and elicitation that take place during the presentation of new grammatical concepts,

the script of what the teacher can say is indicated, in harmony with the Macdonaldizing nature of the system.

The class structure described above is part of the *Introduction* to *Essential English 10* levels, which have a structural approach focused on communicative notions and functions. On the other hand, in the advanced courses (11 to 16), the teaching system shifts to a profile focused primarily on the performance of communicative tasks and the integration of the four skills. However, even at these levels, the mark of Macdonaldization remains, as the same characteristics of the *Lesson Plans* are present, where teachers are provided with the activities to be performed and the discourse script for conducting the lessons.

The concept of time limits for each course in the curriculum is also fundamental. At Interlingua branches, the average duration per level is seventeen 80-minute sessions, for a total of approximately 22.5 hours. The thematic distribution of content is pre-established in blocks, or classes. There are specific topics that must be covered in each block. It is common for each group to have two teachers teaching the same course. For example, one teacher is assigned to Monday, Wednesday, and Friday classes, while another teaches Tuesday and Thursday sessions.

For this reason, it is extremely important that the specific content assigned for each lesson be covered, otherwise there would be a delay and the topics in the program for that level would not be completed within the allotted time.

To delve deeper into the methodology, Teacher 1, who completed the training before being assigned to teach classes, was interviewed. This is the course called *Method*, which lasts approximately 140 hours, where teacher candidates

are prepared to use the school's system by teaching the *Preliminary, Introduction, Essential English 1, 2, 3, and 4* levels.

According to the interviewee, this course makes it clear that, as an integral part of the Interlingua methodology, the activities that the teacher has to perform have already been determined and are set out in the so-called *Lesson Plans*. There is a lesson plan for each of the levels that make up the institute's curriculum.

Upon analyzing the *Lesson Plans*, it can be seen that they consist of scripts prepared by the academic department, which even include what the teacher says to their students, as if it were a movie script. This echoes Littlejohn's comments on Macdonalized lesson plans.

> ...Detailed teachers' guides complete the picture, providing, as they frequently do, a blow-by-blow guide to what to say and do in the classroom... (Littlejohn, 2012:12)

In fact, according to Teacher 1, during the Method course, the trainer evaluates favorably those who follow this script to the letter. The prerequisite for passing is that participants demonstrate that they are able to adhere to the methodology and apply the steps of the teaching system, using the materials appropriately.

Throughout this training, the instructor has the opportunity to constantly hear participants speak in English, as the entire program is conducted in this language. Thus, their communicative competence in linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic terms can be assessed. If any of them are found to be below the minimum required level (which must be between B2+ and C1), the instructor

may determine that the participant does not meet the requirements to continue with the course and the recruitment process.

A crucial aspect in determining whether candidates taking the Method course are suitable for employment is their participation in two sample classes in front of real groups. These classes are called *Team Teaching*. In these classes, an experienced observer from the institute must evaluate the candidate's eligibility, paying attention to their ability to properly apply the steps of the method in interaction with two different groups of enrolled students. The person responsible for these observations rates the candidate's quality, handling of the methodology, and effect on the students.

In this evaluation, it is noted whether each of the requirements has been met or, if not, notes are taken regarding the points that were not satisfied. At the end of each trial class, the observer provides the candidate with feedback on their performance.

Once the candidate passes the Method course, they begin working at the school to which they have been assigned. For approximately seven weeks, they are assigned to daily counseling sessions with a previously selected experienced teacher. The purpose of these sessions, which last approximately an hour and a half, is to consolidate what has been learned in the Method course. A different aspect of the mentoring sessions is that the mentor tries to train the new teacher to personalize the way they use the *Lesson Plans*. While the Method course aimed to have the candidate adhere strictly to these plans, even if it meant acting as a script reader, the goal of the mentoring sessions is

for them to follow the plans more naturally, contributing their own ideas and expressions.

It is also common for new teachers to be observed more frequently, as they are considered to lack sufficient experience to teach lessons efficiently and therefore require much more guidance to improve. However, as part of this school's quality control, all teachers are in fact observed on a regular basis to ensure that classes are being taught in accordance with the Interlingua methodology.

3.5.2. Actual curriculum

An example of the importance of monitoring new teachers is the fact that, when observing a class taught by Teacher 1, it was clear even at that stage that he was still practically reading from *the Lesson Plan* and found it very difficult to personalize the way he taught the lesson. Through observations by experienced teachers, the aim is for the new teacher to avoid this practice and be able to teach classes with greater spontaneity. In fact, the expression *"lesson plan reader"* is a common slang term used by Interlingua teachers, particularly those with more experience, to disparage the practice of simply standing in front of the group and following the manual in a way that reveals a lack of preparation and naturalness.

Delving deeper into the quality control observations carried out by Interlingua, according to the interview with Teacher 5, these consist of an experienced teacher, already appointed as an official observer by the academic department, entering one of the classes for a period of about fifteen minutes while the teacher being observed is teaching. Once in the lesson, they will take

a seat in a neutral place so as not to interrupt it, which is usually in a corner of the classroom, either at the front or at the back.

Throughout the observation, you must complete the corresponding information on the evaluation sheet, which is divided into four sections. In the first section, you must write a summary of the events that took place during the observation, from start to finish. In the second section, called *Steps*, you must note whether the teacher is following the steps of the method correctly. If there is a deviation, it must be noted. Interestingly, one factor that can be considered a deviation and penalized is if the teacher is not complying with the time allocated for each activity. If they are running late, this can be indicated as a disqualification in the *Steps* section. The third section concerns the *teacher's* personality, in which the teacher's proactivity and willingness to help their students not only follow the steps of the learning system but also master the goals of the class are evaluated. In this regard, qualities such as patience, personalization, versatility, and familiarity of the teacher when addressing each student by name and so on are evaluated favorably. In the fourth section, which refers to *student performance*, the observer will pay attention to the students' fluency and manner of speaking. If they demonstrate adequate and fluent use of structures, integrating previous topics, they will be given a good grade in this area.

The results of these quality control observations are VG (Very Good), G (Good), M (Minimum), and NA (Not Acceptable). The criteria for assigning these grades are as follows: If the teacher meets the requirements in the *Steps*, *Teacher's personality*, and *Students' performance* sections, they will be assigned a G (Good) grade. If they only meet two of these criteria, they will receive an M (Minimum). If they meet only one or none of them, they will receive NA (Not Acceptable). To receive VG (Very Good), the teacher, in addition to

meeting the three basic criteria, must demonstrate that they go above and beyond, that is, that they can draw on their own versatility as a teacher to help students use the class content appropriately.

According to the testimony in the interview with Teacher 5, in the Interlingua system it is important to be aware of two concepts: variation and deviation. A variation is when, for example, the teacher chooses to use a different activity, give instructions in different words, or personalize the examples in the exercises without having to work with those in the lesson plan, all while taking care not to deviate from *the lesson plan*.

A deviation, on the other hand, is when steps in the method are omitted or time limits are not met. A quality control observation that detects deviations results in a penalty; however, if a variation is found to have been made for the purpose of personalizing and/or adapting the class, benefiting the students' learning and performance, the teacher receives a VG in their rating.

Once teachers gain more experience and demonstrate that they are able to follow the method to the letter, obtaining good ratings in the observations, they are trained to teach the following levels: *Essential English 5, Essential English 6, Essential English 7,* etc. At Interlingua, teachers cannot teach any level for which they have not received training; otherwise, the quality of the classes would be affected.

After reviewing the materials, methodology, and teacher activity, it is clear that the Interlingua system fits perfectly with the characteristics of McDonaldization: calculability, predictability, efficiency, control, uniformity, mass production, etc. (Ritzer, 2015).

The factors of calculability and predictability are seen in the design of its method, in which it *is calculated and predicted* that students will achieve the course *goals* by mastering the target structures of each level, which is divided into blocks where the assigned topics are taught to the letter. For example, if a student has taken and passed *Essential English 2*, they are expected to be able to understand and fluently use communicative notions such as expressing actions in the simple past, the frequency of routines in the present, future plans with the periphrasis *going to*, tastes and preferences with object pronouns, and so on. It can be formulated as follows:

TAM + SFM = SLE

SLE = SME

Where

TAM = Teacher applies the method

ESM = Student follows the method

SLE = Student learns English

SME = Student masters English

The factors of efficiency and control are evident from the recruitment process itself. A new teacher will only be hired if they can demonstrate the ability to apply the steps of the method optimally and efficiently. But it doesn't end there. Once hired, whether they are a novice or experienced teacher, observations will

be carried out to ensure that they are working consistently with the methodology in order to continue to ensure the quality of the service.

Uniformity and mass production are evident in the way classes and lesson plans are structured, which in practice function as operating manuals prescribing how teaching should be delivered, even providing a script of what teachers can say, as if they were in a factory where the manufactured product were English classes and the workers were teachers, who do not need to have much specialization in language teaching or linguistic theories, but only possess an adequate level of language proficiency and the ability to learn to implement the steps in the manual. Each pupil is not only seen as a student, but rather as a customer who expects to receive a standardized service for which they are paying, in line with the principles of the McDonaldized school that operates under the postulates of free market needs, in which standardized results are sought at all costs and at low cost to satisfy the needs of buyers. As Littlejohn points out:

> But even the word 'student' becomes questionable in this mindset. 'Patients', 'passengers', 'students', 'pupils', 'teachers', 'doctors' – terms such as these reflect an earlier era, as a new vocabulary of 'consumer', 'client', and 'provider' is introduced to reflect the market roles of those involved. (Littlejohn, 2012)

The new roles adopted by both the teacher (service provider) and the student (client) have been the result of forces that transcend the spectrum of what happens inside the classroom. As will be seen below, we are faced with factors of neoliberalism that act as imperatives for what English language teaching should be.

CHAPTER 4. PROPOSAL FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CRITICAL-SOCIAL PARADIGM IN THE INTERLANGUAGE TEACHER

In this chapter, we will first analyze the main ideas of the authors Littlejohn and Crookes separately. Next, a comparison and contrast between the two will be made in order to find similarities and differences. Subsequently, the elements of this analysis between the aforementioned authors will be highlighted in light of the hidden curriculum in Interlingua, which allows its teachers to have more elements to develop a critical and social philosophy of their activity. Finally, the individual responsibility of each teacher to continue developing their own philosophy on an ongoing basis will be emphasized.

4.1. Littlejohn

In this section, we will begin to analyze Littlejohn's proposal by focusing on and commenting on the vision he wrote about in his article entitled *The Social Location of Language Teaching: From Zeitgeist to Imperative* (Littlejohn, 2012).

Littlejohn offers a rich and challenging invitation to broaden the spectrum of the discipline of language teaching to include perspectives that incorporate the role of social theory. To further his analysis, he provides a brief summary of how this field has evolved from the 1950s to the present day, taking into account the historical context. The central argument of the article is to reveal how, in recent years, there has been a shift from a kind of zeitgeist, or cultural influence, around disciplines such as applied linguistics, second language acquisition, psycholinguistics, among others, to a trend that is imperative and external to these fields. On this last point, it delves into concepts such as McDonaldization and neoliberalism in terms of the almost absolute influence they have been exerting on language teaching today.

He then goes on to refer to the Marxist postulate of superstructure, which establishes that the ideas and beliefs of individuals are closely related to material conditions. Although he acknowledges that this view has been classified as mechanistic, in that it conceives of human beings merely as victims of external forces against which they cannot exert any resistance, he then alludes to neo-Marxist attempts to point out that ideology, understood as the set of beliefs held about the nature of things, is what the ruling elites have imposed to legitimize their hegemony, instilling in individuals a worldview through the institutional framework of schools, churches, legal systems, the media, political parties, etc.

Although he clarifies that he does not intend to delve into the debate on the relationship between ideology and material and social conditions, he does emphasize that language teaching, as a purely cultural activity created by humans, is not exempt from the imprint of the prevailing ideology, whose influence is felt in everything related to teaching, from methodology to the materials themselves. The focal point he wants to reach is precisely the transition from the zeitgeist, or the cultural spirit of the historical moment, to forces that in fact act imperatively, dictating the ways in which classes are taught.

To reach this conclusion, he presents a summary of social developments since World War II to demonstrate that the work of teachers in the classroom has always been influenced by external factors beyond the educational phenomenon.

Littlejohn's (2012) historical analysis, while acknowledging its limitations as a Western perspective, focuses on the development of events that took place from the 1950s onwards. Below is a paraphrase of this analysis.

The Allies, particularly the United States and England, had emerged victorious and faced the enormous task of rebuilding the world economy through government measures implemented by the Marshall Plan. On the other hand, the Soviet Union was advancing rapidly in its technology and arms race. The launch of its first satellite into space, Sputnik, forced the United States to recognize the need to catch up in terms of progress, and part of what they had to do to achieve this was to study the technologies of rival countries. As such, learning foreign languages (Russian, Chinese, German, Spanish, etc.) became a duty for the US military.

In keeping with the rationalist spirit and behavioral paradigm that prevailed in the 1950s, learning was conceived from a military and disciplined perspective in which the acquisition of habits and the performance of repetition exercises to consolidate knowledge and mastery of the new language were the main trends. It was the era of drills and the audiolingual method, which was on par with the direct method used by Berlitz.

The following decades (the 1960s and 1970s) saw a rebellion against the generation that had participated in World War II. Young people no longer believed in moral values or scientific rationality.

Numerous protests broke out in the streets and universities, rejecting the rigidity of society and advocating the abandonment of positivist ideas and the

values of a generation that had participated in the greatest slaughter in human history.

In English language teaching, this shift in sociocultural values manifested itself in a disregard for audiolingualism and the direct method. In the search for a freer vision, devoid of the dogmatism of the mainstream of the time, methodologies such as Caleb Gategno's silent way appeared, in which students were not forced to start speaking the second language without first ensuring that they understood the suprasegmental and structural spectrum of the linguistic system through visual aids such as *color charts* and bars. Lozanov's Suggestopedia also made an appearance, a methodology focused on eliminating all emotional obstacles for students and on individual empowerment, alongside English language learning. Likewise, self-directed teaching methods emerged, as did self-access groups focused on autonomous learning, leading to the preponderance of Stephen Krashen's "natural" approach, which reflected a rejection of institutionalized systems in favor of freer and more unlimited trends, in line with the hippie movement.

Along with the emphasis on individualism, recognition of the needs of others gained importance. Movements such as feminism and multiculturalism, which promoted the democratic inclusion of minorities and different ethnic groups displaced by the capitalist economy, reached their peak. Thus, approaches such as English for specific purposes came to prominence, where teachers developed the curriculum considering the needs of their students, personalizing programs and materials. In addition, the empowerment of students through learning strategies was highlighted. There was a shift from prescriptive teaching (focused on grammatical accuracy) to one in which language is seen more as a phenomenon of interaction than as a structured system, resulting in the

widespread adoption of the communicative approach and the student-negotiated curriculum (Breen, 1984; Breen and Candlin, 1980; in Littlejohn, 2012).

The mainstream of applied linguistics in English language teaching has since maintained the influence of this approach, evolving with the contribution of teaching through the curriculum, where foreign languages have been included as a tool for learning specific content in other subjects (mathematics, history, psychology, etc.); with the contribution of task-based teaching, which works to empower students to achieve communication projects specifically related to their immediate needs and the real world; and with the role of neurolinguistic programming, which explores each individual's learning styles and creates curriculum proposals to enhance their progress in an integrated manner.

Littlejohn (2012) points out that in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and even the early 1990s, the zeitgeist, or spirit of the times behind the evolution of language teaching, had creative, experimental, and innovative overtones. On the other hand, from the second half of the 1990s onwards, the situation changed radically towards extreme uniformity in approaches, which, in his view, has jeopardized the future prospects of language teaching.

At this juncture, two phenomena have played a crucial role: McDonaldization and neoliberalism. As indicated in the conceptual framework of this work, McDonaldization refers to George Ritzer's theory (2015), in which the author criticizes not the McDonald's corporation itself but the adoption by institutions in all fields of the characteristics of its model. Littlejohn (2012) wonders whether we are facing a 'caged society' in terms of English language teaching and admits that to verify this assertion would require a thorough investigation of contemporary practices in language teaching, which goes beyond the scope of

his article; However, he mentions that a starting point is to observe the main characteristics of the materials published by the major publishers.

He then goes on to say that analysis of such materials reveals a persistent tendency to break down content into standardized, uniform units with predetermined durations, so that teachers have to adhere to a fixed plan of action.

This last point refers to the mark of McDonaldization that was presented in the previous section regarding the Interlingua system. Concluding his commentary on this phenomenon, Littlejohn warns:

> If my analysis of the nature of much published teaching material is correct, then it does not require a major step to make the link between Ritzer's analysis and what is happening in contemporary language teaching. Much current material, I would argue, appears to offer scripts for both teachers and learners, packed experiences, predictability, and standardization, in much the same way as the famous hamburger chain does. The analysis could also be extended: do we now have 'McTeacher Training' in the form of globally standardized teaching qualifications, in which trainees are 'trained' to evoke standardized routines of 'McLesson' through the use of 'McCoursebook'? (Littlejohn, 2012: 11)

The next concept to explain the transition from the zeitgeist to external imperatives on English language teaching is economic neoliberalism. Littlejohn again takes his readers back to the historical context and traces its origins to Adam Smith (in Littlejohn, 2012), who saw that the ideal way to increase the wealth of nations was to grant freedom to the factors of the economy to operate without restriction, a position that was consolidated after the French Revolution and the Independence of the Thirteen Colonies of North America, where the struggle was to reduce as much as possible the interference of state power, represented at that time by the French and English Crowns, which ruled almost absolutely over the future of the forces of production.

Following the growth of the various capitalist empires in the 19th century, which led to the arms race from 1870 to 1914, the two greatest conflagrations in history ensued. The economy of much of the Western world after World War II was devastated. Hence, state power, following Keynesian principles, had to come to the rescue with measures such as the Marshall Plan to restore the government's guiding role, regulating the supply of factors of production, stimulating the purchasing power of the population, and directing public spending toward infrastructure projects. This was the era of the so-called welfare state, which governed the economy until the 1970s and 1980s, after which the global inflationary crisis and the fall in oil prices led to the consolidation of a new liberalism as a remedy for the problems attributed to this protectionist capitalism.

Milton Friedman's monetarism, which advocates for total control of money by central banks, and Thatcher-Reagan neoliberalism, in favor of the government's mission to only guarantee the free market, were adopted in almost every corner of the Western Hemisphere, positioning neoliberal philosophy as the hegemonic discourse of all institutions (Block, Gray, and Holborow, 2012), including educational ones. In this historical and social context, which Littlejohn (2012) points out we still find ourselves in, the planning of educational aspects, previously addressed from a holistic and comprehensive perspective, has been fragmented into atomic parts, each representing a monetary value, so that the more sections there are, the greater the added value, that is, the profit margin for teaching services.

This has led to an expansion of agencies responsible for rating the quality of universities according to certain quantitative criteria, not necessarily related to educational performance. And what does all this have to do with language

teaching, asks Littlejohn (2012)? A lot, because although second language teaching has always been a large industry, in recent years we have witnessed an escalation of certifications and courses covering fields never seen before: legal, business, medical, academic English, English for young people, university students, adults, with and without computers, in schools or language institutes, etc., creating a million-dollar business for Cambridge, Oxford, and the major publishers.

However, the crux of Littlejohn's argument is his accusation against the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) of being the main global agent for the consolidation of neoliberal principles in language teaching. The fact that this institution has made precise divisions of proficiency levels (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2) and detailed the performance characteristics of each has contributed to the typical atomization of the market economy required for the monetary expansion of English and other language teaching services.

Another of his accusations is that the CEFR does not go into detail on methodologies but presents a unilateral and Westernized vision, defining in advance what the teacher and the school should do, which has made this framework a benchmark for all companies engaged in language teaching, concerning the services offered and the measurement of expected results in students, evoking factors such as calculability, predictability, and efficiency, among others, typical of the McDonaldized institutions of neoliberalism.

Littlejohn succinctly points out the role of the CEFR in terms of the counterproductive results it has caused:

> And, while the CEF document itself makes no statements about methodology, it is clear that narrowly specified targets are likely to lead to narrowly specified teaching,

> and that narrowly specified teaching is likely to produce a limited range of methodological options—and a tendency towards McDonaldized routines. It is, indeed, the language teaching industry's best ever instrument to achieve the globalization of one particular prescription of what language, language teaching, and language learning mean, and its best ever instrument to achieve the fulfillment of the neoliberalist goal. (Littlejohn, 2012:13)

So, as this quote suggests, one of Littlejohn's main concerns is that the 'narrowness' of the objectives imposed by the CEFR has resulted in the consolidation of an equally 'narrow' form of teaching, limiting the range of methodological options and seriously undermining the teacher's inventiveness and creativity.

Littlejohn's contribution is clearly extremely useful, as it places language teaching within the conglomerate of political, economic, social, and historical factors that have permeated it in recent years, all of which provides a valuable source of information for teachers to see themselves and their activity from a broad perspective, in order to have theoretical tools to question the mainstream of linguistics applied to language teaching and, in the particular case of this work, as a teacher at Interlingua, to go beyond the methodology that this institute requires them to follow.

4.2 Crookes

As indicated in the introduction to this work, one of Graham Crookes' primary sources of analysis is based on his article entitled *Language Teacher's Philosophies of Teaching: Bases for Development and Possible Lines of Investigation* (Crookes, 2011), in which he proposes that teachers construct a critical philosophy of their work as teachers. In this section of the work, his essential points will be discussed.

According to Crookes, research on the beliefs, attitudes, values, visions, and philosophy of language teachers continues to play a minor role in the academic literature on language teaching, as applied linguistics has focused on language studies, learning, and teaching.

It was not until the 1980s, with work on teacher education, teaching practice, and studies of teachers' beliefs and attitudes, that research began to focus on this area (Richards and Nunan, 1990; Richards and Crookes, 1988; in Crookes, 2011). Since the 1990s, work has been carried out on reflective teaching practice (Richards and Lockhart, 2007), so one would expect teachers to be more willing to ask themselves questions such as: *What are we actually doing as language teachers*? *What are our goals?* Not only in terms of classroom practices or from an instrumental perspective, but also from a much broader view, seeking a broader purpose for their work in relation to both their professional development and the impact they can have at the social level.

Crookes points out that the possibility for teachers to ask themselves questions about the ultimate purpose of their mission may vary depending on where they work, their situation, and their working conditions. Those who teach in more favorable environments undoubtedly have more free time to sit down and reflect on their activity. For many others, however, the circumstances are not as advantageous, and they barely have enough time to move from one class to another, prepare materials, grade exams, give feedback, etc.

Given the great relevance that modern paradigms of applied linguistics, with a strong emphasis on pragmatism, have on language education and teaching, it is very likely that the vast majority of language teachers believe that their main goal is to help students achieve communicative competence, acquire a good

level of the foreign language, nothing more, and that their philosophy as teachers is the result of what they have learned over time about what works and what does not work for the development of their students and themselves as teachers (Crookes, 2011). This is a pragmatic philosophy that transcends idealism and realism as categories.

When a teacher is idealistic, for example, they may strive to adhere to certain convictions or theoretical postulates, such as those of the Direct Method, which stigmatizes the use of the first language in class. In such a situation, they will believe that by applying the principles of this method, they will enable students to acquire native proficiency in the foreign language. On the other hand, a realistic teacher would be convinced that it is not possible for the learner to achieve native proficiency and that, furthermore, the first language should always play an important role in learning. Therefore, they would not follow the principles of the direct method but would work to help the student achieve the proficiency that is within their capabilities. A teacher with a pragmatic philosophy, on the other hand, would keep in mind that, ultimately, the goal is to achieve communicative proficiency, so they would take the elements that work from both the direct method and any other method to help their students achieve this (Crookes, 2011).

By pointing out the importance of teachers being aware of the main philosophies of education (essentialism, perennialism, reconstructivism, progressivism), Crookes believes that they will have the opportunity to recognize how certain practices, concepts, and orientations in language teaching are part of historical movements that transcend the classroom universe. Without this awareness, they are more likely to end up enslaved to textbook pedagogies

imposed at the institutional level and less likely to see themselves as social actors with the possibility of bringing about change in the world.

Crookes notes that when working with philosophical categories, teachers can draw on epistemology, metaphysics, and axiology. In the first case, epistemology relates to the nature of knowledge and the development of theories of truth, whether relative or absolute. For example, when a teacher reads Chomskian ideas, they are exposed to a discourse full of assertions about the existence of the language acquisition device and generative grammar. If they truly believe in these ideas, they will act with the conviction that every student, regardless of their performance or background, can achieve language proficiency. If, when studying Krashen's comprehensible input hypothesis (which holds that second language acquisition occurs when one is in communicative interactions with input slightly above the learner's level), the teacher similarly believes in it, then they will not be opposed to working with groups of students whose English levels differ slightly, as they will be convinced that the lower-level students will benefit. Upon verifying that Krashen and Chomsky's postulates are actually fulfilled in class, their episteme will be based on them, which will be reflected in their teaching style.

On the metaphysical side, the teacher is faced with questions such as what is the essence of life and of human beings. What they believe about this will also determine the way in which they carry out their teaching work. For example, if they have a view influenced by Vigotsky that humans are eminently social beings, they will give priority to classroom activities where students focus primarily on working in groups. If they agree with behaviorist philosophy, in

which individuals learn through stimulus and response, then they will apply teaching techniques in which students memorize, repeat, and achieve correct use of language and its grammatical structure. If you are a follower of positivist trends, you will make efforts to ensure that students learn for purely utilitarian purposes in order to integrate into the economic system and provide added value to productive activities.

In terms of axiology, ethics and aesthetics come into play, which can be defined as valuable and beautiful. Teachers may already be steeped in ideas about morality. Educational institutions generally have codes of conduct that prescribe acceptable and unacceptable behaviors, such as academic honesty, cheating on exams, accepting bribes, and abuse of power, among others. But the ethical spectrum goes beyond behavior within the school. It also includes commitment to social causes, activism toward movements such as environmentalism, anti-corruption, and human rights. Teachers cannot avoid expressing their ethical convictions when teaching, particularly if they come from a foreign country where values are different. Crookes asks:

> Should a teacher manifest their values in their work (in their classroom, their schools, and in their professional participation)? Some would say in answer, How could they not (at least to some extent)? And another response would be what good is a professional life that does not operate according to values? It is in the nature of a profession and of professional activity that it must, by definition, be guided by values. (Crookes, 2011: 1131)

Throughout the spectrum of their teaching practice, teachers will demonstrate what they conceive to be morally correct, their principles of justice, their convictions, and their critiques of societal problems.

Crookes states that teachers must turn to philosophy to consider their mission in a radically different way than that imposed on them by professional

literature in order to avoid adopting one based on uncritical and limited foundations, such as teaching lessons efficiently, motivating students, preparing them well for exams, etc. If the educational authorities in each country follow a philosophy that serves as a guideline for the creation of official curricula, language teachers, with even more reason, should also establish their own.

Crookes refers to Wringe (1988; in Crookes 2011) to develop a useful taxonomy for the sake of a philosophy of education. It consists of three basic points: (1) goal orientation that results in individual growth; (2) a focus on objectives that have a positive impact on social development; and (3) the promotion of ideals such as truth, rationality, and excellence. In most of the available literature, priority has been given to the first point, according to Crookes, who therefore advocates an emphasis on points 2 and 3. However, as he points out in his research on the working conditions of language teachers and the relationship between these and their preparation, it is difficult to expect this to happen. The workload of the vast majority is such that it would be impossible to stop and meditate on their professional practice, let alone reflect on the philosophical currents underlying the methodology of their schools. It is difficult to imagine a teacher having time to philosophize while working with groups of forty students, grading exams and assignments, submitting reports, taking training courses, preparing new materials, meeting with parents, etc.

Crookes (2011) emphasizes throughout his article that there are still few research efforts focused on the values, attitudes, mindset, and hopes of language teachers. However, he refers to studies that address their beliefs mainly in terms of techniques and methods (Mangubhai, 2004; Breen, 1991; in Crookes, 2011). The former conducted interviews to study the conception of the Communicative Approach held by seven teachers of languages other than

English. Breen, for his part, worked with eighteen teachers, who carried out self-reflection activities on their practice through observations and class recordings in order to extract principles derived from their teaching. Crookes points to other smaller studies and commends the fact that there are initiatives in this direction, however small they may seem. However, he concludes that their scope is not yet sufficiently significant.

For him, it would be ideal if they were directed towards the analysis of broader concepts such as liberalism, citizenship, critical thinking, autonomy, national identity, self-determination, well-being, justice (in education, for example), ethics, and social commitment (all in relation to language teaching), and whether teachers perceive them as irrelevant, crucial, interesting, frustrating, useful, etc.

Crookes mentions the existence of some interesting studies consisting of essays and empirical research on the influence of Christian values in some language teaching environments (Wong and Canagarajah, 2009; in Crookes, 2011). He mentions that in such cases, teachers carry out their work with a transcendent mission in mind, one of spiritual development and commitment to society. Although he notes that the focus on religious values has been dismissed for years in studies on the philosophy of language teachers, the fact that spiritual views can be found not only in the arena of Christianity but also in Islam (Mohd-Asraf 2005; in Crookes, 2011)), indicates that there is a strong tendency in various language education sectors in which teachers are, in fact, operating with a perspective that goes beyond the instrumentalism of modern applied linguistics, something that, according to Crookes, is preferable to continuing to adhere to pragmatic ideals. In the same vein, it is interesting to highlight the Mexican phenomenon of an English language teaching institute such as Quick

Learning, which, on its official website, when commenting on the characteristics of its system, states that its teachers:

> They also have a master's degree in professional development, English culture, effective public speaking, leadership, human relations, and moral principles of ethical behavior. Quick Learning teachers undergo 260 hours of training before standing in front of a group. Through their example, our teachers teach students the basic traits that shape their character and instill in them our values, the values that we who are part of Quick Learning hold dear. These are: Loyalty, Humility, Honesty, Intelligence, Aptitude, Discipline, Perseverance, Seriousness, and Courage to Win. (Quick Learning, 2015)

Of course, in the case of this school, it is necessary to identify the extent to which its teachers actually share a "lofty" vision and "transcendent" values, as referred to on its website. Nevertheless, at least at the institutional level, Quick Learning's mission is to try to imbue its teachers with a philosophy that goes beyond the instrumentalism of simply teaching the class well, following the curriculum, helping students learn English, etc., which is something Crookes finds commendable in the sense that it aims to make the teacher a figure who goes beyond didactic pragmatism. It will certainly be interesting to see future research efforts on the Quick Learning case in order to elucidate the phenomenon of language teacher thinking in that institution.

Crookes ends his article by asserting that the recent preponderance of religious trends does not in any way imply a decline in secular views in the mindset of language teachers. He cites examples from literature on the construction of identity and character in teachers, which assume that existence precedes essence. Crookes wonders whether this is a reflection of the influence of existentialism, which leads him to question whether teachers in general are aware not only of the influence of this philosophical trend on their work, but also of others.

Certainly, any teacher who inquires into the presence of all kinds of philosophies, and not just educational ones, behind the institutional spectrum in which they work, will be at an advantage compared to anyone who does not.

4.3 Littlejohn vs. Crookes

Once some crucial points of these authors' proposals have been highlighted, we will proceed with an intertextual analysis of their ideas with the intention of extracting valuable elements for the achievement of the objectives of this work.

A first point is that both Littlejohn and Crookes admit that something is wrong with the current situation of language teaching. Littlejohn identifies economic neoliberalism and McDonaldization as the culprits of the debacle. Crookes, for his part, rails against essentialism and the instrumental pragmatism of applied linguistics.

To begin to address the crisis, Littlejohn advocates for the contribution of social theory, while Crookes leans toward educational philosophies, epistemology, metaphysics, and axiology. Littlejohn invites us to look outward to understand the full picture of the situation. Teachers should turn their attention to historical events, political decisions, income distribution factors, etc. Crookes, for his part, directs teachers toward the contributions of John Dewey's critical pedagogy, in which the teacher is conceived as an agent committed to his or her environment.

While Littlejohn speaks out against excessive standardization and homogenization, Crookes wants teachers to reflect on the purpose of their work before thinking about any crisis. In fact, in his article cited in this work, he begins by contextualizing the work aspect and its mission by referring to "Increasingly, contract renewal processes and job interviews call for a brief statement of something called philosophy of teaching" (Crookes, 2011:1126). Without ignoring the current problem, in a different article (Crookes, 2009) on the role of critical pedagogy in language teaching, which later gave rise to his recent book *Critical ELT in action: Foundations, Promises, Praxis* (Crookes, 2013), he presents teachers with the ability to act as agents of social change, in harmony with Dewey's ideas.

Crookes discusses the role of activism, in the sense that, among other things, teachers coordinate and develop institutional networks with parents and various sectors of government in the search for funding for innovative educational projects, listing it as follows (Crookes, 2009:6)

> ORGANIZE: Develop institutional networks, develop connections with parents, develop networks in the community.
> ADDRESS LEADERSHIP, but try to see that all are leaders, if provided with the right orientation and skills.
> FUNDRAISE, there is literature on fundraising education...
> ENGAGE IN ACTION: The old slogan ‘direct action gets the goods’ is relevant because in many places conventional politicking will not provide what a critical language teacher might need.

Addressing activism, Littlejohn, for his part, makes the following comparison

> Paradoxically perhaps, we are now seeing global resistance to globalization, in the form of the Occupy movements which have sprung up around the world in places as far apart as New York, London, Berlin, Hong Kong, Rome, Kuala Lumpur, Mexico City, and other major cities...My own personal view is that this is precisely what we need to start doing now in language teaching – to resist the manner in which standardization is being

> enforced, the process in which curriculum decisions are being removed from those directly involved with their implementation and the erosion of the freedom to imagine a different way of doing things (Littlejohn, 2012: 14)

suggesting that teachers begin to show resistance in ways similar to the protest movements against economic neoliberalism following the collapse of the US mortgage market in 2008; in this case, inviting them to fight against the imposition of curriculum standardization by educational institutions and publishers in the creation of teaching materials.

On the theoretical side, Littlejohn (2012) admits that it is not his intention, at least in his article, to establish a philosophical discussion about the superstructure, but he does conceive of language teaching as a cultural activity influenced by the ideological burden imposed unilaterally by the ruling elites. Crookes (2011), on the other hand, does want teachers to delve into different philosophical interpretations and immerse themselves in questions concerning metaphysics, ontology, and axiology, pursuing ongoing dialogue and discussion between different authors and theories: a more ambitious scope in which teachers become, in effect, a philosopher, ethnographer, social critic, writer, activist, etc.

Littlejohn, in emphasizing the hegemonic role of *the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, points out that this institution has been an obstacle to the development of teaching creativity by unilaterally imposing official versions of how to teach and learn, as well as becoming a perfect instrument for the consolidation of large publishers of language teaching books and certifications at almost any level of English proficiency, generating lucrative business for Cambridge.

Crookes views this issue from a more philosophical perspective, reflecting on how the essentialist paradigm has damaged language teaching, devalued it, and deprived teachers of pursuing transcendent goals, in which they see themselves as more than just instructors with the obligation to teach *efficiently*, as prescribed in the *Common Framework*.

In an attempt to illustrate the pursuit of transcendent ideals, Crookes cites cases in which religiosity (whether Christianity or Islam) has tried to lead teachers to overcome the instrumental perspective; However, he does not provide critical information on whether these schools would be using a kind of religious indoctrination as a labor exploitation strategy in which teachers are made to work hard, increasing student enrollment (seen as customers), since, by granting them monetary bonuses, no real change in their vision would actually be taking place, but rather they would be incentivized to go after commissions for re-enrollments.

In this case, even if the apparent goal is to have teachers with a "transcendent" vision, in practice, we would be faced with an institutional framework that would not be entirely different from the model of Macdonaldization denounced by Littlejohn.

Crookes mentions environments in which it is possible to put critical pedagogy into practice due to the limited presence or absence of institutional controls, describing them as "places where experiment and boundary crossing can flourish:

> The break-up of monolithic state education
> Alternatives in the private sector
> Charter schools
> Online education, particularly the so-called virtual schools

Informal education
Community schools
Other formats and host structures and host structures for critical practice
Possibilities within conversation schools (Crookes, 2009:5)

In the case of alternatives in the private sector, it is necessary to ask whether a teacher can act as a critical educator in a private school, as Crookes suggests.

Wouldn't they sooner or later find themselves having to operate in a McDonaldized manner in order to adapt to the ups and downs of the market economy, that is, to move from a dimension of cultural zeitgeist to a pragmatic and instrumental imperative in order to survive, as Littlejohn accuses?

In short, Littlejohn and Crookes agree in their opposition to the instrumentalist tendency of modern applied linguistics in language teaching; They invite teachers to develop a critical awareness of their work by drawing on the contributions of the social sciences, on the one hand, and philosophy, on the other, as well as advocating for teachers to look beyond their classroom reality in order to continue reinventing the mission of their work in a comprehensive way.

One of the main differences between the two authors is that Crookes is more open to the inclusion of other types of currents (including religious ones) in order to give language teaching a 'transcendent' mission, beyond extreme instrumentalism. Furthermore, while Littlejohn does not propose a more demanding theoretical exploration in philosophical terms in his article, Crookes encourages teachers to delve deeper into philosophy and its different aspects and embark on a more daring investigative and practical adventure.

4.4. The hidden curriculum of Interlingua in light of the ideas of Littlejohn and Crookes.

Now, we have reached the point where we must define the space and time and reflect on the applicability of the proposal in this work: that of the Interlingua English teacher. The analysis developed in the preceding pages should provide tools to help teachers at this school develop their critical philosophy.

According to the interview with Teacher 4, an average Interlingua teacher, after passing through the filter through which they were hired, which includes about 140 hours of training to learn how to use the school's method, begins to receive 45 hours of *counseling* and meets with a mentor who, after all, tells them that it is not necessary to act like a robot, reciting the content of the lesson plan word for word, as they were accustomed to doing in the Method course; However, they must be careful not to deviate, that is, omit any step from the manual or do something completely different.

In *counseling,* they learn that they can personalize activities, adapting them to their students (instead of covering them all); but this does not mean they have the freedom to include exercises that, although they believe will help the students, do not fall within the margin of flexibility allowed in the lesson plan. Likewise, since you must alternate with another teacher, sometimes sharing the group with more than one different teacher, you are forced to cover what is planned for each block, otherwise you may jeopardize the program's progress.

After gaining experience with the basic levels, they will begin to receive training for the subsequent courses, *Essential English 5, Essential English 6, Essential English 7*, etc. They will realize that the format of the courses is the same: the

same steps, the same scripts, the same way of implementing the activities, the same model of materials, the same types of drills.

In an effort to adhere to the method, you will become quick to apply correction techniques, focus on students speaking with good grammar and fluency, and be eager to detect and correct any errors in the structural use of the language, whether it be a preposition, an irregular verb, an incorrect auxiliary, and so on. You will think that if a student at level 13 still makes mistakes when expressing themselves in the present simple with third persons, they deserve to pass with a minimum of 7, but never a 9 or 10, even if their fluency and discursive competence are clear enough to be understood in any communicative situation.

Above all, they will be meticulous grammarians, setting as their class objectives mastery of topics such as *the simple present*, *simple past*, *present perfect,* etc. They will conceive of language primarily as a structured system, rather than as a phenomenon with which something is *done*, regardless of whether it is grammatically correct or not. You will consider a student to have a good level if they are able to correctly use the passive voice, conditionals, and modal auxiliaries in all tenses and forms. You will believe that the student has an excellent level if, in addition to using grammatical structures, they are aware of them and can name them.

After working for months, perhaps years, they will be grateful that it is no longer necessary to prepare anything. Everything is in the lesson plan. They will have free time to do other activities during the hours when they do not have classes assigned. They will be convinced that the method is one of the best ways to learn. If an Interlingua student does not progress with the language, it

will be mainly because they have not studied outside of class, have not done their homework or practiced with their textbook, or because the teacher in question has not followed or effectively applied the steps of the method. They will believe that the more they stick to it, the better the results will be; otherwise, the objectives will not be achieved.

However, as they gain more experience, as Professor 4 mentions, they will begin to notice the inherent flaws in the methodological system, the stagnation of students' linguistic and communicative competence, their errors in the correct structural use of basic topics even at advanced levels (despite having done countless repetitions in the so-called *Drills Type One*), their limitations in fluency and oral comprehension, etc.

In principle, this situation should not come as a surprise, since Interlingua itself states on its website that, upon completing Course 16, considered the last of the advanced courses according to its system, students have completed Level B1 and are on the threshold of B2 (upper intermediate) according to *the Common Framework*. Therefore, the teacher will see the highest aspiration of the Interlingua student as achieving an intermediate level. For this reason, the institute offers so-called "special" courses to perfect language proficiency, namely, preparation for the FCE or TOEFL, Market Leader focused on business English, or conversation classes.

All of this will cross your mind as long as you remain pigeonholed into teaching only at one branch. You will live confined to the practices of lesson plans and academic supervision. You will believe that both the teacher and the students will be better the more they stick to the method. If the program is highly

standardized, then the learning outcomes will be similar and predictable, at least within a certain range.

However, at that juncture, sooner or later you will encounter circumstances that may cause you to doubt the strength of the method, such as the lack of effective and consistent acquisition in several students despite advancing level after level. Given the strong influence of the behaviorist paradigm on the Interlingua teacher, they will think that the more efficiently students perform the mechanical drills of repeating grammatical structures, the more they will internalize them and apply them fluently when expressing themselves. However, after a couple of classes, or even a few minutes, they will see them making the same mistakes in the correct use of grammar, as if they had not taken the lesson.

This type of situation, in which errors become fossilized and students are unable to express themselves spontaneously with grammatical structures that have been repeated mechanically so many times, will lead the Interlingua teacher to adapt the activities in order to achieve effective communication among their students, even if this means skipping some of the steps prescribed in the lesson plans.

The point to be made with all of the above is that, even before reading Littlejohn, the most experienced Interlingua teacher will notice for themselves the fallibility of their McDonaldized system and begin to act critically and emancipatorily, going beyond the establishment. By breaking the rules, taking into account the benefit and effective and meaningful learning of their students, their faith in the strength and legitimacy of the method will wane.

At this point, it is necessary to mention a crucial aspect regarding the types of Interlingua classes. The first consists of lessons taught at each of the campuses, where everything is controlled and monitored, ensuring that the method is followed to the letter. In this context, it is less likely for teachers to practice critical pedagogy or question the paradigms of the method, with the exception of the most experienced ones. However, there is another modality, known as the corporate model. These are private classes where the teacher travels to the location specified by the student, which is usually their workplace or home. Most of these courses are paid for by companies whose objective is to invest in language training for their staff. According to the interview with Teacher 4, the context of this type of class offers greater opportunities to implement a different approach, as it is removed from the academic supervision of the branches, since it is less likely for a member of the academic department to visit the companies to carry out quality control observations. Teachers in this modality, in addition to receiving higher pay, have the freedom to make decisions that improve language proficiency and adapt to the needs of individual students.

In this regard, Crookes' (2009) reference to the private sector as a space for practicing critical pedagogy is relevant, a contradictory factor, since one of the fundamental pillars of this trend is to make students aware of injustices in society, several of which are caused by the free market economic system. However, it is in the very context of Interlingua classes at the corporate level that teachers have the academic freedom to implement activities geared toward critical pedagogy, far from the strict, McDonaldized supervision of the branches.

If, in such a situation, outside the school grounds, the teacher reads the article by Littlejohn (2012) cited in this paper, they will learn about McDonaldization.

They will corroborate the weaknesses of using a methodology with these characteristics, despite its supposed advantages, such as having a more relaxed working day due to not having to spend much time preparing classes.

Teacher 2, in his interview, mentions that even the most experienced Interlingua teacher gradually stops following the lesson plan to the letter and becomes more aware of the parts of the lessons where it is better to omit certain steps or use other words, examples, illustrations, or do something totally different. If a member of the academic department comes to observe their class, the teacher adheres to the method in order to be in tune with institutional practices and not jeopardize their job; however, as long as no representative of the academic administration supervises them, they do not follow the lesson plan 100% because they recognize the flaws in the system that hinder learning. But they keep all this to themselves and only share it with other colleagues who are equally experienced and convinced of the fallibility of the method.

If the teacher is aware that there are solid theoretical bases for not following the dictates of the lesson plan, they will verify what they themselves have already discovered in practice. Their curiosity will be piqued to find out more ways of teaching than those imposed by Interlingua.

They will research other methodologies and approaches. They will have a wealth of information at their disposal: Richards, Willis, Krashen, Chomsky, Vigotsky, Gategno, VanPatten, Littlejohn, Crookes, etc.

They will be able to analyze the system they work with on a daily basis. They will recognize, first of all, that Interlingua itself uses an eclectic combination of audiolingualism, grammar and translation, the direct method, notional and

functional communicative approaches in levels 1 to 10, and task-based methodologies in levels 11 to 16.

It is undoubtedly a broad and inclusive spectrum. You will appreciate being in a school that tries to take the best elements from various methods, even if its way of operating standardizes classes and imposes a final version of how things should be done.

In your thirst for knowledge, you will feel compelled to learn, taking Cambridge certifications such as the Teacher's Training Course, the Teaching Knowledge Test, the Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, or, in very favorable cases, enrolling in university programs for a Bachelor's Degree in English Teaching. You will thus embark on a journey in which you will research, discover, critique, and contrast what you have already learned in your teaching experience with more solid theoretical foundations.

In such a situation, Graham Crookes' (2011) contribution on redefining your fundamental reasons and mission as a teacher will come to light. After reading, researching, discovering, and reflecting on the imprint of essentialism, perennialism, progressivism, and reconstructivism in Interlingua's materials and system, the teacher will be able to take sides with one of these currents. They do not have to stick to any one in particular, but rather decide, weigh up, and reflect, based on their worldview, which one they identify with most. They might ask themselves: Do I see English as merely a tool to help my students get a job? Do I agree with the values of American culture and therefore try to spread them in my classes? Do I believe that the most important thing in learning a second language is to enhance personal development, which is why I do my best to personalize and adapt my classes to their individual characteristics? Do I

want to instill in them an understanding of the global world that leads them to intercultural, tolerant, diverse, inclusive, and democratic dialogue with themselves and others?

To be in a better position to dignify their profession, Interlingua teachers must be aware of the social dimension and relevance of the English language. Teaching this language is a huge, million-dollar industry, with hints of political domination and US hegemony reflected not only in economic terms but also culturally, where English, the lingua franca, has become an expression of global control since World War II (Edge, 2006). Neoliberal globalization is written, spoken, and read in English, symbolized by the preponderance of transnational corporations in the markets, an economic imperialism evident in the names of major brands, programs, and songs consumed by all.

However, English is not only the language of the powerful, it is also the vehicle used to spread protests against the chiaroscuro of the modern era, such as the Occupy movement, which emerged in the wake of the Wall Street crisis in 2008. It is a language spoken in victimized nations, such as India, where activists of the stature of Gandhi and his peaceful resistance movement against British rule emerged. It is the same language used by Dr. Martin Luther King to protest the racism inflicted on Black people in the United States. And it continues to be the language used by thousands of activists around the world to communicate their demands for a better society (Block, Gray, and Holborow, 2012).

Learning this language confers the possibility of social and cultural advancement, even in times of economic recession. English is an essential requirement in the workplace. Mastering it puts one on the threshold of

promotion. It provides access to an immense wealth of information available on the Internet, in science books, literature, and politics.

Working as a teacher of this language, regardless of the institution, means performing a task with primarily essentialist goals: integration into the global labor market. When a student achieves communicative competence, they are able to perform all kinds of activities, call suppliers abroad, explain various company-related issues to the board of directors, respond to emails, negotiate with international clients, and communicate directly with headquarters (Crookes, 2011).

Having a vision of the scope of their work, both from this essentialist perspective and in terms of the historical, social, and cultural impact on their students, is a good step for teachers to take in order to gain a perspective worthy of their work. Mexican English teachers are more than just employees of Interlingua, Harmon Hall, Quick Learning, Berlitz, or Anglo; they are, fundamentally, individuals capable of contributing to the country's economic growth, by helping their students acquire a second language not only for instrumental purposes but also as a path to a different vision of life, achieving unique experiences through exposure to new literatures, discourses, cultural notions, and philosophies of a language spoken around the world, from New York, London, and Ontario to Nigeria, Belize, Jamaica, the Philippines, Singapore, Hong Kong, etc.

Knowing, as Crookes (2011) mentions, that their classroom activity is permeated by strong philosophical traditions gives teachers the opportunity to become philosophers themselves. From the profession of language teaching, through their metaphysical analysis, they can reach unexpected territories,

reading Hegel, Marx, Dewey, Chomsky, comparing discursive threads and the way arguments are interwoven in more than one language.

There will be teachers who take Crookes' (2009) ideas and critical pedagogy to heart and see themselves as crucial actors for change through educational practice. English will become a tool for combating injustice in the world, using social media to denounce corrupt acts by governments or companies, engaging in activism with an international reach.

Furthermore, as already shown in this paper, there are teaching units in the Interlingua program designed to bring discussions about the problems of today's society to the table. In this context, teachers can lead lessons focusing on the Mexican situation, adapting the questions in the lesson plan, changing or modifying them in order to promote critical awareness, creating a class where real challenges are discussed. Thus, instead of citing examples from textbooks, teachers, as critical educators, will have the opportunity to refer to genuine examples.

In much more practical terms, adopting a critical philosophy will motivate teachers to prepare themselves more academically. In an interview with Professor 6, who has adopted this stance, he mentioned that this will be reflected in the quality of his classes and in the favorable impact on his students, who will recognize a teacher who goes beyond the program and does additional, creative, and innovative things (Crookes, 2011). In the case of the Interlingua teacher, after acquiring better credentials as a teacher, he will enrich his resume and have the tools to find employment where higher salaries are offered. After analyzing the reality and becoming a better teacher himself, he may feel motivated to leave the institution as such. However, he will consider it

appropriate to try to make his concerns known to the academic department, letting them know the urgency of making changes aimed at promoting genuine content acquisition, making the curriculum more flexible, empowering teachers to go beyond the lesson plan, and personalizing classes to the needs of students.

However, such changes would require the implementation of measures to have more proactive, creative, and committed teachers, which would require improvements in their working conditions, and this would necessarily include not only more competitive pay but also the provision of legal benefits, something that the institution seems unwilling to do.

There are no single recipes for how to proceed in the search for one's own teaching philosophy. As with philosophical development, which is alien to uniformity, open to a multiplicity of perspectives and paths, constantly inventive, always rethinking, questioning, inquiring, and deconstructing, the development of a teaching philosophy, especially now that we can no longer speak of "the Method," of that ideal approach, knows no absolutes. We are in the era of postmodernism, of the Post-Method. There are no fixed paradigms, no single truths, no constant visions. All that remains is impermanence, fluctuation, change. Each teacher must do their own thing to build their critical philosophy. No one will do it for them.

It is an adventure, a personal undertaking, original and inevitably expressed in the first person, in harmony with hermeneutics, where there is room for the interpretive role of the individual, the intimate vision of the author, their experiences and background, all of which leads this work to the chapter on the responsibility of each teacher to construct their own critical philosophy.

4.5. The teacher's responsibility to constantly rework their philosophy.

To avoid falling into the gray areas of McDonaldization, it is essential that teachers make a difference by constructing a critical philosophy. Being in institutional contexts where there is more flexibility to make decisions about how to teach lessons is an advantage in moving in that direction (Crookes, 2009). In the case of Interlingua, working as a business teacher, far from the reach of strict academic supervision, is the most ideal scenario. In this type of class, students may ask the teacher not to follow a traditional program, but rather to tailor the lessons to their needs. This can occur mainly in one-on-one settings.

Teacher 7, who teaches business classes to Interlingua clients, referred to a particular situation with a student whose language proficiency level was in the B1-B2 range. According to this teacher, the student in question, in his demand for more emphasis on conversation, requested a form of class in which he could express himself freely and talk about his experiences with much more ease. As his company was paying for the course and he was not required to follow the progress established by Interlingua, but rather his own individual learning pace and style, it was possible to adapt the way the lessons were taught to a personalized approach. In this circumstance, his affective filter (Krashen, 1981) reached such low levels that the motivation to express himself in a second language, without the pressure of feeling evaluated or having to cover a certain number of pages in a textbook, became a powerful weapon. The student had the opportunity to make mistakes without fear. At the same time, the focus of the

class was on what he said and not just how he said it, as he had a teacher who was ready to listen and give him the opportunity to experiment with the language, all of which allowed the student to develop fluency and communicative competence more quickly.

The teacher mentioned that for six months he had followed the Interlingua lesson plan to the letter. Later, at the student's request, he proceeded differently, adapting the pace to his needs, using a variety of activities that suited his learning style, but above all, allowing him to express his concerns and experiences, listening to him attentively, without criticizing or pressuring him in any way, encouraging him through carefully posed questions to express himself comfortably.

The result of comparing the oral expression between the two periods was revealing. In the first, there was too much hesitation, constant pauses, and excessive concern about which grammatical structures to use to express himself correctly, which greatly slowed down his speaking pace. In the second, he was able to express himself much more fluently and naturally. Although he made some mistakes in the use of grammatical structures, the little or no pressure and concern about doing it correctly allowed him to have enough confidence to speak with greater clarity and fluency compared to what was seen in the first period.

Of course, this was a case involving a particular student, but at least the fact that it was possible to carry out this type of experiment in a business service context allowed the teacher to draw his own conclusions and critiques about what he was doing as a teacher.

Based on that experience, the teacher expressed his conviction that, although the highly structured and systematized form of the Interlingua method has the advantage of making it easier to work with, following it to the letter does not guarantee that the student will develop adequate fluency. they may consciously learn grammatical structures, knowing how to name them and compare them with others, but this does not mean that they will achieve internalization, an acquisition of what they have learned to the point of being able to use it consistently, mainly due to the overly rapid progression between different topics.

Additionally, different conclusions can be drawn from this experience. It is interesting how the low level of pressure and freedom that the student had in this second case gave him the confidence to express himself in that particular way, as if he had found an outlet in another language to express things that he would not normally express in his mother tongue. This point refers to postulates of linguistic psychoanalysis that give the use of words therapeutic power. This is the practice in which the person undergoing psychoanalysis uses language to identify their trauma, clarify their symptoms, and recognize the causes of their hysteria by narrating to another person, in this case an analyst, the story of their life, the events that marked them and gave rise to their behavior, their crises, etc. (De la Peña, 2011). However, most readings on this subject do so from the perspective of the mother tongue. Very little has been written about doing so in a second language, let alone the feasibility of doing so while learning that other language. Could there be a connection between the role of a second language as a means of expressing trauma, in the manner of linguistic psychoanalysis, and the extent to which that language is acquired? Is it valid for an English teacher, or a teacher of any other foreign language, to draw on the contributions of psychoanalysis in their teaching practice, particularly in one-to-one classes?

Can the second language serve as that Freudian Big Other onto which the identification of the traumatic symptom can be directed?

The fact that, on an individual basis, one can arrive at these reflections illustrates that each person will differ in the way they exercise their style of critical pedagogy, which emphasizes the individual nature of the philosophy that teachers construct.

One cannot aspire to achieve similar results or pursue similar goals in this regard. In seeking to redefine and rethink what they do in their role as teachers, some may become activists, others writers, psychologists, counselors, leaders, entrepreneurs, coordinators, trainers, etc., or they may become teachers committed to different causes, changing their mental models, adopting a more flexible or firmer attitude in other aspects, giving a radical twist to their work. What matters is that there is a willingness to take risks and make decisions to build a critical philosophy, without forgetting that this is and always will be an individual task.

CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of this work, proposed from the outset, was to reflect on how the proposals of Graham Crookes and Andrew Littlejohn could help Interlingua teachers develop a critical-social vision of what they do in order to give meaning to their teaching work. It was pointed out that, in the current era, there is a growing trend toward homogenization in institutional practices for teaching, in which teachers act more like workers with few skills, submissive to the dictates of lesson plans.

A first step toward achieving this was to follow Crookes' recommendation to delve deeper into educational philosophies. What conclusions could be reached by comparing the Interlingua system with each of these philosophies?

From the perspective of the philosophy of education, after analyzing the formal and vivid curriculum Casarini (2010), that is, the materials and practices of the institution, it is evident that the system of this school is eclectic in nature, since the presence of the four main currents can be seen, namely, essentialism, perennialism, progressivism, and reconstructivism.

Essentialism is evident because the influence of behaviorist philosophy on the learning of specific grammatical goals to develop mastery of communicative competence and linguistic accuracy is crucial (Faerch, Haastrup & Phillipson, 1984). Likewise, at levels 11 to 16, the instrumental learning of the four communication skills is promoted by applying reading and writing strategies characteristic of essentialist authors (Adler and Van Doren, 1972). Both on its website and in its textbooks, language teaching is encouraged for utilitarian and instrumentalist purposes, namely to get a job. The role of grades and obtaining

high scores is constantly emphasized (Educational Testing Services, 2015; Interlingua, 2013).

The perennialist paradigm also abounds in its system, as shown by the examples of the materials analyzed, which emphasize American values in the corporate and family spheres, as well as their discussion in class (Interlingua, 2012; Covey, 2014; Peters, 2003).

Progressivism, seen as the driving force behind the individual development of the student, is present in the methodical way in which feedback is practiced and in the *Check your progress* sections, which constantly invite students to self-assess, set learning goals, put strategies into practice to accelerate their level, and focus on their strengths and areas of opportunity.

Reconstructivism begins to be noticeable in levels 8, 9, and 10, during the units in which strategies for giving oral presentations are worked on, since the themes around which they revolve deal with social issues such as poverty, pollution, insecurity, economic inequality, gender equality, etc. (Crookes, 2013; Interlingua, 2012).

However, it should be noted that the elements of critical pedagogy in reconstructivism are limited to raising awareness and discussing social problems and do not encourage students or teachers to become activists (Crookes, 2013; Interlingua, 2012).

Despite this philosophical eclecticism, a core factor that forms part of the Interlingua system is the McDonaldization of teaching, not only because of the uniformity of its materials but also because of its methodology. In an effort to

standardize classroom practices to obtain homogeneous results, teachers end up becoming mere implementers of the dictates of lesson plans prepared by the academic department.

There is a notable tendency to hire teachers without pedagogical skills (Littlejohn, 2012). The average teacher in the branches has fewer and fewer professional qualifications, since they do not go beyond what has been prepared for them, and their precarious working conditions, in which they do not enjoy benefits or a long-term career plan, lower their motivation. All of this has a negative impact on the quality of classes. The current high turnover rate is a consequence of the system itself.

It is a vicious circle (Vasconcelos, 2008). Just like a fast-food restaurant that hires unskilled workers to perform in a corporate structure that dictates all the processes to be followed, Interlingua has become one of the most representative examples of the McDonald's of English schools.
This should come as no surprise, since Interlingua is a business and will always seek to obtain the highest possible profitability at the lowest possible cost.

Littlejohn's analysis of the social dimension invites teachers to look at their environment, realizing that what happens inside the classroom is often strongly influenced by factors outside it.

That being the case, teachers who follow this advice would do well to learn about the history of Interlingua from its founding in the late 1960s to the present day. This analytical exercise will allow them to find parallels between the evolution of society and the global economy and the way the institute operates.

While during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, the economy experienced state capitalism, where the government centralized activities and invested in social development, from its inception until the late 1990s, Interlingua was a company whose decisions were made with the well-being of its employees in mind (Littlejohn, 2012).

In the same way that the advent of neoliberalism brought about a structure in which private and business interests prevailed over social and governmental interests, from 2004 onwards, Interlingua's management adopted a primarily corporate strategy, reinventing its way of operating, which has resulted in the implementation of contractual reforms, fundamentally aimed at reducing labor liabilities to create a profitable organization with brand presence (Block, Gray, and Holborow, 2012).

With a complete picture of all this, teachers will, at the very least, be aware of the reasons behind the decisions made by their institute. If they link this social analysis to the harmful effects of McDonaldization on teaching and learning, they will begin to doubt the infallibility of the Interlingua system and question what they need to do to not only avoid being part of it, but to transcend it, as revealed by the hidden curriculum through interviews (Littlejohn, 2012).

Reading Crookes gives teachers the opportunity to rethink their goals by analyzing educational philosophies (Crookes, 2011). Ideally, they should recognize that reconstructivism and critical pedagogy are the best options for training students to learn to think for themselves.

This would be reflected in classroom practice that encourages students to become aware of social problems, their causes and consequences, as well as ways forward through activism, entrepreneurship, lobbying, innovation, etc. In other words, rather than just being a language teacher, they can become something more significant and also help their students to do the same (Crookes, 2013).

The combination of Littlejohn's and Crookes' ideas allows us to visualize the following situation more clearly: there is a powerful correlation between social, economic, and political factors and teaching practice and institutional decisions, which currently results in the creation of highly essentialist and perennialist curricula. However, in the eagerness to follow these two philosophies full of instrumentalism, extremes are reached in which McDonaldized systems are imposed, leading to a decline in teaching quality and learning. As such, purely essentialist objectives even run the risk of not being achieved. Given this situation, the development of a critical philosophy on the part of teachers is vital to overcoming this crisis and reinventing their role as professionals (Crookes, 2013).

Teachers at Interlingua or any other institution that embarks on this path can thus become something different, transcendent, by becoming aware of their role as educators and their potential to actively engage in today's world (Crookes, 2013). Their curiosity will be awakened. They will want to cultivate themselves, to learn much more about teaching and the history of their own institution. They will seek information about the sociocultural, economic, and political context that shapes the way they teach. They will dare to question the correct ways they have been taught to teach (Crookes, 2013).

Possibly, upon realizing their potential, they will decide to become an entrepreneur, opening their own school, or they will seek to work in an institution where they will be better compensated for the skills they will have developed after adopting a critical stance that will allow them to reinvent themselves and improve. Or perhaps they will end up changing their career path, becoming something else: a writer, activist, psychologist, speaker, artist, social activist, etc.

Delving even further into the case of the Interlingua teacher, they will lose their fear of subversion. The lesson plan will cease to be that kind of sacred book that they have to follow. The performance of the students, their right to take center stage in class, their very opportunity to reinvent themselves, will become the new goals. For the Interlingua teacher, it will be more important for the student to achieve acquisition and not just the conscious learning effort that is made by repeating isolated sentences with correct grammar over and over again, as is the case with the mechanical drills of their system (Krashen, 1981).

Being aware of the recent history of their institute, they will understand that it is no coincidence that decisions affecting them in their work are made under the pretext of ensuring corporate efficiency. This is a global trend in the neoliberal system, in which profit has become the main objective, and Mexico is a prominent participant in shaping its economic system, making it more flexible and "competitive," attracting foreign investment, and providing cheap labor to large transnational corporations (Block, Gray, & Holborow, 2012).

They will realize that in order to survive, they need to reinvent their mission, the way they teach their classes. Faced with the excessive uniformity that is emerging in curricula and trends in second language teaching, they will strive to differentiate themselves, to make the experience in their classes unique. They will shy away from monotony, from the same ways of doing things. They will prioritize creativity and inventiveness, but will also consider effective acquisition and genuine, meaningful learning in students to be crucial goals (Crookes, 2011, 2013; Littlejohn, 2012).

Although not mentioned in the development of this work, it is worth noting in this conclusion, to leave it as an open point, the debate sparked by the unstoppable development of artificial intelligence (AI), which is expected to soon venture into increasingly complex intellectual tasks (Pulla, 2016). Considering that the main reason for implementing Macdonaldized systems in the economy is to reduce costs, fears have been raised that many jobs will be replaced by this technology.

In relation to language teaching, the development of AI could have a considerable impact. An example of this is the creation of devices that allow many languages to be translated and interpreted in real time. Although the quality of their translations still has many limitations, over time they will become more and more refined (Allende, 2014).

And not only in the field of translation and interpretation. There are even efforts to create virtual "teachers" through artificial intelligence**,** robots available on the internet with the ability to learn quickly, act as teachers, give feedback, respond assertively to student questions, and have millions of pieces of data stored in the cloud at their immediate disposal. This raises questions such as:

What will happen when we actually have devices capable of translating and interpreting well enough to facilitate fluid communication between speakers of different languages? Will the time and investment devoted to learning other languages become obsolete? (Arrieta, 2017).

On the teaching side, what impact will the development and refinement of robots with the ability to teach have, given that their use could be much cheaper than the salary of a human teacher?

A scenario in which artificial intelligence takes control of more and more activities in the economy forces language teachers to continually rethink their work. The availability of more technological resources will be geared toward enhancing student autonomy. Mechanical activities in which students focus their learning on language structures will not require teacher guidance. Lesson plan methodologies, such as Interlingua, with teachers accustomed to following ultra-standardized teaching, will become obsolete, as robotic technologies will be able to perform the mechanization of learning (Allende, 2016).

In a context in which McDonaldization is taken to unprecedented extremes through artificial intelligence, it is likely that only teachers with the ability to develop a critical and social philosophy of their activity will be able to reinvent themselves in order to survive.

They will need not only to be up to date with these new technologies and their use and implementation in the classroom, but also to have the ability to contribute their own teaching originality, which will differentiate them from the tasks that these new technologies will be able to perform better than human teachers.

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