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Navigating an eclectic methodology: EFL teachers' perceptions and practices

Explorando percepciones y prácticas bajo una metodología ecléctica

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ABSTRACT: The successful implementation of any method or approach in language teaching depends largely on teachers' attitudes, behaviors, and actions inside and outside the classroom. This quantitative study examines the perceptions and practices of sixty-five EFL teachers regarding the implementation of an eclectic methodology at a prominent public university in Mexico. Its researcher-designed questionnaire revealed that the methodology is flexible and practical, and it is not difficult to implement compared to previous methods. In terms of teaching practices, the analysis uncovered two opposing tendencies: divergent and convergent practices toward the eclectic methodology theoretical principles. Moreover, the top three practices were related to students' language production, which belongs to the convergent tendency. The contribution that these results bring to the ELT field is relevant due to the novelty of the subject of study but, more importantly, to gaining an understanding of how teachers' perceptions shape the way they teach in class in a context where an eclectic methodology is implemented.

KEYWORDS: eclecticism, teaching practices, teachers' perceptions, effectiveness.

RESUMEN: La exitosa implementación de cualquier método o enfoque en la enseñanza de lenguas depende en gran medida a las actitudes, conductas, y acciones del profesorado, dentro y fuera del aula. El presente estudio cuantitativo exploró las percepciones y prácticas de sesenta y cinco profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) a la luz de la implementación de la metodología ecléctica en una reconocida universidad mexicana. A través de un cuestionario, los participantes proporcionaron información que mostró que la metodología es percibida como práctica, flexible, y fácil de implementar comparada con otras. En cuanto a las prácticas de enseñanza, los resultados mostraron dos tendencias opuestas: prácticas convergentes y divergentes hacia los principios teóricos de la metodología ecléctica. Las prácticas docentes más frecuentes de acuerdo con la información recolectada están relacionadas con la producción de los alumnos. La contribución que estos resulta-

dos traen al área es relevante debido a la novedad del tema de estudio, pero aún más importante, para comprender cómo las percepciones de los docentes dan forma a la manera en que enseñan en clase en un contexto donde se implementa una metodología ecléctica.

PALABRAS CLAVE: eclecticismo, práctica docente, percepciones de maestros, efectividad.

1. Introduction

English Language Teaching has undergone theoretical shifts throughout the years, the *post-method era* in the late 1990's allowed specialists in the field to question and reflect on the nature and scope of method (Kumaravadivelu, 1994). Method had been tailored by theorizers to fit the classroom reality instead of empowering teachers' voices to develop a principled and systematic approach to language teaching.

Larsen-Freeman (2000), Mellow (2000), and Richards (2014) used the term *Principled or informed eclecticism* to refer to a pluralistic, coherent and dynamic approach to teaching targeted to address learning objectives and learners' needs. Teachers who subscribe to it hold a body of knowledge and theoretical principles of learning and teaching on which they can rely for designing and evaluating classroom activities. The main difference between this particular way of employing *principled eclecticism* and *eclecticism* is the rationale behind teaching decisions. Gao (2011) highlights that "every decision about classroom instruction and activities is based on a thorough and holistic understanding of all learning theories and related pedagogies".

It has become clear that *principled eclecticism* became an alternative approach for those who are interested in serving the learners instead of methods themselves. This concept motivated the academic authorities at the Languages Department back in 2009 to design and implement an eclectic methodology blending approaches, techniques, and activities to provide learners with better opportunities to learn English successfully.

A group of three people committed themselves to the creation of a different way of teaching languages for the Languages Department. An English Professor, the head of the Languages Department, and the head of the Academic section of the Languages Department collaborated in the design and implementation of the eclectic methodology.

Since its implementation, little has been done to gain a deeper understanding of how teachers perceive the methodology. Therefore, given the importance of this issue and the scarcity of research on teacher perceptions and teaching practices in the Mexican ELT scenario, this research examines English teacher's perceptions towards the eclectic methodology along their practices in the English language classroom.

2. Key concepts behind the eclectic methodology[1]

The aspects that the eclectic methodology hold as principles derive from four teach-

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1 Since there is no published edition of the eclectic methodology, the researcher holds to the experience gathered over the years of teaching, the teacher-training course currently taught at the Languages Department and further independent research on its theoretical principles to describe how the methodology works.

ing methodologies and approaches. Their description will serve as a guide to understand the objectives that each step of the Teaching Cycle attempts to reach as well as the implications held for teachers and learners in the classroom. Camacho, and Moya (2009) articulated a variety of methods and approaches that suited the characteristics of the student community far from fully traditional practices. Parupalli (2018) as cited in Fadi (2022), highlights eight features of eclecticism including catering learners' needs and adding the innovative and enjoyable element to teaching (p.3).

The following methods and approaches will be presented in the order they appear in the Teaching Cycle of the eclectic methodology.

2.1 Grammar- Translation Method
This method was widely used in Europe and in foreign language teaching scenarios up to the 1940's. The basic unit of teaching and practice is the sentence since one of the Grammar-Translation tenets is for students to understand and manipulate the morphology and syntax of the target language. The language theory behind this method is that the first language is maintained as "the reference system in the acquisition of the second language (Stern, 1983)" (Richards, 2001, p. 5). There was no attention to speaking or listening as the major focus was to learn the foreign language through reading passages which were translated into and out of the target language. It was expected that learners could develop a high sense of accuracy by learning the grammatical rules (Richards, 2001, p. 6).

Larsen-Freeman explains that these associated techniques to the Grammar-Translation Method show what learners and teachers were expected to do in class and how language should be learnt under this method (2000, p. 18).

2.2 Audiolingualism
Mukalel (2007) remarks that the audio-lingual method, as it is also known, is "the contemporary version of the direct method with a new emphasis on the communicative value of the foreign language taught in class (p.78)". In the words of Larsen-Freeman (2000) and using the chain drill technique as an example, "the purpose of language learning is to learn how to use the language to communicate" (p. 43). Audiolingualism is underpinned by a structural theory of language and a theory of learning known as behaviorism, the latter can be explained as a habit formation process turning repetitions into the main vehicle to attain language proficiency (Nunan, 2015; Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

Richards (2001) outlines that dialogue repetitions and pattern practice provided learners means for automatization followed by exercises where students were asked to transfer learned patterns into novel situations (p. 25). No matter how criticized this method was in the 1970's, the techniques spawned by the method can adequately address to certain needs in the language classroom.

2.3 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)
Widdowson (1983) reflected on the difference between competence and capacity.

For the first time, he defined competence as the knowledge of the linguistic and sociolinguistic conventions. Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) contributed with their own definition; competence refers to the knowledge about a language and other aspects of language use dividing it into three categories: grammatical principles, knowledge of how to use the language in a social context and how to combine them according to discourse principles.

Canale (1983) later added the notion of performance by contrasting capacity from manifestation in real communication distancing this notion from Chomsky's concept of performance. When presenting the model of communicative competence, there were four main components as shown in the diagram on the right:

Influenced by a developing frame upon which a Communicative Competence model was being built, a teaching approach was developed along. Richards (1998) explains that this approach/method "starts from a theory of language as communication (p.159)". Meaning and interaction are paramount under this conception of language. The goal of CLT is to develop communicative competence and in order to accomplish it there are several techniques.

Action-Oriented Approach

The task that is embedded in the eclectic methodology belongs to the Action-Oriented Approach. Described in the Common European Framework of Reference (2001) and identified as pedagogical task, it "involves a strategic activation of specific competences in order to carry out a set of purposeful actions in a particular domain with a clearly defined goal and a specific outcome (p. 157)". As learners are viewed as "social agents" that use the language, communicative pedagogical tasks engage them in "interaction, production, reception, or mediation whilst real communication is happening within the language classroom (p. 157)".
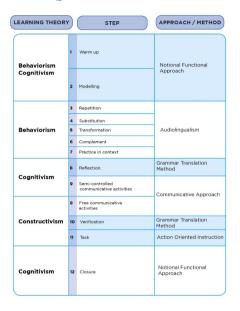
These tasks are pedagogic in nature. However, they are intended to involve learners in meaningful communication while reflecting how language is used in life-like situations. The emphasis that is placed under this approach is not merely in accuracy or fluency but rather on the successful completion of the task. In other words, "how students expressed, negotiated, and comprehended meaning in order to achieve a communication goal (p.158)."

Eclectic Methodology: how does the Teaching Cycle work?

The eclectic methodology has two different cycles: The Teaching Cycle and the Verification Cycle. The Teaching Cycle entails twelve steps to teach English in terms of language notions and functions; the learning theories, approaches, and methods are intricately weaved as shown in the figure below.

LEARNING THEORY	STEP		APPROACH / METHOD
Behaviorism Cognitivism	1	Warm up	Notional Functional Approach
	2	Modelling	
Behaviorism	3	Repetition	Audiolingualism
	4	Substitution	
	5	Transformation	
	6	Complement	
	7	Practice in context	
Cognitivism	8	Reflection	Grammar Translation Method
	9	Semi-controlled communicative activities	Communicative Approach
Constructivism	9	Free communicative activities	
	10	Verification	Grammar Translation Method
	11	Task	Action Oriented Instruction
Cognitivism	12	Closure	Notional Functional Approach

Note. Theories, methods, and approaches in the Eclectic Methodology

Warm-up and Modelling are the first two steps in which the teacher sets the scene to introduce the notional-functional content to learners. Contextualization and meaning are paramount at this point. The following eight steps focus on form rather than in meaning. The next steps such as repetition, substitution, transformation, completion, and practice in context embody the practice that ultimately lead to the independent use of the notion-function in context. These steps are taken from the Audiolingualism Method (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

The Reflection and Verification steps are characterized by the explicit instruction

of Grammatical content where students are encouraged to identify the rules underlying the contextualized examples (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Semi-controlled and free communicative activities place importance in learners' written and oral production in the target language. The task that is embedded in the Eclectic Methodology belongs to the Action-Oriented Approach. Described in the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2001) and identified as pedagogical task, it "involves a strategic activation of specific competences in order to carry out a set of purposeful actions in a particular domain with a clearly defined goal and a specific outcome" (CEF, 2001). The last step, Closure, summarizes what has been taught in the lesson highlighting the notional-functional content.
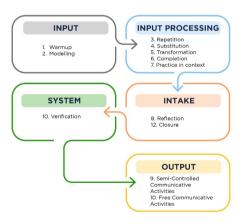
2.2 VanPatten's Input Processing Influence in the Eclectic Methodology

The notion of Input Processing is the backbone of the eclectic methodology construction; the twelve steps represent the stages that learners undergo as language is being acquired. SLA had a strong influence in the design of the eclectic methodology and served as the foundation for their own set of beliefs as it provided cutting-edge knowledge. The Languages Department sought to find new answers for rather old questions embedded in a completely new paradigm of teaching and learning languages. As shown in the diagram below, the twelve steps of the eclectic methodology are aligned to a stage of the acquisition theory proposed by VanPatten (1996). The didactic proposal based on the Input Process is called Processing Instruction (PI). PI

is defined by Sanz and VanPatten (1998 in Hashemnezhad, 2013) as "a psycholinguistically motivated focus on form that is adjunct to communicative language teaching and/or to comprehension-based approaches (p.50)". One of its main objectives is to equip learners with efficient strategies for input processing while providing principles to foster form-meaning connections.

Along with this meaning-connection process, another process happens when learners process a sentence during comprehension that VanPatten labels as parsing. In his words, parsing is "the projection of some kind of syntactic structure onto an utterance as it is heard (2003, p.35)". When teaching, this happens a number of times when students predict how the sentence should be completed, or what comes next when a sentence is read out-loud. The options retrieved from the students' developing system come into play when doing so.

Figure 2
The Eclectic Methodology: steps according to the Input Processing notion

The information shown in Figure 2 depicts the progression of the twelve steps of the Teaching Cycle as they are aligned to the Input Processing notion.

3. Perceptions and Practices in English Language Teaching

Perceptions have a potent influence on how people view reality; hence, teachers' perceptions of language teaching and learning determine, to some extent, their teaching practices, their role within the classroom, their attitude towards the language, ultimately behaving in a certain way according to such set of perceptions. Jain (2005) defines perception as "the process through which the information from outside environment is selected, received, organized, and interpreted to make it meaningful. Input of meaningful information results in decisions and actions (p. 48)". Thereby, perceptions from teachers who have been teaching under the Eclectic Methodology can potentially contribute to the understanding of teachers' practices and the relationship between them.

Studies exploring perceptions and practices have been thriving in educational research since they take part in the teaching and learning process. Lara, Geoffrey, and Gonzalez (2016), Castillo, Pinto & Alcocer (2019), explored teachers' perceptions from different standpoints. Lara et al. (2016) studied teachers' perceptions towards Content Based Instruction (CBI), and whether or not they would recommend it to their peers. Findings revealed that teachers considered CBI an inappropriate pedagogical approach within their institutional and cultural contexts of their own schools. Castillo,

Pinto & Alcocer (2019) explored perceptions of English language teachers from public high schools in the Mexican state of Yucatan. Among the findings, researchers reported that perceptions influence teachers' cognition about language and teaching. However, there are fewer studies exploring teachers' perceptions and practices under an eclectic methodology.

Addressing teachers' perceptions towards ELT methodologies and their effectiveness, Hughes and Chen (2008) found that there is a rising conflict with teachers' view of their role in class as counselors and facilitators, which is why there is still a tendency of dominance in teacher talking time and traditional teaching related techniques.

Given the novelty of the issue and the scarcity of research on teachers´ perceptions, eclectic methodology and teaching practices, the present study aims to contribute to the field and mirror the current interactions between them in the Foreign Language Teaching scenario. The objectives are to describe teachers' perceptions towards this eclectic methodology and explore their teaching practices under the light of an eclectic methodology.
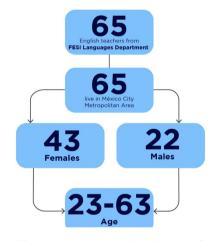
4. Methodology

According to the research objectives and the nature of the information pursued, it was necessary to take advantage of both, qualitative and quantitative approaches to better understand the phenomenon as well as to support the contributions that the study will have in the English teaching context of the target institution. The type of research in which a researcher combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration is called mixed methods research (Johnson et al. 2007).

4.1 Participants

Sixty-five English teachers from the Languages department participated in the study, all participants reported to live in Mexico City Metropolitan area; 22 were males and 43 females aged between 23-63 as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3
Information about participants

Note. Age, gender, and residency of participants

Among the participants, almost half of the participants hold a B.A. in English Language Teaching, the second larger part hold a B.A. in a different area of knowledge, and the rest of the participants represent a wide range of professional development from a Teacher's Diploma to a Ph.D. degree as seen in Chart 1.

Chart 1
Highest level of participants' formal education

Levels of education	N. of participants
PhD./ MD/ J.D.	2
Master in any other area of knowledge	5
Master in English Language Teaching	2
Bachelor Degree in any other area of knowledge	18
Bachelor degree in English Language Teaching	30
Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT)	2
Curso de Formación de Profesores de Idiomas/ Lenguas	5
Unanswered	1

4.2 Instruments

The questionnaire was divided into three sections to facilitate the distribution of information and to better analyze the data collected. On a broad sense, the questionnaire topic structure was designed as follows: Teachers' General Information, Perceptions of the eclectic methodology, and teaching practices.

The second and third section included Likert type-scale questions, multiple choice as well as open ended questions. The scale included five levels of agreement, importance, and frequency.

4.3 Procedure

The call for participation was e-mailed to all 80 in-service teachers from the Languages Department. Voluntary participation consent and confidentiality were guaranteed to all participants. Sixty-five responses were received via Google Forms.

4.4 Data Analysis

Analyzing frequencies obtained from Likert-type questions was the data analysis procedure followed to summarize and describe the data collected. This involves calculating frequencies and percentages derived from the tendencies revealed. This feature of Descriptive Statistics allowed the researcher to better understand the characteristics of the data, such as the most common responses, the variability of responses, as well as the overall trend in responses.

5. Results
5.1 Perceptions

It was revealed that teachers perceived the eclectic methodology as being flexible (n=55, 84%), practical (n=59, 95%), easy-to-follow (n=58, 89.5%), and effective (n=63, 97%). Regarding less positive features, teachers agreed on it being time-consuming (n=21, 32%), repetitive (n= 31, 47%), outdated (n=10, 15%), and redundant (n= 15, 23%) as seen in Chart 2.

Chart 2
Perceptions regarding the eclectic methodology

	Flexible	Time-consuming	Practical	Repetitive
Totally agree	17 (26%)	4 (6%)	21 (35%)	6 (9%)
Agree	38 (58%)	17 (26%)	38 (60%)	25 (38%)
Neither disagree or agree	7 (11%)	20 (30%)	3 (4.5%)	22(33%)
Disagree	1 (1.5%)	20 (30%)	2 (3%)	10 (15%)
Totally Disagree	2 (3%)	5 (8%)	1 (1.5%)	3 (4.5%)
TOTAL(n= 65)				
	Easy-to-follow	Outdated	Redundant	Effective
Totally agree	31 (48%)	2 (3%)	1 (1.5%)	24 (37%)
Agree	27 (41.5%)	8 (12%)	14 (22%)	39 (60%)
Neither disagree or agree	3 (4.5%)	14 (22%)	20 (31%)	1 (1.5%)
Disagree	3 (4.5%)	14 (22%)	20 (31%)	1(1.5%)
Totally disagree	1 (1.5%)	16 (25%)	8 (12%)	0 (0%)
TOTAL (n=65)				

According to the information collected, teachers' general perceptions towards the eclectic methodology are aligned to positive attributes such as flexible, practical, easy-to-follow and effective. Most of the participants (n=63, 97%) agree on the efficacy of the methodology which is a remarkable feature to be highlighted by teachers themselves.

Since this research focuses on exploring teachers' perceptions, there was another set of items where participants expressed their levels of agreement to five statements. As seen in Chart 3, teachers agreed that the methodology is not difficult to implement in class (n= 55, 85%). Compared to other language teaching methods, 43% of teach-

ers (n=28) perceived that the time invested when planning a lesson with the Methodology is not more demanding.

Once these attributes were identified, it was also relevant to view how teachers perceive themselves as to whether or not the eclectic methodology demands specialized training in order to be implemented; the data shows a mixed perception with a higher tendency towards agreement (n= 42, 65%). Moreover, it can be drawn that teachers perceive that the eclectic methodology enables them with several techniques that lead to an improved teaching practice (n=58, 89%). Furthermore, the eclectic methodology offers flexibility to address students' needs (n=56, 86%). These characterics concern the teaching and learning aspects behind the methodology from the teachers' perspective.

Chart 3
Teachers' Perceptions in statements

Statements	Totally agree	Agree	Neither disagree nor agree	Disagree	Totally disagree
1. The eclectic methodology is difficult to implement.	2 (3%)	2 (3%)	6 (9%)	32 (49%)	23 (35%)
2. Planning a lesson with the eclectic methodology demands more time than I invest planning under a different method.	7 (11%)	15 (23%)	15 (23%)	17 (26%)	11 (17%)
3. As a teacher, I need specialized training to carry out the eclectic methodology.	11 (17%)	31 (48%)	8 (12%)	11 (17%)	4 (6%)
4. The eclectic methodology provides different techniques that lead to an improved teaching practice.	23 (35%)	35 (54%)	6 (9%)	1 (1.5%)	0 (0%)
5. The eclectic methodology is flexible enough to address students' needs.	19 (29%)	37 (57%)	6 (9%)	3 (5%)	0 (0%)
TOTAL (n=65)					

5.2 Teaching Practices

Two items that revolved around the steps of the teaching cycle of the methodology; the first item addressed the importance of each step for each notion-function to be taught in class. All steps were ranked as essential in a mixed form (Warm-up n=50, 77%; Modelling n=54, 83%; Repetition n=24, 37%; Substitution n=19, 29%; Transformation n=30, 46%; Complement n=25, 38%; Practice in Context n=57, 88%; Reflection n=46, 71%; Semi-Controlled/ Free Communicative activities n=53, 82%,

Verification n=44, 68%; Tasks n=47, 72%, Closure n=40, 62%) and there were five responses that considered some steps as not important (Repetition n=1, 1.5%; Substitution n=1, 1.5%; Complement n=1, 1.5%; Reflection n=1, 1.5%, Closure n=1, 1.5%) (See Chart 4). The perception towards the teaching cycle as a whole entity is positive and consistent with teachers' responses in general. It is clear that teachers understand that each step has an objective that helps learners in their language learning process.

Chart 4.
Importance of the methodology steps in a lesson

Teaching Cycle Steps	Essential	Quite important	Moderately Important	Slightly Important	Not important
Warm-up	50 (77%)	10 (15%)	4 (6%)	1 (1.5%)	0 (0%)
Modelling	54 (83%)	8 (12%)	3 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Repetition	24 (37%)	18 (28%)	18 (28%)	4 (6%)	1 (1.5%)
Substitution	19 (29%)	30 (46%)	12 (18%)	3 (5%)	1 (1.5%)
Transformation	30 (46%)	24 (37%)	9 (14%)	2 (3%)	0 (0%)
Complement	25 (38%)	23 (35%)	14 (22%)	2 (3%)	1 (1.5%)
Practice in Context	57 (88%)	8 (12%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Reflection	46 (71%)	16 (25%)	1 (1.5%)	1 (1.5%)	1 (1.5%)
Semi-Controlled/ Free Communicative Activities	53 (82%)	11 (17%)	1 (1.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Verification	44 (68%)	19 (29%)	2 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Tasks	47 (72%)	16 (25%)	1 (1.5%)	1 (1.5%)	0 (0%)
Closure	40 (62%)	18 (28%)	4 (6%)	2 (3%)	1 (1.5%)

The top three steps considered essential were *Practice in Context* (n=57, 88%), *Modelling* (n=54, 83%), and *Semi-Controlled* or *Free Communicative Activities* (n=53, 82%); as they were ranked, it can be interpreted that teachers' hold in high regard the step where students are able to practice the language in context under controlled circumstances; then, the Modelling step where students are presented a notional-functional rela-

tionship in context and last, the step where students are able to implement what they learnt in a less controlled environment.

The last steps ranked in importance were Transformation (n=46, 71%), Repetition (n=24, 37%), and Substitution (n=19, 29%). The common aspect shared among these three steps is that they are repetitive, mechanical and predictable. However, these steps prepare students for the upcoming stages that demand a higher understanding of what is being taught and provide the learner with the necessary feedback to go through the rest of the cycle.

On the one hand, the relevance that each step has in the Teaching Cycle of the methodology was clearly stated. Besides, deciding to skip a step of the methodology when there are two language functions to teach in the same notion provides another approach to explore the teaching practices

involved in the decision-making process of the Teaching Cycle.

As seen in Chart 5, teachers' responses show that there are steps of the methodology that are eliminated when teaching two functions within the same notion. Teachers develop a criterion that enables them to select in which cases learners need to go through all the Teaching Cycle. In summary, the information provided reveals how flexible and adaptable the methodology is; if any of the steps can be deleted according to what teachers observe in class, then it can be said that the eclectic methodology shapes a reliable decision-making process since there is no significant tendency towards always deleting one of the steps. On the contrary, the category *Sometimes* is the one that reflects that the decision goes through a process and it is not an automatic teaching practice.

Chart 5

Eliminating steps of the methodology in a lesson

Teaching Cycle Steps	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Warm-up	5 (8%)	13 (20%)	13 (20%)	10 (15%)	24 (37%)
Modelling	0 (0%)	2 (3%)	11 (17%)	18 (28%)	34 (52%)
Repetition	2 (3%)	8 (12%)	26 (40%)	17 (26%)	12 (18%)
Substitution	2 (3%)	4 (6%)	19 (29%)	23 (35%)	17 (26%)
Transformation	0 (0%)	3 (5%)	13 (20%)	21 (32%)	28 (43%)
Complement	1 (1.5%)	2 (3%)	12 (18%)	28 (43%)	22 (34%)
Practice in Context	0 (0%)	1 (1.5%)	4 (6%)	15 (23%)	45 (69%)
Reflection	1(1.5%)	1 (1.5%)	7 (11%)	15 (23%)	41 (63%)
Semi-Controlled/ Free Communicative Activities	0 (0%)	1 (1.5%)	7 (11%)	9 (14%)	48 (74%)
Verification	0 (0%)	1 (1.5%)	4 (6%)	15 (23%)	45 (69%)
Tasks	0 (0%)	3 (5%)	5 (8%)	12 (18%)	45 (69%)
Closure	2 (3%)	3 (5%)	10 (15%)	18 (28%)	32 (49%)

5.3 Convergent and Divergent Teaching Practices

By ranking the frequency of activities and strategies, teachers' responses drew a general picture of what their Teaching Practices of choice are. Among the convergent Teaching Practices, *Speaking in the target language to fulfill a task* (n= 54, 83%) such as an interview, role-play or presentation takes the first place. The second place is *Introducing new vocabulary in context* (n=45, 69%) and third, *Writing in the target language to fulfill a task* (n=36, 55%) as an e-mail, letter, or Social Media post. The aspects behind the top three places have to do with language production and the means to carry out it successfully, the introduction of new vocabulary for students to broaden language comprehension as well as to enable them to use them in real communication.

Chart 6
Convergent and Divergent Teaching Practices

Convergent Teaching Practices	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Speaking in the target language to fulfill a task (for example: interview, role-play, or presentation.)	54 (83%)	10 (15%)	1 (1.5)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Introducing new vocabulary in context.	45 (69%)	16 (25%)	4 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Writing in the target language to fulfill a task (for example: E-mail, letter, or Social Media post)	36 (55%)	22 (34%)	6 (9%)	1 (1.5%)	0 (0%)
Using authentic materials to model oral, written and/or phonological aspects of the target language.	26 (40%)	25 (38%)	14 (22%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Using monolingual dictionaries to find out the meaning of a word.	7 (11%)	15 (23%)	24 (37%)	10 (15%)	9 (14%)
Divergent-Teaching Practices					
Conjugating verbs on charts.	4 (6%)	9 (14%)	20 (31%)	24 (37%)	8 (12%)
Changing sentences into affirmative, negative, or interrogative forms.	23 (35%)	20 (31%)	16 (25%)	5 (8%)	1 (1.5%)
Doing workbook exercises on grammatical points.	10 (15%)	24 (37%)	26 (40%)	5 (8%)	0 (0%)
Translating new vocabulary into their mother tongue.	2 (3%)	8 (12%)	23 (35%)	22 (34%)	10 (15%)
Explaining grammatical rules	6 (9%)	18 (28%)	25 (38%)	14 (22%)	2 (3%)

In terms of divergent Teaching Practices, *Conjugating verbs on charts* (n=26, 40%) fell into the first place, in second place *Changing sentences into affirmative, negative, or interrogative forms* (n=23, 35%) and, in the third place, *Doing workbook exercises on Grammatical Points* (n=10, 15%). These divergent Teaching Practices are not promoted in the methodology. However, the Transformation Step can be misinterpreted as when learners have to change sentences into affirmative, negative and interrogative sentences in a mechanic way.

6. Discussion

In a broad sense, teachers' perceptions towards the eclectic methodology were aligned to positive attributes such as effective, practical, and easy-to-follow. None of the aforementioned features received less than 60% of agreement which shows that the perceptions are strongly consistent among participants. According to the results, perceptions that were aligned to negative features of the methodology such as repetitive, time-consuming, and outdated lead to explore the relationship between the years of experience of the participants and how they perceive time, flexibility and practicality. As Jain (2015) highlights, perceptions are a means of meaningful information that results in decisions and actions.

The results observed show that the decision-making progress as well as the thought-process involved before, during and after teaching a lesson under the eclectic methodology is influenced by their perceptions. Nevertheless, there are elements such as assessment, curriculum, learning objectives, teachers' training and educa-tional background that are linked to the perceptions in much the same manner. Due to the novelty of the present study, the information gained represents an innovative contribution to the ELT field in terms of teachers' perception towards an eclectic methodology.

Teachers' perceptions on the efficacy of the methodology regarding proficiency levels points out that the methodology is efficient in basic and intermediate levels (Plan Global 1 to 9). These levels include notional-functional contents that follow a spiral approach as proposed by Bruner (2016), if the curriculum is designed upon learners' natural thinking process, it fosters learners to grasp full understanding by means of revisiting contents repeatedly and building cumulatively upon such contents.

The programs from levels 1 to 9 at the Languages Department were designed to revisit grammatical structures but with different notions and functions. This is consistent with how teachers perceive the efficacy of the methodology for basic and intermediate levels of proficiency. In much the same way, teachers perceive that higher levels of English proficiency demand a more challenging teaching cycle with less predictive or repetitive steps.

To understand English teachers' perceptions, it is necessary to be aware of the intricate relationship of the elements from the English language learning program that come before and after the conception of the methodology. It would be very interesting to revise other components of the English Language Learning Program at the Languages Department to determine how evaluation, programs and materials

intervene in the construction of teachers' perceptions in the light of the implementation of the methodology.

In terms of teaching practices, the results revealed that teachers have gained enough knowledge regarding the methodology that enables them to select and delete steps of the Teaching Cycle whenever there are two functions within the same notion. This decision-making process reflects that teachers understand the objective of each of the steps and this allows them to address students' needs respectively. Practice in Context, Modelling, and Semi-Controlled or Free Communicative Activities were the highly rated steps as essential for a lesson to be successful. On the other hand, Free Communicative Activities, Practice in Context, Verification and Task, and Reflection were the steps that fell into the *Never* deleting category. The shared characteristics among these aforementioned steps is that they are centered in the learners' outcomes, teachers measure the success of the lesson based on how students go from the Input Processing Stage towards the output stage except for the *Modelling* step. This step is both essential for teachers and learners since it is the steppingstone for the whole lesson.

Recent studies demonstrated that language teaching and learning is not limited to a specific approach (Valledor, Olmedo, Hellín, et al ,2023), that eclecticism needs to be aligned to the nature and extent of the learning objectives (Deyes, 1983 in Morelo, 2022). Furthermore, eclecticism is *framed in taking what is most appropriate of other methods to the learning needs and the learning context* (Mosquera, 2021). Taking the aforementioned

into consideration, the information gathered in the study shows that eclecticism can transform the teaching and learning scenario by empowering teachers to decide what is best for their students, how students should be taught, and to what extent teachers' actions can positively impact on students' learning. The eclectic methodology here analyzed establishes a series of steps that can initially help novice teachers in basic and intermediate levels build their criteria towards different teaching approaches and techniques. Thus, allowing them to enrich their teaching practices so as to become independent users of the eclectic methodology. However, upper-intermediate, and advanced levels remain seen as levels that require a different approach to teaching students as the eclectic methodology is regarded as repetitive.

7. Conclusions
7.1 Teachers' Perceptions
By closely observing which steps of the Teaching Cycle are considered essential and which are frequently skipped when there are two functions within the same notion, teachers showed how flexible and practical these decisions are when it comes to teaching and lesson-planning. When asked directly, there was no strong consensus among participants on whether the methodology was flexible or practical. However, by analyzing the data, teachers have built a specialized knowledge that allows them to anticipate, plan and adapt the steps of the methodology considering the language level of proficiency, the notional-functional content, and objectives to be met, to tailor the method to their teaching context.

Teachers showed that the Input Processing Steps[2] were not considered as essential as the rest of the teaching steps. However, if these steps are coated with teachers' perceptions about being repetitive, predictable or long, then, the processing strategies that allow students to process the input presented might be at risk of not being completed in the Teaching Cycle. For this reason, it is important to draw teachers' attention towards the mechanics of these steps for them to be implemented at different levels of complexity according to the demands of each level. If teachers are better equipped at diversifying the strategies and exercises in the Input Processing stage of the methodology, they will guarantee that learners have developed the necessary knowledge to cope with more demanding tasks.

The response towards convergent and divergent teaching practices reflects a changing scenario for English language students at the Languages Department. Convergent teaching practices are closer to a more Communicative orientation that implies a shift in the roles of teachers and students in the language learning process. It would be very interesting to gain understanding of this in terms of students' perceptions, how do they perceive their own language learning process and how clear it is for them to learn under a notional-functional orientation.

Due to the novelty brought by the eclectic methodology and the outlook from which it was studied, there were some limitations that are worth pointing out. The data collection instruments such as lesson-plans, class observations and post-lesson interviews as in Johnson, 1992; Burns, 1992; Phipps and Borg, 2009; could have provided more practical knowledge regarding teaching practices to determine whether teachers rely on convergent or divergent practices within the Methodology Teaching Cycle instead of using a written questionnaire.

8. Future Research

Adapting the Teaching Cycle of the methodology for higher levels of language proficiency is the main leading area to pursue research in, the limitations of the steps are well known by teachers whose expertise can potentially contribute to improve the methodology to a significant extent.

On the other hand, students' perceptions towards the methodology are also subject of further study since they can expand on how successful the shift towards notional-functional instruction is as the language proficiency grows higher. In a recent study, González, Ladino, and Escobar (2020) highlighted among its findings that students welcome teachers who are constantly updating and improving their techniques as they show more reflection towards their teaching practices and the resources they use to teach. If students perceptions were to be analyzed in this context, university authorities could also address their currents needs and learning objectives.

Furthermore, teachers' professional development from a process-oriented standpoint could also be worth of future studies since they can be studied in a longer period of time reflecting on how they change through time or, if change really happens and what could be the factors underlying its change.

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2 Repetition, Substitution, Transformation, and Completion except Practice in Context.

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