e-Círculo Literario aplicado en la clase de inglés. Una innovación educativa después del terremoto de 2016 en Ecuador

e-Literature Circle in the English class. An educational innovation after the 2016 earthquake in Ecuador

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Palabras clave
Educación superior, educación a distancia, educación virtual, inglés como lengua extranjera, círculo literario

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este trabajo es presentar el e-Círculo Literario (e-CL) como innovación académica, y que parte del Círculo Literario convencional (CL) para lograr su adaptación técnica en una plataforma informática de fácil acceso, así como la transformación de una práctica oral en idioma inglés hacia la producción escrita. La metodología seleccionada acude al enfoque de interacción social donde 38 estudiantes universitarios participan de una intervención educativa a distancia, diseñada *ad hoc* por el equipo investigador. Desde la investigación cualitativa se aplican las técnicas: grupo focal, observación contextualizada y entrevista semiestructurada para medir la eficiencia de la herramienta digital. Los resultados demuestran alta factibilidad técnica del e-CL y su aporte al mejoramiento de los niveles de producción escrita en idioma inglés de los participantes, a pesar de encontrarse en condiciones adversas. Se concluye que la educación digital potencia las posibilidades de retomar la marcha cotidiana de actividades educativas de calidad, dentro de escenarios afectados por desastres naturales. Adicionalmente, el uso del e-Círculo Literario ha logrado reducir la exposición del alumnado a riesgos latentes en eventos de catástrofes, tales como el terremoto de 7.8 grados Richter acontecido en Ecuador el 16 de abril de 2016.

Keywords
Higher education, distance education, e-learning, English as a foreign language, literature circle

ABSTRACT

This work aims is to introduce the e-Literary Circle (e-LC) as an academic innovation that parts from the conventional Literary Circle (CL) towards, its adaptation to an accessible computer platform, and the transformation of an oral practice in English into a written production process. The methodology selected is based on the social interaction approach where 38 university students participated in a distance educational intervention designed by the researcher team. From the qualitative method were applied the technics: focus group, contextualized observation, and semi-structured interview to test the efficiency of the digital tool. The results demonstrate a high technical feasibility of the e-LC and its contribution for the participants improve their written production levels in the English language, despite being in adverse conditions. It is concluded that digital education enhances the possibilities of resuming the daily march of educational activities with quality, within scenarios affected by natural disasters. In addition, the use of the Literary e-Circle has managed to reduce student's exposure to latent hazards in natural catastrophes events, such as the 7.8-magnitude earthquake that hit Ecuador on April 16, 2016.

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INTRODUCTION

The university educational system of Ecuador has achieved important progress as of the enactment of the 2011 Organic Law on Higher Education. This legal framework facilitated the structuring of an institutional cooperation network led by the National Higher Education and Technology Department and the Higher Education Council. However, in April 2016, the provinces of Manabi and Esmeraldas suffered a 7.8 earthquake on the Richter magnitude scale causing the loss of 661 lives and 6,274 injured. Close to 28,678 people were rendered homeless as a result of the total or partial destruction of their dwellings (Risk Management Secretariat, 2016).

The term *disaster* refers to the considerable damage caused to property, injuries or loss of lives, and is the result of the interaction among human beings and a natural process of recuperation that is time and money consuming. The earthquake that took place on April 16, 2016 (16A) in the provinces of Esmeraldas and Manabi in Ecuador, among its impacts, caused the destruction of buildings in elementary, high school and higher education centers. The Secular University Eloy Alfaro de Manabi (ULEAM) reported total damage to its General Secretariat, classrooms, tutorial rooms and laboratories containing office equipment, libraries, archives of already launched educational projects, furnishing and others. It was determined that, from the 310 classrooms required for the 2016-2017 cycle, 90 only would met the safety conditions (ULEAM, 2016).

A person, after having gone through the experience of an earthquake with the loss of human lives and material damage, usually suffers some type of emotional affection. In the case of students, if we add to this loss the suspension of university activities and the delay in resuming their classes, this generates in them an additional negative situation.

Therefore, in order to reduce the students' exposure to the latent risks of the earthquake identified as 16A (April 16) and its numerous replicas detected in the following months, a team of professors of Educational Studies of National and Foreign Languages of the Faculty of Education Sciences at the ULEAM, made some adaptations to the "in-class reading circles" and transferred them to a distance education mode relying on information and communication technologies (ICTs). This document reports this educational experience from the emergence of the idea, its implementation and the evaluation of the results obtained through "e-Lit Circles". This didactic adaptation is based on the innovation model by social interaction (Barraza, 2005) which aim is to review the "pedagogical practices" in order to provide them with greater flexibility (Libedinsky, 2001, p.140).

This paper seeks answers to the following questions: Is it possible to adapt Lit Circles to computer platforms easily accessible to university students?

Is it possible to strengthen the participants' written production in English through e-Lit Circles? What are the potentialities of the e-Lit Circles as learning virtual space in condition of natural disasters?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Literary Circle as Language Practice

Reading is a very complex cognitive process involving the knowledge of language, the culture and the world; thus, essential in higher education. The term *leer*, according to the Real Academia Española de la Lengua [Dictionary of the Spanish Royal Academy] refers to the activity of "going over something written or printed visually and understanding the meaning of the letters used". According to Carrasco (2003), "reading is a process of construction of meanings culturally determined. A reader can apply different strategies to comprehend a message communicated through a written text by means of socially acquired references and patterns," (p. 131).

Following Carrasco (2003), reading is not acquired universally and evenly by all children. However, its teaching is one of the school essential functions and its deficiency is notorious in university classrooms. Introduction to reading is generally a family task but it is also the fruit of encounters among people and their ways of thinking.

For the International Reading Association (IRA), "comprehension is a dynamic and interactive process of construction of meaning by combining the reader's knowledge with the text information, contextualized by the reading situation" (1996, p.2). Likewise, one of the objectives of universal training "is to achieve, in an independent manner through reading, the construction of multiple interpretations, to establish relations between texts, review and update reading proposals" (Carrasco, 2003, p.131). However, when a person reading lacks specific knowledge on the topic and content of a specific text, it is difficult to introduce coherence relations, make up propositions and develop models related to the texts worked upon (Gárate, 1994).

Furthermore, in the case of university students, young or adults, and based on their previous knowledge of a specific topic, during their reading practices, they apply a concrete strategy and they even "overuse it [*sic*] since they do not know any other strategy, and this can affect comprehension negatively, and even impede the transaction with the text. Abusing this strategy would be similar to having a dialogue with the deaf, or the reader with himself" (Gárate, 1994, p. 135).

In regard to the acquisition of vocabulary, Laufer (1997) points out that the insufficient knowledge of words impedes the subject to learn a second language, to comprehend authentic texts since he is unable to apply the reading strategies he has used with texts in his mother tongue. From the

sociolinguistic approach, it has been understood that "reading" does not consist only in decoding a text but it rather involves the knowledge of the language, its culture and context. Goodman and Goodman (1990) ratified the foregoing when they indicated that the reader seeks to construct and attribute meanings by interacting with the text and sharing information with other readers, a common practice at the higher education level.

Conventional Lit Circles are generally small discussion groups, formed with the intention of reading and talking about a story (Daniels, 1994, as cited in Obregón, 2006). This is a classroom practice. Each one of the roles assumed by the members of the Lit Circle, stimulates his participation, interchange and reading comprehension, benefits in line with Sánchez and Contreras (2012) thinking, who claim that through reading all the knowledge embodied in written means throughout history are kept alive. According to Gago (1995, as cited in Cabrero, Llorente and Gomez, 2011), the objective is to achieve that university students become aware of reality and gain knowledge through a social communication process with their peers by working texts in foreign languages. To do so, they must go through every step from reading the text, comprehend it, connect it with other experiences accumulated in the long-term memory of every reader until reaching setting out new ideas, following the *input-process-output* cycle (Krashen, 1985).

Next, we expound the Lit Circle objectives proposed by (Daniels, 1994, cited in Obregón, 2006) and Obregón (2006):

- Learn to discuss about literature, talking about stories that have been read.
- Connect literature with personal experiences from assumed roles, as artist, bridge connector, pronunciation detective, discussion leader and reporter.
- Achieve in-depth comprehension of the text.
- Learn to express opinions and respect the opinions of others, learning from the different standpoints.
- Connect literature with other learning areas such as writing, spelling, style and rhetoric.
- Learn more about the world and contexts of Anglo-Saxon countries through literature (Obregón, 2006).

As for stimulating the readers' reflexive capacity, Collie and Slater (1987) point out that literature involves students working with the text during the revision and analysis which can be a personal or collective exercise. Through said practice, readers strengthen their reflexive capacity that leads them to compare written situations with those lived in real life. Human nature, on the other hand, encourages people to share their personal interpretation of their readings either orally or in writing. Said behavior corresponds to the production stage and is the result of exposure

or contact with the foreign language and its culture from a day-to-day basis (Krashen, 1985).

This academic practice generates multiple work possibilities with the participation of the students of different ages, knowledge level, place of residence, among other important aspects, since this work focuses on university students. This process requires reading motivation, understood as the force driving people in achieving their objective or the solution to a problem (Eggen & Kauchak, 1994).

Carroli (2011) and Bland and Lütge (2013), experts in the didactic of learning foreign languages, claim that in order to develop reading comprehension in languages other than the mother tongue the frequent use of literary texts is recommended since they offer the opportunity to acquire vocabulary from a specific context and, we could say, from their real usage. Moreover, readers discover the foreign language grammatical forms used in conventional settings. Therefore, literary texts lead the reader to an interaction that exceeds the initiation-response-feedback sequence or IRF (British Council, 2015), and achieve positive harmony of the university student with the learning of a foreign language that tends to follow the natural and social order of things (Krashen, 1985).

Processes of Acquisition of Foreign Languages Supported on the Web

Currently, the techniques for the acquisition of foreign languages suggest the application of activities that follow the natural order of human experiences. On this topic, Krashen (1985) proposes that "people acquire a second language only if there is exposure to a language that is comprehensible and if its affective filter is sufficiently low, as to allow that data to enter his accumulated knowledge" (p. 4).

The aim of the English class is to expose students to said foreign language and use ICTs to fulfill this mandate since "they encourage participation, critical thinking and collaborative learning" (Esteve, 2009, p. 59) besides promoting macro abilities in the learners (Herrera, 2011). The teaching of languages finds in the Web an opportunity for global communication among people acquiring a language and native speakers. This fosters rapprochement to foreign cultures and generates motivational situations.

The rise of Web 1.0 has facilitated students' autonomy, more specifically in regard to the progress of learning at their own pace, since the Web offers different services and platforms that can be used according to every learner's time availability. Web 1.0 began with the distribution of study material by using communication means such as e-mail and Web pages designed in a friendly manner by expert technicians who achieved attracting users to online language courses.

More authentic and attractive learning settings have been designed for the Web after conducting inquiries on the interests, age, language, among other personal factors of the potential users (Villafuerte, Carreño and Demera, 2015). Experiences making use of the Web have encouraged written production and collaborative work significantly. Thus, Carrera and Villafuerte (2015) claim that the academic work in acquiring foreign languages with university students lead to better results in oral expression when using ICTs and classroom games to translate words, draft messages and thoughts, create socio-dramas, simulate roles, etc.

The term Web 2.0 was presented for the first time in 2004 by Tim O'Reilly, an Irish speaker at an international conference on the evolution of the use of Internet. Web 2.0 is a process that highlights online collaboration, interactivity and Internet resources interchange. Web 2.0 is characterized by the fact that it promotes the generation and interchange of information among users and achievements are more significant in those that are really interested in acquiring a language (Intriago *et al*., Villafuerte, Morales Jaramillo, Lema & Echeverria, 2016). This is a new generation of Web sites that possess contents produced by the users of the portal. It is a practice of collective creation that currently has greater penetration in the university setting (Bartolomé and Grané, 2009; Cabero and Castaño, 2009).

This process stems from the facilitation of multiple tools that Web 2.0 provides to its users through user friendly platforms called social networks. These applications combine opinion articles, photographs, models, videos, audio files, forums and databases to generate products result of creativity. Such communicative resources are used to interchange data and to promote the collective production of new knowledge, thus, ratifying the premise proposed by Michavila and Parejo (2008) that the learners are the ones to assume their own learning.

Web 2.0 facilitates the participation of communities or human collectives that are geographically scattered around the world. This is considered an innovative manner of social construction of knowledge that uses virtual settings (Intriago *et al*, 2016). However, the fact of the interchange of resources and creations made by users produces relationships and human interactions through information platforms supporting collective intelligence (Bartolomé and Grané, 2009), which contribution opens a new chapter to be explored.

As for the qualities that potentiate Web 2.0 as a didactic tool to be used in a university setting in Latin America, they have been identified as easily accessible from remote areas, reduced costs, to the extent that the printed medias are migrating to screens in a society with a hyper fragmented public, and the combination of an extensive variety of computer applications that connect with the concrete personal needs. With web 2.0, every learner of foreign languages may concentrate on the content of his interest (grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation), or on those

communication skills to be strengthened (oral or written expression, aural and reading comprehension). By overcoming the barriers that constitute physical distances, the learners are exposed, in a control manner, to real and everyday situations which are fundamental to the acquisition of a language from its own context (Oxford, 1990, as cited in Etxebarria, Garay & Romero, 2015).

On the other hand, Web 3.0 supports collaborative academic works among people that share similar thematic interests or objectives. Its application follows the process of acquisition of a second language by considering the student's social context that is determined by his individuality, attitudes, personality, values and also the social media where the student usually evolves (Gardner, 1983). Web 3.0 proposes the use of multiple applications through social networks such as Facebook, Tuenti, YouTube, Google+. Google offers applications for education such as Google Docs, Google Sheets, Google Slides, Google Drive, Google Translate, among others, that support processes of digital education and generates potential uses in schools, colleges, universities, public and private organizations (Railean, 2012).

Educational Innovations of Feasible Application towards Natural Disasters

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), has promoted the use of digital tools to improve the quality and efficiency of the teaching-learning interaction at all levels of education. Before such adverse circumstances that affect educational systems, the "teaching practices" were reviewed in order to give them such flexibility (Libedinsky, 2001), and enable them to respond favorably to the impacts that could cause earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, etc.

Educational innovation requires the knowledge of reality and the desire to change it for an improved situation as a result of social interaction (Barraza, 2005). However, to achieve success, the use of educational technologies (Internet connectivity, electronic devices, software...) available to the majority of the population is essential. Therefore, the ICTs, learning technologies and knowledge may be used to achieve that people interact, express their opinions, exchange reading material, photographs, videos, about a topic of mutual interest, which has proven to be a tool that motivates learning and activates creativity (Esteve, 2009), and is capable of implementing complex educational processes.

In this context, distance education is a model that allows those individuals located geographically in different places around the planet and who, for different reasons cannot get together in person, can interact around a topic of mutual interest. Therefore, we resort to ICTs given their capacity to overcome physical distances and their potential fosters collaborative work (Cabero, Llorente and Gómez, 2011). Collaborative learning consists of

“the efforts of a group between professors and students and requires the active participation and interaction of professors and students towards traditional models of cumulative learning” (Salinas, 2004, p. 4).

Within the university context at world level, experiences have been conducted by making use of digital educational platforms, social networks and other online services (Esteve, 2009; Cabero and Castaño, 2009; Intriago *et al*, 2016), since they are means that offer innovative opportunities to design and implement education programs that use the power of attraction characteristic of social networks (Facebook, YouTube, Google+, etc.), console games and other available technologies (Villafuerte *et al*., 2015).

Global communication is translated to the field of the teaching-learning process of foreign languages through the digital education mode which facilitates direct interchange from “learner to learner” or “learner to professor”, or vice-versa. Furthermore, computer devices and clouds are used to save data, and the persons using these tools create information repositories that grow according to their needs (Intriago *et al.*, 2016). These repositories may be permanent or temporary and they offer good safety levels in spite of the natural risks with which they co-exist.

However, distance education as well as digital education consider the in-depth knowledge and the practical use of computer tools from a utilitarian level to a didactic level. These matters are still subject of discussion given the existence of sectors that resist considering the production of didactic material as a teaching competence (Martínez, n.d.). We are dealing with bridging the gaps between the expected level and the current level of achievement (Kahane, 2008), where human quality includes “know how to be, know how to know and to know how”, with the purpose of obtaining the ideal performance based on the personological resources of the subject (Tejeda and Sánchez, 2012). For the purpose of this paper, these resources focus on the use of computer tools required to adapt, implement, participate and evaluate literary reading circles in digital settings and at distance to strengthen reading comprehension in English.

Among the previous papers in reference to the use of “reading circles”, the application of ICTs to the teaching-learning of foreign languages in a university setting was mentioned in the research conducted by a group of professors of the Faculty of Fine Arts of the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, who have used MOODLE as a resource for in-person, distance learning and semi on-site classes In said research, students submitted articles, images, videos or any content of a Web page on a subject of study. Management with greater facility of communication between professors and students are among the achievements, and it extends to the application of MOODLE in evaluations and self-evaluations in a permanent way. The results indicate an outstanding utilization of the platform to enhance the interests and learning pace of every student.

Another experience worth considering was conducted at Universidad de Alcalá de Henares where web-blogs were used to promote collaborative teaching and to highlight the learning-by-doing principle. Progress in the active development of information carried out in in-person classes through opinions and comments was identified. The promotion of meta-cognitive planning processes, supervision and revision and the motivation of the students and professors at the moment of self-direct learning are among some of the findings (Iborra and Viejo, 2010).

Chun, Choi and Kim, in 2012, conducted a research on the relative efficacy of extensive reading in comparison to paired-associate learning in South Korea. The results indicated that extensive reading generated best results in reading comprehension and it was even greater in the acquisition of vocabulary.

As for Ecuador, we can cite Universidad Particular Loja [Loja Private University] and its distance courses for the Bachelor's Degree in English and Psychology as a demonstration of the potentialities and success of education supported by virtual platforms which have improved through cumulative experiences.

METHODOLOGY

This research-action work resorts to the qualitative method to document the operative evaluation process and e-Lit Circle didactic achievements. The sample studied consisted of 38 students enrolled in the English Literature Workshop of the Bachelor's Degree in Languages at ULEAM. It is a heterogeneous sample integrated by 29 women and 9 men from twenty-one to forty-five years of age (Table 1) who reported, at the beginning of the English language knowledge process to be at A2 and B1 levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL, 2002).

Table 1. Sample of the participating students according to age and sex

Grupo etario	Mujeres	Hombres	Total estudiantes
21-26 años	19	5	24
27-35 años	5	2	7
36-40 años	3	1	4
Mayores de 40 años	2	1	3
Total	29	9	38

Source: ULEAM Students Registry (2016).

Instruments

The measurement of the production generated by the participants was conducted through a qualitative process that analyzed the quality of said

production based on the appropriate use of the written English language, the clarity of expression of the messages, the relevance of the products (reports, graphs, texts and others) submitted in comparison to the text worked upon, the time dedicated to the intervention and the digital competencies. In accordance with the objectives set, the instruments designed were:

A focal group that conducted a comparative analysis of the modality and roles between conventional Lit Circle and e-Lit Circle.

The observation of the attitudes of the participants towards the introduction and work with the e-Lit Circle based on the quantity and quality of the written production of the participants.

Interviews of three participants to evaluate the e-Lit Circle potentialities as a virtual learning space following the input-process-output sequence.

Procedure

The steps for the execution of this study were as follows:

- Based on the ethical protocols of the American Psychology Association (APA), the informed consent certificate was obtained from every one of the 38 participants.
- Explanation of the objectives of the project to the two work groups, as well as the roles to be executed during the e-Lit Circle.
- Training provided to use Google educational applications, two short introductory in-person workshops and permanent online tutorial throughout the educational intervention.
- Execution of e-Lit Circle for four months.
- Evaluation of e-Lit Circle. It begins with the data collection through focal group instruments, observation of the attitudes of the participants and a semi-structured interview.

RESULTS

Comparative analysis of the roles of conventional Lit Circles and e-Lit Circles.

Next, we outline the comparative analysis conducted by the focal group in regard to the roles of the two Lit Circle modalities (Table 2).

Table 2. Comparative Analysis of the roles of Lit Circle and e-Lit Circle

Lit Circle roles	Lit Circle Functions and roles	e-Lit Circle Roles	e-Lit Circle new functions and roles
	Modality Process being developed mainly orally		Modality Process being developed mainly in writing
Debate Leader	Conducts and motivates the discussion on a daily basis. Creates questions to discuss on a text already read. Uses his level of knowledge to establish interpretation and universal analysis	Debate Monitor	In charge of sending messages to participants with instructions during the e-Lit Circle reading through G-mail, WhatsApp or other tools
Detective	Identifies literary forms in a text and substantiates reasons for which the author uses them. Seeks words, sentences and descriptive, powerful, funny and also confused passages in the text that has been read. Generates ideas by explaining the reasons for which the author used them	Grammar Inspector	Seeks grammar and punctuation errors to improve written products. Relies on Google Translator Debates on possible confusions in the application of grammar rules
Bridge Constructor	Establishes relations between the book and the readers Establishes relations between the book and the readers of the circle Seeks place or events, communities or cultural values and brings them to his own local life	Trainer	Trains communication dexterities of the members of the e-Circle Promotes written discussion among participants by using Google+ resources Invites participants to publish posters, diagrams and summaries, or posts and use cloud
Reporter	Promotes interest in reading from the presentation of news on the plots in the text Identifies and extracts the essential points of a text in form of an article.	Blogger YouTube	Enter new levels of discussion by introducing real news related to the plots of the texts already read Design blogs and videos to introduce new elements of discussion

Artist	Contributes with an artistic vision of the plot and expresses it artistically through painting, drawing, sculpture, etc.	Creators of web resources	Create pieces using programs to develop graphs compatible with Google+ Combine artistic styles from classic and renaissance art to abstract art to reflect the plot according to the text being worked upon.
		CEFRL Inspectors	Insist that the participants strengthen their communication skills in the foreign language for production Promote the measurement of communication skills with approaches of the CEFRL
		Cyberspace Police	Censors the view of the discussion levels Observes and monitors the relations and constructive dialogue

Source: Report of focal groups, August 2016.

e-Lit Circle roles promote the use of Google tools for education. Three roles have been introduced to e-Lit Circles: Web resource creators, CEFRL inspectors and cyberspace police. The names of the roles also acquire a direct link with Google applications.

There is definitely a preference for the construction of some roles over others; for example, unanimously, the role of the artist is the most attractive and the one that produces pleasure. It also gives a rarely explored advantage to the learners of the previous EFL classes and allows relevant connections between the content of the texts and the non linguistic representations being created.

Diction detective is the least popular role since the concept of diction is limited to focusing on new and difficult words and puts aside literary figures such as metaphors, idiomatic expressions, sayings, among other lexical resources.

Observation of the Attitudes of Participants towards e-Lit Circles

Next we present the attitudes observed in the participants during the execution of e-Lit Circle autonomous tasks. The observations in Table 3 analyze the following categories: quality of the literary production, appropriate use of the English language in e-Lit Circle, presentation of the products, ideas, designs and their creative manifestations during e-Lit Circle, quantity of literary production during e-Lit Circle and compliance with the deadlines to submit the products during e-Lit Circle in comparison with the variables of sex, age, digital competence, written English communication skills, written English expression skills and English comprehensive reading skills.

Table 3. Attitudes of the Participants towards e-Lit Circle

Category	Sex	Age	Digital Competence
Quality of literary production during e-Lit Circle	We do not observe any tendency that determines that women or men have a greater attitude for literary composition. Women as well as men show creativity In general, the group shows a very good creative capacity stimulated by literary reading	We do not observe any tendency in regard to age or literary quality Outstanding literary capacity has been observed in very young participants as well as in adults.	Quality of literary production considers creativity, composition style, coherence, registry used This is not affected by little digital competence This is about communication skills and literary composition
Appropriate use of English during e-Lit Circle	Indifferent. Women as well as men make correct use or make similar mistakes in writing in English	Older participants make more typical errors in English and more frequently. We believe this is due to the lack of time available to do their autonomous tasks	Participants with greater digital competence use digital dictionaries and spelling controllers to improve their written production Students with lesser digital competence do not use correction programs

Presentation of products, ideas, designs, etc., during e-Lit Circle	Women participants have shown greater dedication in using e-Lit Circle. Their work is better presented in comparison to their male classmates	Older adult participants perform their work with lesser detail than younger participants who personalize and decorate their work Work and family activities influence the attitude of adult and young participants in the same way in regard to literary production	Participants with greater digital competence show better performance in presenting their views and products.
Quantity of literary production during e-Lit Circle	The women group has had greater unique production Women: 8 products. Men: 6.5 products	The tendency is that younger participants have had a greater production than older adult participants	It is clear that participants with greater digital competencies submitted a larger number of products
Meeting the deadline to submit the products during e-Lit Circle	The tendency is that women submit their work within the deadline while men wait until they have accumulated several products before uploading their work to the website	There is no marked tendency in meeting the deadline according to age	Participants with greater experience submit the products requested ahead of time

Source: Results of the observation process, August 2016.

The observations on the attitudes of the participants show us that there is a direct relation between digital competence and literary production which manifests itself in the amount of written works submitted by the participants but not particularly in the quality of the products.

As for the literary production of the participants, we observe that age does not have as much influence as routines and labor and family factors have on the quality and quantity of said literary production.

Sex has no influence in the attitudes for quality literary production. However, we notice that women commit themselves more to e-Lit Circle. Women as well as men have produced quality documents and their creativity level is directly related the level of knowledge of the language.

The best works were submitted by students who have a higher level of knowledge of the English language (Table 4).

Table 4. Communication Skills Being Evaluated

Category	Comprehensive Reading Skill in English	Written Expression Skill in English
Quality of literary production during e-Lit Circle	A good level of reading comprehension is needed to ensure quality input	Participants with a better level of knowledge of the language are those who have achieved greater success in producing a greater quantity of book reviews and other graphic products.
Appropriate use of the English language during e-Lit Circle	The exposure to good textual sources developed with the correct structural and grammatical level contributes to enriching the reading capacity of the participants.	There is an effort to use structural elements progressively in the creation of the written language. In general, the fact of taking the time to socialize elements from different roles allows the learners to access syntax and morphological rules learned in controlled exercises without context. We observe an effort to automate the correction application to the discourse.
Presentation of products, ideas, designs, etc., during e-Lit Circle	Comprehensive reading enables participants to collect data to perform their tasks. Reading provides relevant details of the scenarios described in the texts participants have taken to guide them in reproducing the texts graphically, textually, and reflexively	Based on the level of written expression of the participants, we observe differences in the composition of the texts, the cover pages of the work and material selection. All the participants applied the format elements
Quantity of literary production during e-Lit Circle	Production requires in-depth comprehension of the messages the author wishes to transmit. This activity requires a developed reading comprehension that allows a quality input	The production of language in terms of quality varies from one group to another. However, we noticed an interest to express forceful opinions on the role manifestations which are different for each student. In this sense, the preference to make comments was directed to the role of the artist. Many wanted to express their interpretation

		and to comment on the connection presented by the artists.
Meeting the deadlines to submit the products during e-Lit Circle	Reading can take longer for those participants with weak reading comprehension. This has an influence on the time of delivery of the final production.	No clear tendency has been observed in regard to dexterity, written expression and meeting the deadlines. It seems that the factors behind meeting the deadlines have to do with responsibility and efficient use of time.

Source: Results of focal group, August 2016.

Triangular analysis of the interviews on e-Lit Circle potentialities

Next, we will present the triangulation process based on semi-structured interviewed applied to three e- Lit Circle participants (Table 5). The dimensions addressed were as follows:

- e-Lit Circle potentialities as learning space.
- e-Lit Circle potentialities as element to motivate the literary production in the participants.
- e-Lit Circle potentialities to stimulate literary creativity.
- e-Lit Circle potentialities as a space for collaborative learning.

Table 5. Triangulation of interviews on e-Lit Circle potentialities

1. e-Lit Circle potentialities as learning space			
Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	TENDENCY
In part, Google with its tools helps to provide greater facility to its users, in this case, the students. e-Lit Circle also helps in argumentation and ideas readers have based on their standpoints e-Lit Circle helps me express new ideas or maybe also see life in a different way. It helps me read not only literary works known to me only by title but also understand the story behind them	The application of the use of reading circles promotes reading in English as a mean to learn the language The greater potentiality lies in the development of the reading skill An essential benefit of e-Lit Circle through "Google platform" was the *sense of argumentation given to books through the group members.*	As for me, the use of the Google platform as *mean of argumentation* in reading circles e-Lit Circle was beneficial to reflect on the content of the books I have read by stimulating creativity and personal interpretation In Education, it is an excellent *tool to link ICTs and a* necessary skill for the English language	Argumentation of new ideas Excellent Reflection Excellent *tool to link ICTs and a* necessary skill for the English language
Comment: All the participants agree that e-Lit Circle potentiates argumentation and reflection during practices or workshops. Reading using ICTs potentiates the learning of English.			
2. e-Lit Circle potentialities as element motivating literary production in participants			
Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	TENDENCY
It can be understood that I have read the books by obligation, but the truth is that I probably need a push which I have not had in the past This has now *motivated me to read other books on my own free will.* This has helped me to read more books in English	As for me, using Google as a virtual interaction tool was motivating and attractive, which motivated me personally in learning more on the use of Google as an administrator tool for virtual tasks	From my own perspective, it is relative Classifying the texts by literary genres would help us individually as well as a group. It would be even better if we were given three-page articles [...] However there were times in which there was interest in the matter	It has motivated me to read other books on my own free will It has motivated me personally in learning more on the use of Google as a tool "GRADES" was the motivation for some participants

		"GRADES" was the motivation for some participants	
Comment: The motivation generated by e-Lit Circle is disperse and it reflects the personal interest of the reader and his preferences. Therefore, some are motivated by reading, others by the use of computer tool, and others are motivated by passing the course.			
3. e-Lit Circle potentialities to stimulate literary creativity			
Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	TENDENCY
It is easier to watch a video or a movie where most of the book is captured in images and does not allow our brain to work or imagine. *By reading two lines only we could imagine a million things and make our own movie of the book we have read.* [...] maybe these are cases that have never happened to us or cases that we have never imagined would happen. *And also, the fact that one wants more after finishing reading a book that does not have a happy ending*	As for me, the Google platform as means of argumentation in reading circles fostered the *reflection of content of the books read. It stimulated* creativity and personal interpretation	From my point of view, passing the seminar motivated him more than his desire to improve reading comprehension and the characteristics of the "READING"	By reading two lines only we could imagine a million things and make our own movie of the book we have read. Stimulating creativity and personal interpretation More motivated by passing the seminar than his desire to improve his reading comprehension
Comment: A good level of stimulus has been observed towards reading and creative reflection based on the opinions of two of the three participants. The third participant considers as a priority passing the course more than the interest in learning literature.			

4. e-Lit Circle potentialities as space for collaborative learning			
Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	TENDENCY
It does promote collaborative learning Have an eye on everything even if one is or not leader of the group. Most of the time we did teamwork and that way we learned more one from the other since we were able to hear the other person's point of view.	I consider that the platform does promote collaborative platform *provided the members of the reading group show a certain degree of interest* acceptable for the work being carried out	The experience of participation was not pleasant. *It took a lot of efforts to ask the group to collaborate. They refused to read.* They were annoyed to comment on the work of others. It was tedious... Well, considering the virtual experience, I would say that interaction is feasible provided the participant feels the need and motivation to do so. ... Since it is a cultural matter, reading could be boring for the person who is not accustomed reading.	It has always been more a teamwork Collaborative learning is possible provided the members of the reading group show interest The collaboration of the whole group is required Interaction is feasible provided there is a need and motivation
Analysis: There is a tendency about the will required by the participant to collaborate in e-Lit Circle activities. In regard to readings, difficulties in collaborating and in complying with responsibilities are highlighted.			

All the participants interviewed agree that e-Lit Circle potentiates the capacity of argumentation and reflection during practices or workshops. It is claimed that reading using ICTs potentiates the learning of English.

The motivation generated by e-Lit Circle is disperse. The personal interest and preferences of every reader gain space. Therefore, some participants are motivated by the reading while others are more interested by the use of the computer tool and, lastly, another participant was motivated by passing the course. We have observed a good stimulation level towards reading and creative reflection based on e-Lit Circle in two participants. An additional finding to this paper is that it achieved motivating literary reading in people who, at the beginning, rejected said type of texts. In this case, the incorporation of ICTs has been relevant.

There is a tendency in collaborative learning to examine the willingness of the participants to collaborate in e-Lit Circle activities. The focus is on the

difficulties to achieve the collaboration of all the participants and, above all, on the fulfillment of responsibilities in regard to readings.

Among the comments collected on the operation of e-Lit Circle, the lack of enjoyment in reading seems to be the tendency among participants notwithstanding the fact that they completed all the assignments given.

> The readings were easy [comprehensible input].
>
> As for me, I do not like to read, but since there were not too many new words and we could chose [student-centered].
>
> We chose a reading about detectives and that kept me interested but I do not really like to read.

CONCLUSIONS

This work achieves the objective of innovating in-person Lit Circle to virtual e-Lit Circle as a tool that uses Google for education and which operation is successful within the framework of the Higher Education System in Ecuador. This innovation contributed in recuperating the educational activities in the language studies at the ULEAM after the 16A earthquake in Ecuador. It reduced the exposure of the students and professors to hazards and minimized the negative effects on the learning achievements originally planned. The results show that it is possible to strengthen the written production of the participants in the English language through the application of e-Lit circles since the adaptations of the roles made for its virtual operation fostered the expression of ideas and reflections in writing.

As for the potentialities of e-Lit circles as learning space, the use of Google applications for education entails elements such as easy accessibility and friendly environment given its simplicity, compatibility with multiple multimedia functions on the Internet (YouTube, Google Plus, Sites, Chrome, among others). These characteristics have been decisive at the moment of opting for educational Google as a platform for the development of this innovation.

One of the limitations of both traditional Lit Circles and e-Lit Circles is the great length of time it takes for the learners to obtain feedback on their performance in order for them to overcome their shortcomings in using the foreign language. Lacking a solid support plan could be the cause for which the process of overcoming common mistakes remains incomplete, thus the invitation to conduct a research on new forms of support and evaluation for digital education.

e-Lit Circle is assessed as the “virtual community” own creation at the service of education. It is a collaborative learning space installed on digital

means and which potentialities are beneficial for the learning process of a foreign language and its uses can be expanded according to the requirements of distance, semi in-class education, or of educational settings affected by natural disasters.

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