CONTEXTUALIZED CURRICULAR PROPOSAL FOR THE AREA OF ENGLISH: AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENHANCE EDUCATION FOR TOURISM IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CÓRDOBA

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ABSTRACT

The report details the development of an educational proposal adapted for teaching English in secondary schools, with the aim of improving tourism education in schools associated with the Tourism Friendly Schools program in Córdoba, Colombia. Based on a socio-critical approach, this research uses a qualitative method incorporating educational action research. This method facilitated the identification and reevaluation of curricular practices through the active involvement of teachers and students. English teachers and tenth and eleventh grade students participated in the research process, which included semi-structured interviews, discussion groups, and document analysis to characterize the current curriculum and co-develop an educational proposal adapted to the area's sociocultural and tourist context. The results revealed limited adaptation of the English curriculum and an insufficient connection between language teaching and local tourism opportunities. In conclusion, the report presents an adapted curricular proposal that incorporates a sociocultural approach and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) principles, promoting significant learning and recognizing the territory as an educational resource. The proposal aims to enhance students' comprehensive training and establish English as a vital tool for tourism education and sustainable development at the local level.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today's society demands significant changes that must be addressed through education. This will enrich people's overall development and adequately meet the social, cultural, and economic demands of the environments where educational institutions are located. These transformations must focus on addressing structural weaknesses, recognizing new needs, and taking advantage of the environment's resources and potential. This requires changes primarily in the curricular sphere. In this context, Cordero and Cabrera (2018) point out that curricular modifications arise "from various geographical, temporal, thematic, and disciplinary origins, as well as from different educational levels" (p. 18). This guarantees the active participation of educational institutions, teachers, and students in creating and reinterpreting the curriculum.

From this perspective, the curriculum is an ever-changing element that must adapt to the sociocultural reality of its environment, fostering the connection between school and community. Therefore, this research focuses on the English curriculum, recognizing that its teaching has been influenced by global standardization processes that restrict adaptation of learning. Yilorm (2016) points out that in Chile, the process of teaching and learning English has predominantly focused on instruction. This approach prioritizes mechanical repetition of information and accumulation of knowledge based on models from English-speaking countries. This hinders comprehensive student training.

Similarly, Romero et al. (2012) indicate that in Mexico, official English curricula are based on textbooks produced by foreign publishers such as Macmillan and Pearson. These textbooks do not align with students' realities, limiting their recognition of their sociocultural context. In Brazil, Cox et al. (2008) explain that English teaching in public schools has become dominant, linked to economic, cultural, and political interests in the United States. This has led to linguistic and cultural dependence, hiding local realities. Vera and Corzo (2018) also argue that the expansion of English validates prevailing ideas in powerful countries, ignoring historical processes of colonialism and linguistic imperialism. They therefore highlight the need for educators to adopt a critical attitude that incorporates linguistic, cultural, and contextual aspects into language teaching.

In contrast, experiences in European contexts demonstrate the importance of connecting the curriculum to students' daily lives. Moreno (2021) states that in Spain, "the curriculum is not detached from students' concerns or daily lives. Education is

understood as an integral process" (p. 60). This reinforces the need for contextualized education that links educational activities with social dynamics in the environment.

These considerations are particularly important in Colombia, where the English curriculum faces similar challenges. Colombia's General Education Law 115 of 1994 establishes a curriculum composed of compulsory and essential areas, including English. However, standardizing content and evaluating it through national exams, such as SABER 11°, has led to centralized, vertical, and hierarchical curricula. These curricula are created by entities that often do not understand local particularities. This restricts the contextualization of knowledge.

In this context, the English language learning area is supported by the Basic Standards of Proficiency in Foreign Languages and the National Bilingualism Program, implemented in collaboration with the British Council (Ministry of National Education, 2020). This program has generated tensions between the local and the global by favoring the content and cultural values of English-speaking nations. Mayora and Gutiérrez (2019) have pointed out this problem, finding that a high percentage of Institutional Educational Projects were outdated and that there were no curricular orientations aligned with the communicative approach of the English area. Echeverri and Quinchía (2016) emphasize the importance of creating relevant curricula by actively participating in educational communities and recognizing their particularities, interests, and needs.

From this perspective, the present study adopts a sociocritical model that considers English teaching a social activity related to cultural, economic, and territorial processes that influence learning. Sun (2014) mentions that language learning processes are closely related to social and cultural contexts, and Johnson (2009) highlights that the sociocultural approach provides a new paradigm in language teaching and learning.

Consistent with this, the research is conducted in Córdoba, a department with significant tourism potential where tourism activity is considered essential for regional development (Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, 2019). This environment provides an ideal opportunity to design a curricular proposal for English that values tourism as an educational tool to enhance teaching and learning processes and promote sustainable development in the region. Thus, this study seeks to answer the following question: How can the collaborative development of a curricular proposal adapted to the field of English enhance tourism

education in Córdoba?

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 *The curriculum as a sociocultural construction*

Throughout history, the curriculum has been interpreted in various ways, reflecting the social, cultural, and political contexts in which it exists. Osorio (2017) describes the curriculum as "a historical construct in both theory and practice, and each educational community must define it according to their understanding of the relationship between school and society, theory and practice, and the role of its participants in educational institution dynamics" (p. 151). This description underscores the curriculum's contextual, dynamic, and relational nature, distancing it from fixed or merely functional approaches.

From a critical point of view, the curriculum is not limited to organizing content; it becomes a space for cultural and social interaction. Kemmis (1993), as cited by Echeverri and Quinchía (2016), defines the curriculum as "the organization of what must be taught and learned" (p. 132), emphasizing its role in structuring teaching processes. Consistent with this notion, Stenhouse (1991) asserts that the curriculum is "an attempt to communicate the fundamental principles and characteristics of an educational objective in a manner that allows for critical dialogue and effective implementation," emphasizing its reflective and transformative nature.

These ideas allow us to understand the curriculum as a social practice that must be adjusted to environmental realities. As Villagómez and Llanos (2020) point out, a curriculum is not a summary or list of content, but rather a vibrant, continuously changing process defined by the educational needs of learners and their contexts (p. 211). This emphasizes the importance of constant contextualization.

2.2 *Socio-critical approach and contextualized curriculum*

The socio-critical approach views the curriculum as a political, liberating, and transformative resource. According to Román and Díez (1998), this tradition of the curriculum originates from the Frankfurt School and Habermas's approaches. These approaches assign the curriculum functions of "political, liberating, and emancipatory" (p. 4). From this perspective, the curriculum is understood as "social culture converted into school culture through educational institutions and teachers" (Román & Díez, 1998). This implies recognizing teachers' work

as mediators between academic knowledge and students' lived reality.

Osorio (2017) reinforces this idea, pointing out that conceiving the curriculum as a social practice requires scrutinizing the conditions under which it occurs. This scrutiny must contribute to improving the understanding of educational phenomena and committing to intervening in reality to transform it (p. 150). Thus, the socio-critical curriculum encourages the active participation of educational stakeholders, the exchange of knowledge, and the collective construction of knowledge—essential aspects for developing contextualized curricular proposals.

In this context, Toro (2017) describes the curriculum as "an educational proposal in continuous development and adaptation," promoting the formation of analytical and reflective citizens through the relationship between theory, practice, and praxis (pp. 480). This perspective is especially relevant for teaching English in tourist areas, where the curriculum must connect language skills with the area's cultural and economic dynamics.

2.3 *Teaching English as a Foreign Language from a Contextualized Perspective*

Teaching English as a foreign language has been promoted globally as an essential tool for integration into an interconnected world. UNESCO (2022) emphasizes the importance of learning foreign languages from an early age, recognizing their significance for cultural and linguistic diversity. However, several studies indicate that English teaching has favored standardized approaches that ignore local contexts.

Beltrán (2017) distinguishes between learning and acquiring a language, noting that not all students can effectively use the language for social interaction. In Colombia, Arana (2021) states that although the government has implemented policies to improve English education, "much remains to be done" (p. 168), particularly regarding the curriculum's relevance and content adaptation.

The Ministry of National Education's Curricular Guidelines in Foreign Languages (1999) suggest an adaptive, open, and participatory approach that includes intercultural elements and learning methods that favor communicative competence. Nevertheless, Sánchez (2014) notes that poor performance on state exams indicates the necessity of reevaluating pedagogical and curricular practices by incorporating strategies that acknowledge students' sociocultural backgrounds.

2.4 English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and its curricular contribution

The English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approach is presented as a relevant alternative that meets the specific needs of a given context. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) characterize ESP as an approach that combines academic and professional language competencies oriented toward specific situations of language use. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), ESP-based curricula must take into account the students' authentic needs, which largely stem from the context's characteristics.

Brinton et al. (2003) emphasize that using relevant content increases motivation and promotes meaningful learning, making ESP an ideal approach for teaching English in tourism contexts. Thus, ESP allows language learning to be combined with developing specific competencies associated with tourist activities and the sociocultural environment of the student.

2.5 Tourism education and curriculum

Tourism is a key activity for the economic, social, and cultural development of regions. In Colombia, for example, tourism is considered a promising sector, supported by regional development and access to international markets (Salcedo, 2013). In this regard, Millán (2021) suggests that educational tourism can enrich conventional teaching strategies by stimulating learning and fostering respect for the environment.

However, Cárdenas et al. (2020) point out that integrating education and tourism into the curriculum is challenging due to the variety of disciplines involved in this field. From this perspective, tourism-focused education is understood as a comprehensive training process that integrates theoretical and practical knowledge, fostering the development of critical citizens committed to the sustainable growth of their community.

In the context of Córdoba, a department characterized by its natural and cultural wealth (Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, 2019), articulating the curriculum with English teaching and tourism education is a strategic opportunity to strengthen territorial identity and promote local development in schools.

3. OBJECTIVES

3.1 General objective

To develop, through collective action, a contextualized curricular proposal for the area of English that allows for the potentiation of education for tourism in the department of Córdoba.

3.2 Specific objectives

- To characterize the current curriculum of the English area based on the conceptions and manifestations of the educational community of the institutions belonging to the Tourism Friendly Schools program in the department of Córdoba.
- Define, through processes of collective reflection, the epistemological and methodological elements necessary for the development of a contextualized curricular proposal for the area of English oriented to education for tourism.
- To configure a contextualized curricular proposal for the area of English that recognizes, from collective action, its epistemological and methodological contributions in the potentiation of education for tourism in the department of Córdoba.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research paradigm

The research is situated within a socio-critical framework that views knowledge as a social product aimed at understanding and modifying educational realities. From this perspective, the research process goes beyond merely describing phenomena. It promotes critical reflection and transformative actions based on the interests, needs, and experiences of those involved. In line with this perspective, the study acknowledges that English curriculum practices are influenced by social, cultural, and political factors. Therefore, resignifying them requires participatory processes and dialogues that enable the questioning of conventional curricular structures and the proposal of context-specific alternatives.

The socio-critical approach liberates participants by recognizing them as active contributors to knowledge construction and decision-making related to the curriculum. Thus, teachers and students are viewed as co-researchers who contribute to the development of a relevant curricular proposal for the tourism sector in Córdoba.

4.3 Research Approach

This study employs a qualitative approach to understand the perceptions, meanings, and practices that have shaped educational stakeholders' views on the English curriculum and its connection to tourism

education. This approach allows for a comprehensive analysis of the educational reality, recognizing the subjectivity of the participants and the complexity of the contexts in which the teaching and learning processes occur.

Within this approach, the research focuses on the interpretive analysis of institutional discourses, experiences, and documents. This facilitates the identification of the current curriculum's tensions, limitations, and opportunities. Additionally, this approach helps understand the curriculum as a social practice that can be transformed through collective reflection and pedagogical action.

4.4 Type and design of research

The research follows the Educational Action Research (HAI) design, which aims to improve and transform educational practices through constant cycles of reflection, action, and evaluation. This design is ideal for this study because it connects theory and practice, generating curricular change through the active participation of educational stakeholders.

HAI is based on the idea that educational problems should be examined and addressed within their context, involving those directly connected to them. In this sense, the chosen design enabled the collaborative development of the curricular proposal through critical analysis of the existing curriculum and co-creation of alternatives tailored to English instruction in tourism education.

4.5 Context and participants

The project was carried out in public schools in Córdoba, Colombia, that are part of the Tourism Friendly Schools (CAT) program. This initiative promotes tourism, cultural awareness, and environmental connection through education. The schools are located in areas with high tourist potential, making them suitable environments for integrating the curriculum with English teaching and tourism-focused education.

The participants were English teachers and tenth- and eleventh-grade students who were chosen for their direct connection to curricular processes and active participation in educational activities. In line with the educational action research approach, participants took on the role of co-researchers, contributing their knowledge, experiences, and reflections at different stages of the study.

4.6 Information collection techniques and instruments

Multiple qualitative methods were used to collect data, which helped to understand the complexity of the phenomenon analyzed and to facilitate the triangulation of information:

- Semi-structured interviews, aimed at educators and relevant actors, in order to explore in depth their perspectives on the curriculum of the English area, teaching methodologies and the connection between language teaching and tourism.
- Focus groups, held with educators and students, focused on promoting the exchange of ideas, critical reflection and the joint creation of meanings in relation to the contextualized curriculum.
- Analysis of documents, focused on examining institutional texts such as the Institutional Educational Project (IEP), plans for each area, guides and didactic resources, with the aim of comparing the planned curriculum with the curriculum in execution.
- Participatory observation, applied to understand the educational dynamics in their real environment and document the teaching practices linked to the learning of English.

These strategies allowed to obtain varied and valuable information, contributing to a complete understanding of the phenomenon investigated.

4.7 Procedure

The methodological process was developed through cyclical phases, typical of educational action research:

1. Recognition of the context and preliminary reflection, aimed at identifying the characteristics of the current curriculum, pedagogical practices and the particularities of the tourist environment.
2. Reflexive characterization of the findings, through the analysis of the participants' voices and documentary review, which allowed the identification of curricular tensions and needs.
3. Co-creation of the curricular proposal, based on the dialogue between theoretical knowledge and practical experiences, configuring a first contextualized curriculum model.
4. Collective recognition and validation, through systematic feedback that made it possible to adjust, strengthen and legitimize the curricular proposal constructed.

5. RESULTS

Phase 1: preparatory and voluntary immersion of the participants

Recognizing that the ongoing research is a collective project whose organization, approach, and development stem from the participation of the entire community—in this case, the English teachers of the two institutions under study: The José María Córdoba Educational Institution in Montería and the Lacides C. Bersal Educational Institution in Lorica. An open call was sent to all teachers, allowing for dialogue and recognition of the participating voices in configuring the problem and approaching the objectives of the research.

At the José María Córdoba Educational Institution, the link was established with the directors and the English department coordinator, and ten teachers participated. At the other institution, direct dialogue was established with the academic coordinator, and three English teachers participated.

The meeting was held outside of the institutions to avoid creating an obligation, as it was an open and voluntary invitation. Nine teachers participated and contributed to the construction of the work plan based on recognizing the problem and setting objectives.

Figure 1 Community immersion

Once the problem and its objectives were raised, the systematic feedback to the teachers was carried out through a scheme that demonstrates the logic and coherence between the stipulated approaches. See figure.
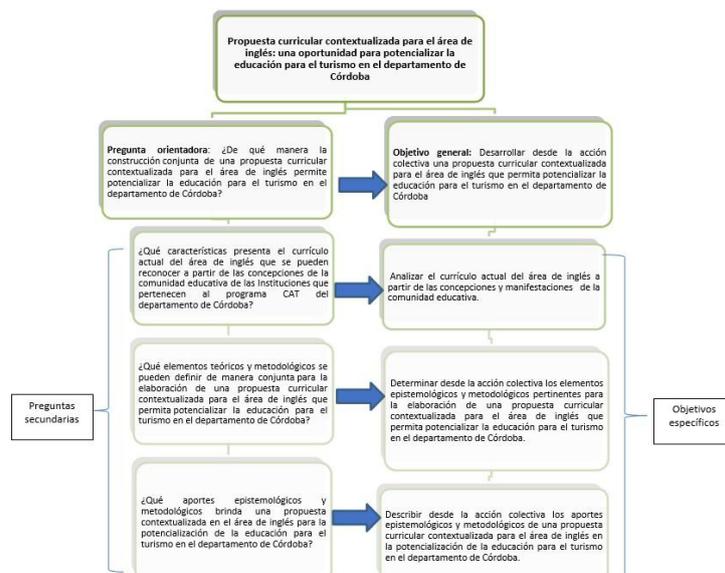
Figure 1 Systematic return of the preparatory phase

After this systematic return, the minutes are signed with which it is recorded that the initial configuration of the research was approved by the professors, all agreeing with the intention of the research.

Phase 2: Reflective characterization of initial findings

The intentionality of the first specific objective of this research is oriented to the characterization of the current curriculum model for the area of English, which had four systemic scenarios

- Semi-structured interview with teacher
- Focus group with students
- Analysis and interpretation of documents related to the nature of the research, such as the Institutional Educational Project and the Foreign Language Area Plan
- Systematic return of findings

These contexts fostered openness to dialogue

from diverse perspectives related to teaching and learning English. The goal was to reveal teachers' daily activities and opinions on the curricular structure based on their experience. The study also sought to understand learners' perceptions through a focus group, which allowed for dialogue based on their ideas about learning and teaching English. The focus group also allowed for an understanding of learners' points of view on how these processes are developed in practice. Both the interviews and the focus group lasted two hours and were analyzed for about two weeks. This analysis led to the formulation of new knowledge based on the testimonies of the co-research community. Regarding ethical considerations, aspects such as informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and co-investigator participation in the action research process and decision-making were specified (Löftman et al., 2004).

Semi-structured interviews: Processing, Analysis and Discussion

To manage the primary information obtained from the interviews, we began the open coding process, which involves approaching the data to reveal notions, conceptions, and meanings. This approach aligns with Strauss and Corbin's (2002) perspective, which emphasizes the importance of opening the text to reveal its underlying thoughts and ideas (p. 111).

Then, to establish connections within the information, axial coding was used. This process involves establishing links between the categories obtained in open coding and their subcategories. According to Strauss & Corbin (2002), a category represents a phenomenon—that is, a problem, issue, event, or occurrence—that is significant to the interviewees (p. 137).

The result of this systematic coding process was the organization of recurring concepts around three research categories: curriculum, English teaching, and tourism education. The qualitative analysis software ATLAS. Ti (version 22.0.1), which facilitated the discussion and inspection of information and its conceptual interconnection by establishing semantic networks. This tool was chosen because of the variety of information collected, and pseudonyms were used for the participants. The teachers were named (D), each with a numerical subscript to differentiate them.

Selective coding was used to obtain a higher level of abstraction of the information collected in the interview. According to Bonilla & López (2016), it is a third stage of information analysis that implies a greater degree of abstraction. It aims to establish the conceptual and theoretical relationships between

codes or families and concretize them in theorizing (p. 308).

The semantic network built with ATLAS.ti for the curriculum category shows the relationship between the characteristics of the currently implemented English teaching model, its relationship with the context and resources used, and its strengths. It is evident that a central category revolves around organizing coherent curricula to the context. The participating teachers' statements are translated into teaching and learning processes mainly based on transmitting knowledge that prioritizes memorizing grammatical structures and repetitive learning through continuous exercises. This inclines English language teaching to be instrumental, prioritizing grammatical structure and memorizing linguistic sequences.
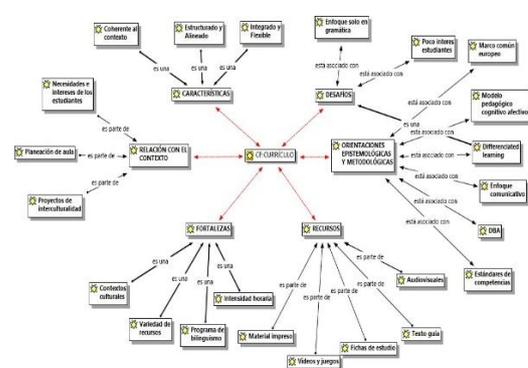
Figure 2 Preliminary Conceptions of Curriculum

On this aspect, the interviewees pointed out the following:

[…] The curriculum is aligned with the country's educational policies. Common European Framework, DBA, affective cognitive pedagogical model, active methodologies, multiple intelligences, emotional intelligence, Bloom's taxonomy, Task-based learning, Project-based learning, but this does not guarantee that it will be adapted to the needs and interests of students and the cultural context in which it is implemented. D1

[…] The curriculum must be structured and aligned with the curricular objectives; it must integrate the different components of learning (cognitive, affective, and communicative) and prioritize the content that can be assessed in the national tests. D4

[…] The curricula that we currently develop in the institution make evaluative bets towards grammar and there is little presence of other language skills, which generates little interest on the part of D6 students

[…]The guidelines of competency-based teaching and the cognitive-affective pedagogical model are followed. D5

[…] The curriculum is oriented according to the parameters of the MEN, working considering the DBA, the standards and the curricular guidelines. The work is carried out in work teams according to the area of training. D7

From the analysis of the semantic network for the category of curriculum, there is evidence of a strong tendency towards the development of the curriculum through a communicative approach, as the most appropriate to work with the number of students in each classroom and to control discipline, which leads classes to prioritize theoretical content and developed through individual activities. In this regard, the teachers express:

[…] The communicative approach will always be an important basis for the development of a good English curriculum that, hand in hand with the communicative method, will lead to favorable results for students. D3

[…] Due to the particularities of the groups I manage, I have used a behaviorist model to manage discipline a little and that allows the communicative approach of the class to be developed with some success. Little homework because not all students have accompaniment at home. D9

[…] I guide my processes in teaching by competencies following a methodology and/or communicative approach. D2

[…] Teaching English with a communicative and functional approach. Institutional pedagogical model and national and local bilingualism program. D8

From the semantic analysis of the curriculum category, another common element between the voices of the interviewees is evidenced, and that is the difficulty that teachers find in linking the activities that characterize the context in their curricular planning, alluding to the fact that it is necessary to use situations typical of English-speaking countries because they are not present in

the context of Cordoba. They affirm that in their classes they do daily activities, but they do not agree with the guidelines of the standardized assessment, which is based on a technical vocabulary that is mandatory for students to know. In the words of the teachers, they state:

[…] The topics to be taught must be prioritized to obtain better performance by students in each of the topics and activities carried out. D1

[…] There are expressions that have an international context as their origin. Also, there are activities or places that are not in our context, so other countries and/or cultures should be mentioned. D2

[…] Yes, but to a small extent. That is, the context is included in the institution's activities, but the area includes them to a small extent. In my case, I include them in my planning in order to have real and tangible examples of life outside the institution. D3

[…] Yes, sometimes I have, as this helps make learning more practical and meaningful for students. Although sometimes the conditions do not lend themselves since the intensity of the hours is very low and you do not have enough time to plan and carry out this type of activity. D4

[…] work in accordance with the guidelines given by the guide texts. D7

[…] Rarely. And if it has been done, a significant sequence of the process has not been carried out. D9

[…] None. Time does not lend itself to interdisciplinary approaches. D5

Among the difficulties referred to, strong semantic lines were found in which the teachers agree, and that is the little time for the execution of contextualized content and the little relevance of these in the real evaluation context. Subsequently, the analysis of the English teaching category was carried out, using the ATLAS.ti tool, originating the following semantic network:
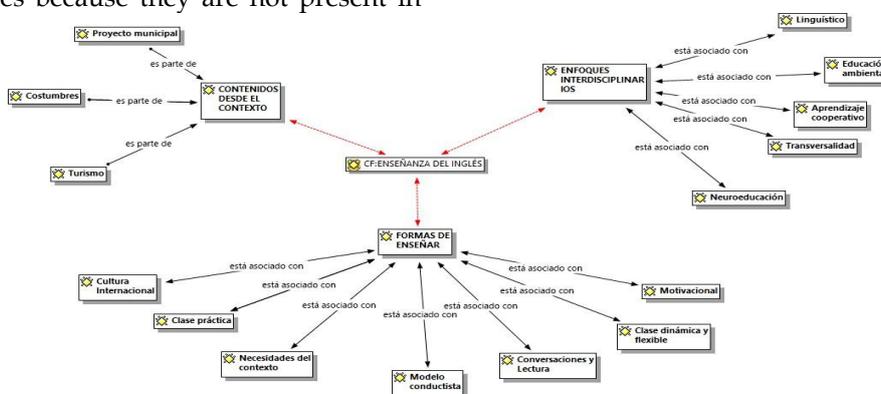

Figure 3. Preliminary conceptions about teaching English

It accounts for the different ways of teaching English. The diagram has three large subcategories:

ways of teaching, interdisciplinary approaches, and content from the context. The predominant way of

teaching is traditional teaching, which focuses on instructing grammar and vocabulary. According to the analysis, this methodology is based on the idea that the best way to learn a language is to study the rules and then practice them.

Another category emphasizes communicative teaching, which focuses on using language in real situations. The idea is that the best way to learn a language is to use it to communicate. There is little presence of teaching based on a student-centered approach, which focuses on students' needs and interests.

The semantic network shows that the conceptions given by teachers overlap, indicating that different teaching approaches are not mutually exclusive. Teachers say that many language teaching programs use a combination of different approaches. However, grammar-based teaching predominates in the institutions under study because teachers cannot develop content through communicative teaching; students lack experience using the language. To reinforce the findings of this category, teachers express:

[…] The way of teaching should be dynamic, flexible, organized, varied and always in accordance with the country's educational policies. D1

[…] activities such as English Day, which are of a national order, students investigate and learn about the culture of other countries such as food, tourism, carnivals, etc. D4

[…] Time does not lend itself to interdisciplinary approaches. D6

[…] He used activities that are pleasant to the students such as conversations and reading of texts. We carry out activities that favor the care of the environment by relating it to English, following themes. D8

[…] I work from a transversal perspective, mainly guiding students in the field of achieving communicative objectives with the language. That is, to provide tools for students to function in situations where they can understand the language and be understood. Banking scenarios, airports, cafes, restaurants, etc. Citizenship skills combined with language and taking English-speaking countries as a reference. D9

From the dialogue with the teachers, it is evident that they intend to work on the teaching of English from an approach other than grammatical because this is a function of the results of the National tests and that they would be interested in working from a contextualized approach that allows the teaching process to permeate from the realities and needs that surround the student. for the benefit of getting to

know its culture, tourism and other activities that characterize its territory.

Similarly, the interview allowed a semantic network to be made according to the category of education for tourism, the following image was elaborated through the ATLAS.ti tool.
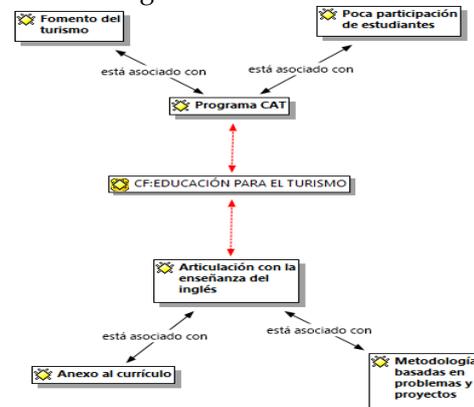
Figure 4 Preliminary conceptions of education for tourism

It demonstrates that tourism can positively impact education and vice versa. Tourism can provide intercultural learning opportunities, encourage student engagement, and enhance the quality of education by fostering a broader understanding of the world and cultural diversity. The dialogue with the teachers revealed that most of them are unaware of the "Tourism-Friendly Schools" program, and they do not use it in their classes.

[…] I have no knowledge about it D2

[…] No. No activities have been carried out from the area with this program. D3

[…] Very little. I know from other sources that it is a program that helps to promote culture, tourism and leisure activities. D4

[…] So far I haven't used it. D7

[…] My current students did not participate, but the graduates did, some have been translator guides, I know that it is a program that has been developed for several years in our institution where several areas contribute and collaborate. This program is focused on making the municipality known nationally and internationally, but English does not work. D8

[…] There has been no participation from my students and as a teacher I have no knowledge of the program. D9

When considering the participants' voices, they express pleasure in recognizing the geography, places, and special events of Córdoba through the English language. They feel pleased to include this knowledge in their current curriculum through vocabulary, expressions, audiovisual material, and other resources that allow them to fluently describe

the region and its notable places and events.

Focus Group, Analysis and Discussion

This strategy was developed with 25 students from all levels of basic secondary school. Through open and respectful dialogue, the voices of the participants were heard. Images of the activity are attached.

Figure 2 Open dialogue with students

Using the ATLAS.ti tool, we decoded the information received from students and generated several semantic networks, each of which accounts for a category of study. The first alludes to the curriculum. The following is a semantic network attached to it.
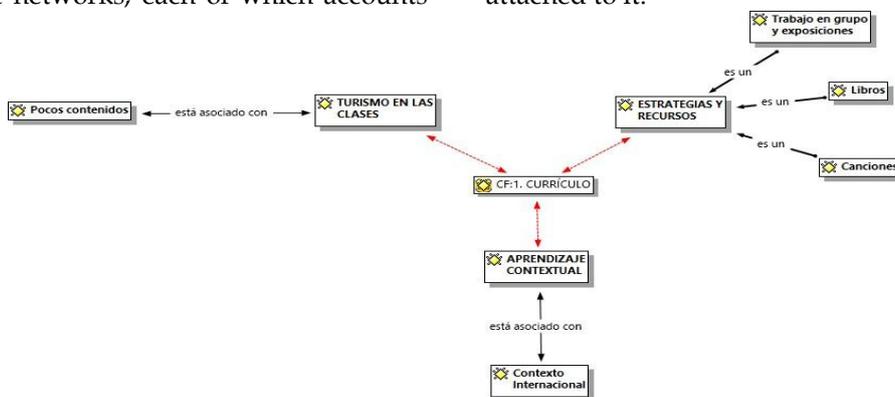
Figure 5 Students' conceptions of the curriculum

Based on an open dialogue, the students stated that their classes are developed through a grammatical approach and that the strong component is the guide texts. From the semantic network it can be deduced that learning is based on exemplification through the international context and that there is little content associated with tourism. In their words they express:

[…] My English classes have many activities, they are two hours of class, they review notebooks and take notes E15

[…] The English classes are very good, you understand and the teacher explains and explains if you don't understand E1

[…] No, they have told us about the context, they talk about Canada, some places in London and the sports of the countries where there is snow from animals such as the panda. E6

[…] It would be good if they talked about the places in Cordoba, not always in the United States, in

Canada, but about the tourist places in Montería, in Cordoba. E9

[…] They always mention foreign places to us, I would like them to focus better on places in the department because that way we will learn about the culture. E7

Reflections from this category point toward a curriculum with an excessive presence of instrumentalized resources, such as photocopies and workshops. Participants also mentioned that their activities are oriented toward situations outside their territory, and they expressed interest in learning about the context of their department in the English field.

During a second stage of the focus group, three questions related to English teaching were discussed. Below is the semantic network created using the ATLAS.ti tool.
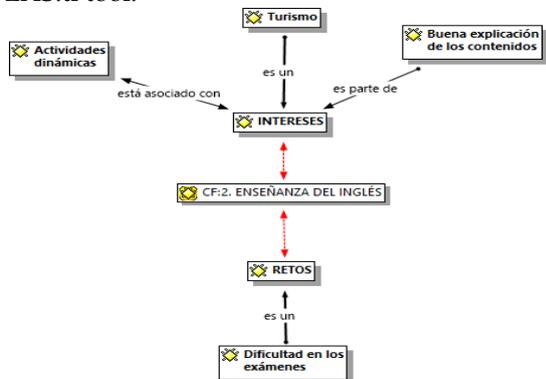
Figure 6 Students' conceptions of English teaching

The trends found show that students agree that their teachers explain in a simple way, through the use of games, challenges or other strategies that arouse their interest, that they strive to memorize rules and grammatical forms because it is what they evaluate most in the SABER 11 tests. From their words they state:

[…] What I like the most are the activities because they are the topic we are teaching, they are easy, we notice the mistakes E1

[…] I like her way of explaining, she explains slowly and if there are doubts she takes the time to explain it to us. E10

[…] When we have to go out and do the activities, the teacher gives us the time. E6 [...] I like that he uses songs, that he always explains to us, that he takes the time. E14 [...] The way he explains the classes is dynamic, he explains with what one knows. E4

[…] It uses a different method, it uses songs or exhibitions and that helps us to understand better. E9

At this point it is necessary to mention that the moderator constantly established dialogue with the students who with one voice expressed their pleasure to work in English on the topic of tourism as a great learning opportunity. On this the students expressed:

[…] I would like to be taught about tourism because if another person from another place or country comes I know how to explain. E9

[…] I would like you to tell me about Montería and Córdoba that I do not know and that I would like to know and know E1

[…] I would like to because at some point in my professional life, if I would like to travel and English would serve me E10

Finally, the focus group closed with three questions related to the category of education for tourism, through the Atlas.ti tool a semantic network was thrown that is shown below.
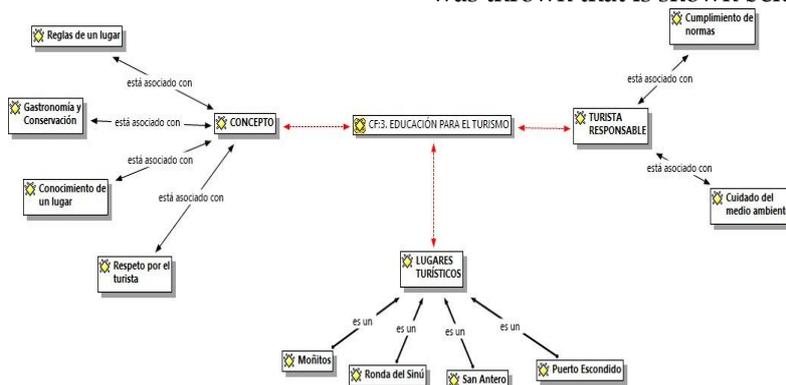
Figure 7 Students' conceptions of education for tourism

The analysis of the semantic network allowed us to conclude that for students, education for tourism refers to the rules of places, gastronomy, and respect for tourist sites. This shows that it is necessary to promote their development from school to generate learning spaces that link the culture and the territory that surrounds the student. In this way, education for tourism, in addition to contributing to the guidelines of this activity, could allow generating spaces for reflection that lead to linking it in the processes of teaching English. In this order, the students express:

[…] I understand about education for tourism, they

teach us where we can go and also how to take care of tourists who come from abroad. E6

[…]It serves to know and promote tourism in Cordoba. E25

[…]It would help us when a car arrives and does not know the rules, for example, if it goes to a beach it knows that it cannot have the volume high. E12

[…]It would serve to have prior knowledge and the rules of a given place E18

[…]It refers to gastronomy and conservation. E22

Also, in this category, the need for the school to educate the student to be a responsible tourist with the environment was emphasized. In this regard, the students express:

[…] I hardly travel, but when I do I don't leave waste on site, I consider myself a responsible tourist. E20

[…] I consider myself a responsible tourist because I comply with the rules of the place, you don't have to throw garbage. E17

[…] I consider myself a responsible tourism because my family has a cabin in Coveñas and I comply with the rules of not playing loud music, of not throwing garbage. E3 [...] I consider myself a responsible tourist because I comply with the rules, do not throw garbage, classify garbage in the order, where the paper goes. E16

From what the students said, it is highlighted that for them the classes would be more interesting if they were with examples from their context and that they would like to learn about the care of the environment through the tourism-English relationship.

Documentary review, analysis and discussion

This process lasted three weeks during which the PEI, the English area plan and the curriculum of two institutions that belong to the CAT program "Tourism-Friendly Schools" were analyzed through a documentary matrix, for a better understanding the codes A1 and A2 were used. The analysis was carried out from three criteria: description of the document, results and observations, detailing for each one three indicators, the first referring to its official commitment to the CAT program, the second and third to the contributions from the mission and vision to said program.

After the analysis of the information collected, it is evident that the official documents do not have the "CAT program" referenced, in the documentary review the following findings were found:

[…]It is an 81-page document with four macro chapters referring to school management, each of them has several sub-processes, but none of them mentions tourism as an activity related to the processes carried out in the school. A1

[…]The area plan is based on the official documents of the Ministry of National Education. There is no evidence of aspects related to the specific context where the institution is located, or about the region. A2

According to these findings, it is concluded that there is no transversality reflected in the PEI or the English area plan of the two institutions studied. In these documents, tourism is not officially recognized as an educational activity, despite its potential to contribute to all areas of knowledge and help students value their environment, culture, and tourism. Similarly, the mission and vision of these institutions do not explicitly include tourism; rather, they aim to train competent students for the labor sector by strengthening English language skills. To conclude this stage, a systematic return to the community was carried out through a scheme that demonstrates the triangulation between the findings (Figure 8).
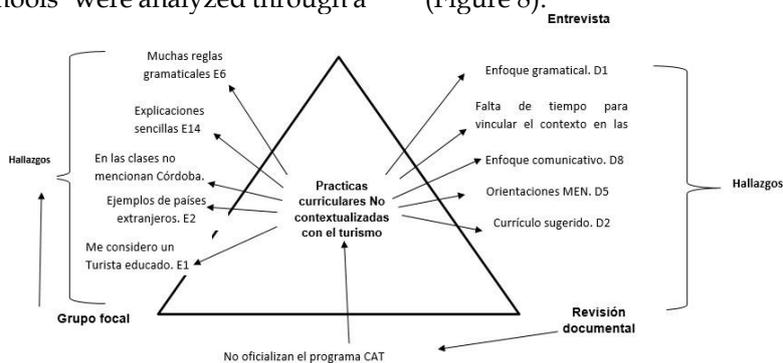
Figure 8 Systematic return of preliminary findings

Phase 3: Configuration of the contextualized curricular proposal for the English area

The development of the contextualized curricular proposal was established as the core of the educational action-research process. This proposal was based on the coherent integration of diagnostic findings and collective contributions from previous stages. This phase represented a transition from critical reflection to tangible curricular action, enabling the redefinition of the English curriculum

based on the sociocultural and tourism-specific characteristics of the Córdoba region.

The resulting proposal is based on the idea of the curriculum as a dynamic, contextualized social practice, in which the environment becomes fundamental and ceases to be a secondary element in the teaching-learning process. In this context, territory, local culture, and tourist activities become valid pedagogical content and scenarios that facilitate the connection between school knowledge and social activities in the environment.

One of the most notable results of this stage was restructuring the educational purpose of the English program. Language becomes a useful tool for intercultural communication and social interaction in real-life tourist situations, moving beyond its traditional, isolated grammar focus. This new perspective enabled teachers and students alike to recognize English's potential to describe cultural heritage, recount local traditions, guide visitors, and accentuate the territory's value from an educational standpoint.

From a curricular perspective, the proposal reorganizes learning objectives, prioritizing the development of communicative, intercultural, and civic skills aligned with the demands of the local tourist environment. The content is organized around problematic situations and contexts specific to the area, such as tourist routes, cultural expressions, traditional cuisine, and the conservation of natural heritage. This reorganization favors the contextualization of linguistic knowledge and contributes to meaningful learning.

In terms of methodology, the curricular proposal incorporates active pedagogical strategies that promote student engagement and leadership. Project-based learning, on-site teaching, and collaborative work are established as core methodologies, enabling learners to apply English to authentic, tourism-related tasks. These strategies facilitate the integration of the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approach, directing language learning toward the specific objectives and real needs of the socioeconomic environment.

Similarly, the proposal transforms the teacher's role into that of a mediator and facilitator of learning. The teacher is responsible for connecting academic knowledge with students' daily experiences. This change in role promotes flexible, reflective pedagogical practices focused on collaborative knowledge construction and strengthening student autonomy.

Another important result of this phase was the redefinition of the evaluation process. Evaluation is now seen as an ongoing, contextualized training process that assesses students' communicative performance in real or simulated tourism-related situations. This evaluative approach goes beyond measuring isolated linguistic content, allowing evidence of progress in the practical application of the language, intercultural interaction, and resolution of specific communicative situations within the environment.

Those involved reported that the proposal for an adapted curriculum had a beneficial effect on their motivation to learn English and their sense of community. Both professors and students agreed that including tourism as the central focus of the curriculum reinforces its relevance and helps position the institution as an active agent in local progress. In summary, Phase 3 facilitated the creation of a contextualized curriculum proposal that connects the curriculum, English instruction, and tourism education. This proposal establishes itself as a viable educational alternative that meets the needs of the community and promotes comprehensive education aimed at the sustainable development of the Córdoba region.

Phase 4: Collective recognition of the contributions of the curricular proposal

The last specific objective of this research immersion was to jointly construct the contributions of the contextualized curricular proposal for the English area. To begin, discussion and reflection groups were formed and met for two hours. Through a workshop guide, questions were posed to encourage ongoing dialogue around the three categories of research and unveil the contributions of a contextualized curricular proposal. Teachers were given pseudonyms beginning with the letter D, followed by a number.

This aligns with Fahad's (2021) ideas, which highlight the vital influence of the social context, including teachers, family, and community, on the process of learning a second language. Fahad emphasizes that social identity and motivation are necessary for learning a second language because they strengthen the notion of contextualized teaching.

In this phase, the co-research group first responded to the question.

What do you understand by epistemological contributions of a contextualized proposal for the area of English? to which the participants responded: […] are the benefits that a contextualized proposal provides to the process of training students. D3
[…] It is the relationship of the territory, culture,

customs that characterize a territory with the English curriculum. D4

[…] It is speaking from the realities of each context in the area of English. D5

[…] It's watching English I don't eat Language hegemonic but as a contextualized language. D6

[…] It allows you to work on English from local realities without ignoring global content. D7

[…] potentiate the activities of the territory from the classrooms. D8

[…] To form critical thinking in the student, viewing the tourist activity as a trainer. D9

[…] Think of a curriculum whose contents are friendly to the context and its activities. D10

[…] are all the contents defined to work with a contextualized curriculum D1

From the voices of the co-creators, epistemological contributions of the curriculum are defined as all the benefits that the development of contextualized content that accounts for the relationship between theory and practice brings. It is to recognize the benefits of working under contextualized curricula in order to promote critical thinking and respectful of the student for his environment and territory.

In the same order, the participants were asked about: What are the epistemological contributions of a contextualized proposal for the area of English? whose answers were:

[…] The main contribution is towards the recognition of the historical value of the department of Córdoba as a tourist power in the country. D2

[…] The appreciation for one's own, the rootedness for the culture of the territory in the new generations who need it so much. D5

[…] It makes language and teaching strategies easier because the student can relate knowledge to real situations that allow them to remember it in the long term. D3

[…] It strengthens the development of English from a communicative approach because the student finds it easier to talk about what they have seen, what they know. D4

[…] It encourages the development of skills that allow the student to perform in the workplace. D9

[…] It contributes to the care and preservation of the environment, through the teaching of tourism ethics. D1

[…] the formation of the tourist vocation in students from an early age, in order to promote the care and preservation of the environment. D7

[…] It allows you to value the territory and its benefits. D6

[…] It allows the linking of activities representative

of the context in educational processes, in this case tourism. D2

This dialogue revealed that the co-creators consider the promotion of vocation from the classrooms as epistemic contributions of a contextualized proposal.

Tourism, respect for the territory, the interest of the student in preserving the environment, the link of tourism activity in the teaching-learning processes of the school, among others. This argument is supported by Eisner (1998) who states that the determination of what content to teach and how to do it is crucial to influence the entire teaching process, in search of an education based on the direct relationship between theory and contextualized practice. Thus, these aspects are essential for educational institutions to be able to effectively carry out the curriculum and teaching, since both constitute the fundamental foundations of education.

Next, a question was raised regarding the objectives provided by a contextualized proposal for the area of English, to which the participants expressed:

[…] the strengthening of responsible tourism activity. D7

[…] Respect for the territory and the activities that characterize it. D 9 [...] to promote care for the environment. D1

[…] Teaching English from the realities of each context. D2

[…] link the territory, its customs, beliefs, characteristics in the teaching of English. D4

[…] to promote the teaching of English not as an Anglo-Saxon language but as a universal language that can be contextualized. D6

[…] dialogue with the knowledge, customs, and traditions of a territory to strengthen the teaching of English. D 8

[…] Promote tourism from the classroom through contextualized teaching. D10

The objectives set out from the dialogue with the participants recognize that this proposal can offer a list of goals to be achieved under a contextualized curriculum, such as the promotion of tourism, dialogue with knowledge, the recognition of English not as a dominant hegemonic language but as a language permeable by the conditions of the context where it is learned, among others. These contributions in terms of objectives are aligned with what Morin (2006) presented when he states that "even if we maintain and discover new oases of certainty, we must be aware that we are sailing in an ocean of uncertainty" (p. 76). From this perspective, an epistemic structure has been developed in the

educational field that has established a specific approach to knowledge, where meanings, categories, laws and principles have been defined that have outlined a direction that, at present, is being questioned from the theory and practice of educational processes. The reason behind this is that education has been conceived as a set of static and mechanical actions, where movement, dynamics, emergence and uncertainty are considered anomalies instead of attributes inherent to a complex reality and it is precisely the contribution from the objectives of this proposal when thinking about the fulfillment of goals not only standardized and monitored globally but locally.

Likewise, in this discussion workshop, the methodological contributions of a contextualized proposal were worked on, starting with the question: What do you understand by methodological contributions of a contextualized proposal for the area of English? to which the co-creators expressed:

[…] The development of activities that promote, characterize and study the territory.
D3

[…] to enhance activities from the territory. D1

[…] Encourage the use of active methodologies that allow the learner to learn in relation to theory and practice. D6

[…]to rescue the values, beliefs, customs of a territory through on-site activities. D7

[…] the recognition of the importance of the dialogue of knowledge from local and territorial realities. D4

From this dialogue of knowledge, it is outlined that the participants understand methodological contributions to all strategies that potentiate the recognition of the territory from the processes of educational training, they also define them as any form that allows the teacher to take the specific contents of the area of English to the local realities that permeate the territory where the student is educated.

Continuing with this reflective dialogue, the participants were asked the following question: What methodologies does a contextualized proposal for the area of English provide? who answered as follows:

[…] The dialogue of knowledge with the territory. D.1 [...] Learning in context. D2

[…] The recognition and promotion of tourism as a representative activity of a territory. D3

[…] The dialogue between locals and visitors for the appropriation of vocabulary typical of the tourist activity. D4

[…] Methodologies that make respectful use of the emblematic spaces of the department of Cordoba,

such as on-site teaching. D5

[…] Active listening through dialogue between locals and visitors. D9 [...] Cultural exchanges mediated by ICTs. D8

From the voices of the participants, it is evident that they recognize that a contextualized proposal for the area of English can make methodological contributions based on the establishment of teaching strategies such as dialogue between locals and visitors to potentiate the development of linguistic skills of the English language, cultural exchanges, teaching from the territory, among other contextualized strategies.

Finally, teachers were asked about what are the resources provided by a contextualized proposal for the area of English? To which they replied:

[…] the tourist sites of the department of Córdoba. D1

[…] digital platforms. D2

[…] travel agencies and their brochures on the benefits of the territories. D3 [...] The emblematic spaces of the department of Córdoba. D 4

[…]The history of the department of Córdoba is a resource to promote the skills of Reading, speaking and listening. D 5

[…] the characteristics of the territory as a resource for teaching vocabulary. D6

The responses of the co-creators show that a contextualized proposal lays the foundations of the possible resources to be used to work under an education from the territory, which makes use of the history of the department, its emblematic sites, the monuments, customs, traditions and culture that identify it and can be linked to the teaching of the English language.

From the voices of the participants, a semantic network was generated from their answers using the ATLAS.ti tool, which is presented below:

It shows that the participants agree on aspects such as the teaching of English from the reality of the context, the tourist vocation, the development of skills and the historical value of the territory that links the student.

It also accounts for the contributions of the proposal around the formulation of goals or objectives achievable in the learning process in relation to the contents and in function of the

preservation of the environment, the study of English as a universal language that can be learned in a contextual way, the promotion of responsible tourism, the study of the territory, the dialogue of knowledge, active listening and cultural exchange.

As resources that are provided in a contextualized proposal, the semantic network highlights the unity of criteria of the teachers in that they recognize the digital platforms, the emblematic sites of the department, the travel agencies as potentiating resources of teaching from the territory, for this reason, the lines in the diagram indicate a direct connection between the contents, the objectives and resources with the contextualized proposal for the English area.

After codifying the contributions of the teachers, the systematic devaluation of the findings was

carried out, in which the researcher accounts for the coherence between the phases developed, which, from the IAE, was oriented towards the collective construction of a contextualized curriculum proposal for the area of English, resulting in the second curriculum model, that recognizes their methodological and epistemological contributions and foundations.

Similarly, the systematic returns that resulted were used to close the loop of phases established by the investigation. At the same time, the perspective is extended to emerging initiatives that make it possible to reproduce this experience in other educational institutions that have a curricular approach focused on contextualized education, in this case from tourism. The following images show systematic feedback with both students and teachers.

Figure 5 Systematic return of the second curriculum model

To conclude, the contextualized curriculum model for the English area was shown, which was

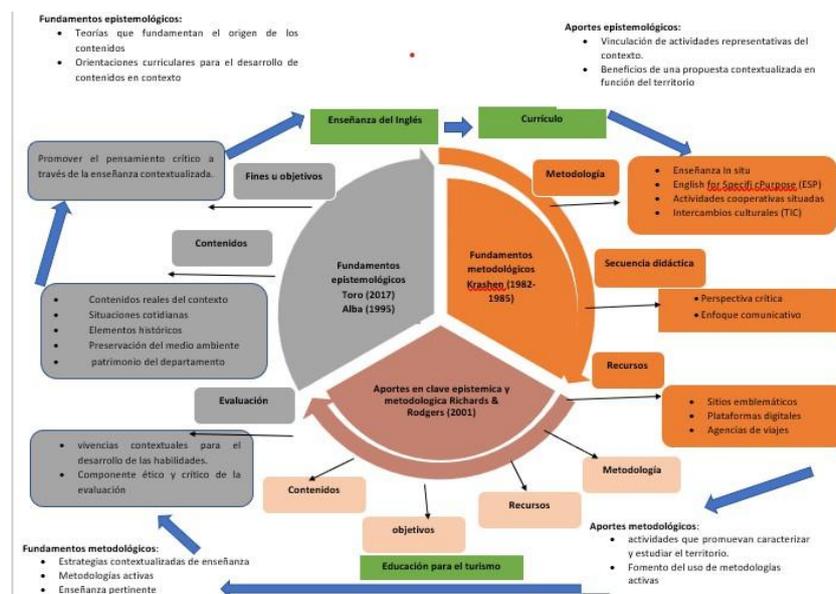born as a co-creative proposal of all the participating agents.

Figure 10 Contextualized Curriculum Model for English Language Instruction

The curriculum model was created based on the ideas of teachers and students who engaged in ongoing dialogue with theory. The authors' work

demonstrates an interweaving of knowledge, where their epistemological foundations highlight the importance of contextualizing teaching and learning

processes. This concept is supported by the incorporation of theoretical ideas, such as those expressed by Stenhouse (1991). This coincides with Toro's (2017) idea of rethinking curricula from their contextual origins.

Similarly, this curriculum model recognizes methodological foundations in strategies that consider territory, culture, and tourism as essential elements in English instruction. As Krashen (1985) expressed when discussing how context can generate the necessary learning stimulus for students to acquire a foreign language, and as Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) promoted when advocating for the English for Specific Purposes approach, the context is important in determining the purpose of language teaching, particularly when addressing technical or practical applicability.

These foundations align with school processes adapted to students' realities and needs, highlighting their methodological and epistemological contributions to providing students with communicative, professional, and axiological skills to recognize and respect their environment.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The research showed that teaching English in tourism-related educational settings still faces significant challenges regarding curriculum standardization and contextualization in teaching and learning processes. In the institutions studied, the English curriculum mainly focuses on complying with national guidelines and preparing students for external exams. This restricts the integration of content and pedagogical approaches coherent with Cordoba's sociocultural and tourist dynamics. This situation demotivates students, causing them to perceive English as abstract knowledge far from their daily lives.

From a socio-critical perspective, the study revealed that curricular transformation is possible by creating spaces for collective reflection and the active participation of educational stakeholders. Educational action research emerged as an appropriate method to redefine the curriculum since it enables the construction of shared meaning and connects theory with practice. In this context, including teachers and students as co-researchers facilitated their engagement in the process and their understanding of the curriculum as a dynamic social practice that can be modified according to the environment.

A key theoretical contribution of this research is redefining the English curriculum as a field of cultural and intercultural mediation. In this framework, language is viewed as a tool for contextual communication rather than merely an object of linguistic study. The contextualized curricular proposal presents an alternative model that integrates territory, local culture, and tourism as central elements of learning. This model helps train students to be critical and aware of their environment and capable of functioning in real situations.

From a pedagogical standpoint, implementing active methodologies and the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approach directs English learning toward specific tourism-related objectives, improving the development of functional communicative skills. This approach promotes meaningful learning and facilitates the application of linguistic knowledge in specific situations, thereby increasing the subject's relevance and its impact on students' overall education.

Additionally, reevaluating assessment as a formative, contextualized process is a significant contribution of the study. It suggests an assessment of learning that focuses on communicative performance and resolving real problems. This evaluative vision ensures consistency between curriculum objectives, educational practices, and contextual demands, thereby improving teaching quality.

In terms of social and educational impact, the research reveals that connecting the curriculum, English language teaching, and tourism education can be an effective strategy for fostering sustainable local development. By connecting the school to the local community, the contextualized curriculum establishes the educational institution as a key player in fostering citizens who value and promote their cultural and tourist environment.

Finally, although the research was carried out in a specific setting, the results offer conceptual and methodological guidelines applicable to other educational contexts with similar features. However, further studies investigating the medium- and long-term effects of the curricular proposal, as well as its adaptation to different educational levels and disciplines, are needed to reinforce the empirical basis for the relevance of adapted curricula in foreign language teaching.

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