Are Chilean School Teachers of English as a Foreign Language encouraging the personal growth of students in order to tackle inequality?

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To Juan.
Abstract

English as a Foreign Language in Chile has become increasingly relevant since 1998, when the country began a period of rapid economic growth. In turn, this growth meant that forming international relationships became a crucial part of the national strategy. Since then, successive governments has invested in policies and reforms aimed at transforming Chile into a bilingual country. This has been an extremely difficult process, with the issue of inequality representing one of the greatest barriers regarding the education of Chileans. It is well documented that Chile has one of the most unequal education systems in the world; largely the consequence of neoliberal policies in force since the dictatorship. This situation is also affecting the teaching and learning of English. The level of English proficiency of Chileans depends mainly on their social standing, as well as the type of school they attend. This study aims to discover whether teachers are taking measures to tackle this prevailing inequality. Personal growth is a multi-faceted concept based on several premises. The majority of these relate to the abilities and tools bestowed on an individual, which they can subsequently use to change their lives. Therefore, this thesis focuses on gauging whether teachers are encouraging personal growth in English language teaching in order to tackle inequality. To investigate this phenomenon, qualitative semi-structured email interviews were conducted with six Chilean EFL teachers, to discover their perceptions and practices of personal growth, inequality and EFL inequality. Results indicate that all teachers try to include and encourage personal growth. Nevertheless, their efforts are manifested through different approaches, perceptions and practices, and not all of them adopt this strategy in order to tackle inequality. Therefore, it is impossible to confirm whether the encouragement of personal growth offers an effective way of tackling inequality. Nevertheless, this study offers initial insights into certain perceptions and practices of Chilean EFL teachers concerning personal growth, inequality and EFL inequality which can be used to influence future research in Chile.
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1. Introduction

According to Torche (2005), during the first half of the 20th century, the Chilean government gradually expanded primary and secondary school enrolment and, from the 1920s, free public education began to be provided. In the mid-1960s, this system was extended following a set of policies which aimed to increase access to primary and secondary education, regardless of social background (Aylwin et al., 1983). The government of the time opened 3,000 new public schools in rural and disadvantaged areas, implemented a double-shift school day, trained new teachers, and extended compulsory primary education from six years to eight (Gazmuri, 2000). This programme was highly successful, as enrolment reached beyond 93% at the primary level in 1970, while secondary enrolment rose from 18% in the late 1950s to 49% in 1970 (Torche, 2005).

In the 1970s, the entire situation changed following the military coup of 11 September 1973, led by Augusto Pinochet. This act signalled the start of an authoritarian dictatorship which ruled Chile until early March 1990. As well as the human suffering it caused, the military regime had a profound effect on politics, the economy and education. It established a system of managing education whereby decisions regarding 80% of Chilean schools were made by central government. The new reforms implemented by the dictatorship covered numerous areas, including teacher wages, teacher employment, curriculum standards and education financing (Delannoy, 2000). In the early 1980s, the Chilean education system underwent three key transformations: the decentralisation of school administration; the inclusion of legal and market incentives to increase the number of private-subsidised schools; and a voucher system of financing (Cox, 2010). Perhaps the most revolutionary component of the reform was the educational voucher system, in which
a subsidy was paid to public and private schools based on student attendance (Torche, 2005).

Another significant feature of the reform was the decentralisation of public schools. As a consequence of this policy, the process of municipalisation took place (Delannoy, 2000). This meant that primary and secondary school management was transferred from the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC\(^1\)) to the more than 300 municipalities. Local governments became responsible for, “contracting, hiring and firing teachers” (ibid, p.8), whereas MINEDUC maintained control of setting the curriculum, as well as assigning textbooks and supervising the overall quality of education (ibid). Delannoy (2000) suggests that this decentralisation was a response to the principles of a market-oriented economy, which held the conviction that quality in education could be guaranteed by generating competition between educational institutions. The impact of these policies affected Chilean education even after the Pinochet regime ended. Indeed, on the final day of the dictatorship, on 10 March 1990, and with the aim of, “locking up his educational reforms” (ibid, p.13), the *Ley Orgánica Constitucional de Educación*\(^2\) (Organic Constitutional Law on Education), known as LOCE, was passed. It subsequently became impossible to repeal these constitutional changes, which have succeeded in bringing widespread inequality to the education system.

Although Chile is considered one of the most stables countries in Latin America, with sustained economic growth over recent decades (Ffrench-Davis, 2002), such economic development has taken place in tandem with deep social disparities caused by the neoliberal influence. This has made Chile one of the most unequal countries in terms of income distribution in the world (Sehnbruch and Donoso, 2011). It should be noted that

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\(^1\) MINEDUC: The Ministry of Education.

\(^2\) For more information on this law, please see: http://bcn.cl/r7j
Chile was the first global neoliberal experiment (Harvey, 2007). The Pinochet dictatorship imposed neoliberalism during the 1980s, including favouring the free market, weakening the role of the State in society and promoting individualisation and competitiveness in social relations. This neoliberal project also affected the structure of the education system, which was transformed from public to private. This change means that parents are now responsible for their children’s education, with the State playing a subsidiary role (Cabalin, 2012). In terms of access, Chilean education has undergone significant evolution following specific education policies and a proliferation of subsidised schools and private institutions. The privatisation of schooling has considerably increased over the last two decades, and, according to Castillo et al. (2014), more students now attend private schools than public schools.

Nevertheless, such widespread access does not mean better educational opportunities for the majority of Chilean students, as neoliberal policies have simply increased the quantity of students and not the quality of education. These policies have intensified social inequalities in education at the primary, secondary and higher levels (Cabalin, 2012), meaning that Chile has the most segregated education system in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2011) (see Aedo and Larranaga, 1994; Lehmann, 1994; Winkler and Rounds, 1996; Medlin, 1996; Mizala and Romaguera, 1998). According to Calabin (2012), Chilean education is based on market fundamentalism, which has generated segregation, stratification and inequality, making Chile famous around the world for its unequal education system. Simce, a test developed in 1988 to monitor and enhance education policies and set improvement goals, has consistently measured the discrepancy in results between public and private school students. These

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3Simce: System for Measuring Education Quality.
results demonstrate that fee-paying schools constantly obtain the highest scores and standards, while public schools fail to achieve significant improvement.

Chilean students across the country do not receive the same quality of education in the most important subjects, such as Language, Mathematics and Science, or in English, which, in Chile, is taught as a foreign, rather than a second language. Several studies and tests (see Zapata et al., 2012; Abrahams and Farias, 2014; Agencia de la Calidad de la Educación, 2010, 2012, 2014; Simce Tests, 2010, 2012, 2014) have demonstrated the unequal and dissimilar proficiency of students when using English as a foreign language. Students attending fee-paying private schools are achieving higher levels than those from public schools. Although the general level of English of Chilean students is very basic (see Section 4.4), there is a significant difference regarding the school a child attends. Simce tests from 2010, 2012 and 2014 demonstrate that students attending more expensive schools perform better on the tests and have greater overall proficiency. In 2010, 65% of students from the highest socio-economic group obtained excellent test results, compared to just 0.3% of students from the lowest socio-economic group. Regarding students attending fee-paying private schools, 64% obtained excellent results, compared to just 4% from public schools (Simce 2010). In 2014, there was a slight improvement in the overall scores, although the difference between wealthy and less wealthy institutions deteriorated: 83% of students from the former achieved excellent results, compared to 0.8% from the latter (Simce 2014).

A comparison between students from public and private institutions in 2014 showed that just 7% of the former obtained a passing mark, compared to 81% from the latter. By comparing results from Simce 2010 and 2014, it can be seen that students from the middle, upper-middle, and upper socio-economic groups increased their positive results by 20%,
while those from the low and middle-low groups experienced no increase, remaining instead at the same level. Such a situation means that a large percentage of Chilean students lack fair access to an important skill: a skill that can bring several benefits to the academic and working lives of students, as well as to their personal perceptions, self-esteem, communicative skills and critical thinking. These aspects are strongly connected to the concept of personal growth, also known as self or personal development.

Definitions of personal growth can be found in psychology literature, such as Psychology and Personal Growth (Goud and Arkoff, 2008). This research explains how the concept involves the growth and enhancement of all aspects of the person, including the feelings the person has about him or herself, and the development of talents and potential. This all contributes to building human capital, enhancing the quality of life and contributing to the realisation of dreams and aspirations. It also helps in developing positive life skills and a healthy self-esteem. It should be noted that, by studying and comparing different scholars (see Freire, 1970, 1973, 1985, 1998; Dixon, 1967, 1975; Whitehead, 1976; Allen, 1980; Marshall, 2000; Reid, 2003; Bousted, 2002) this definition can be said to vary from person to person, since each individual may perceive the concept differently. This might range from conservative and traditional to modern and liberal, as well as being related to psychology and philosophy.

Bearing this in mind, the primary aim of this research is to discover how Chilean EFL teachers perceive personal growth, to gauge whether it is being introduced in their lessons, whether they notice an unequal education system in the EFL classroom, and whether they see personal growth as a tool for tackling this inequality. Using qualitative semi-structured email interviews, six Chilean EFL teachers will be asked for their perceptions of and

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4 EFL: English as a Foreign Language
practices relating to personal growth in the classroom. The objective is for them to reflect on their knowledge of this concept and to gauge whether they introduce it within their lessons. In order to fully understand and assess inequality, three of the interviewed teachers currently work in public schools and three in private schools.

In the following section, I will outline different perceptions of personal growth and its presence in both the general and the Chilean EFL world. In the fourth section, I will contextualise Chilean education, outlining important historical and political events, the unequal education system and the presence of personal growth therein, as well as English as a foreign language in Chile and inequality in the EFL classroom.

In section five, I will provide the rationale for selecting semi-structured email interviews as well as respective advantages and disadvantages. I will also explain the recruitment process and introduce the participants. In section six, I will explain the interview process and how data has been analysed, in conjunction with the results and a discussion arising from the interviews. I will then analyse and connect participants’ main answers with the concept of personal growth as a tool for tackling inequality, as well as suggesting improvements for future practice. In conclusion, in section seven I will summarise the main points of the study and evaluate its limitations, as well as outline certain proposals for future research.

2. Context

Given the pertinence of personal growth to this dissertation, I will summarise certain positions held by different authors and how these relate to English as a foreign language in Chile. Subsequently, regarding the Chilean context, I will provide a brief overview of the
Chilean education system, emphasising historical, political and social backgrounds, as well as the importance of quality and equity therein. The presence of personal growth in Chilean education will then be discussed, prior to a general overview of the situation of English as a Foreign Language in Chile, followed by a look at inequality in the EFL classroom.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Personal Growth

For some scholars (Marshall, 2000; Bousted, 2002; Reid, 2003; Brindley and Marshall, 2015; Gibbons, 2015; Locke, 2015), the concept of personal growth began in 1967, when John Dixon published his book, “Growth through English”, following the 1966 Anglo-American Dartmouth Conference in which forty English teachers from the US and UK met for four weeks to debate the subject of English (Gibbons, 2015). Since then, Dixon has been considered the father of this concept, with Locke (2015) calling him, “the archdeacon of the church of Personal Growth” (ibid, p.21). Dixon presented three models of “English” in his book: firstly, skills-based, which, “fitted an era when initial literacy was the prime demand” (Dixon, 1967, p.1); secondly, cultural heritage, in which the need for a civilising and socially unifying content was stressed; and thirdly, “growth-based”. Dixon favoured the latter model, in which he proposed giving prominence to a child-centred approach, advocating the child’s active production of language through writing and speaking, under a personal rather than functional context, as a means of developing self-awareness and aesthetic sensibility (Dixon, 1967). He claims that when teachers study and observe how children learn to use the language for their own purposes, “surprising new areas of the map emerge that modify considerably our understanding of the earlier features” (ibid, p.4).
According to Allen (1980), this model was influenced by the theory of James Britton, whereby a strong connection between the child and literature was proposed. This proposal was based on the fact that literature prompts children to seek understanding, before then being able to communicate and express themselves. Klein (1970) explains that this idea of sharing oneself and one’s reactions with the numerous voices that can be found in an English classroom, “gives body to Dixon’s vision of personal growth through the use of language” (ibid, p.237). Peel et al. (2008) support this view, convinced that good English teaching, by giving prominence to students’ voices, can be, “a liberating process that would allow children to escape the norms of society” (ibid, p.8), emphasising children’s individual potential and emancipatory development.

Nevertheless, this concept also has its detractors. Shortly after the publication of the book, the concept of personal growth was soon caricatured and attacked. One of its critics, Frank Whitehead, began to disagree in the late 1960s, proclaiming the inadequacy of teaching English as, “communication”. For Whitehead (1966), the idea not only advocates an excessive fixation with language and its referential function as a means of transmitting information, but it also carries the negative implication that what will be communicated is already present and simply waiting to be encoded in words. This, he says, deprives our language of operating as, “a means of exploring and illuminating experience, of giving shape to an intuition which can crystallise only as the words grow together to define its inherent structure” (Whitehead, 1966, p.12). Another notable critic was David Allen, who, although in agreement with Dixon’s criticism of the skill model, claimed that he was falsely equating the cultural heritage model with the idea of transmission, filling empty vessels with a body of established knowledge (Allen, 1980). He also stated that “Growth through English” reflected a corporate drift, magnifying the voice of Britton, whereas the
voices of other authors, such as Lewis, Thompson and Whitehead, who argued for recognising literature as a crucial link between the child and the culture, were minimised.

Bousted (2002) provides relevant information regarding two schools of thought that influenced the idea of personal growth in the 20th century: the Cambridge school, led by Lewis, in which Ball et al. (1990) claimed that education in English was seen as training in response to literature; and the London school, led by Barnes, Britton and Rosen, which, although accepting certain precepts of the Cambridge school, saw education in English as a training in language (Bousted, 2002). In other words, for the Cambridge school, personal growth in English relates to expanding the mind through practical criticism of literature and “escaping” from reality and negative influences of modern culture. Conversely, for the London school, it relates to celebrating one’s own experience and language growth through personal experience (ibid). Despite the differences, both schools were convinced that an, “education in English should be a foundation for the development of the pupil’s character and sensibilities, their personal growth as individuals and as members of society” (ibid, p.186-187).

Regardless of these different perceptions, several studies (Peel and Hargreaves, 1995; Gerchal et. al, 2000; Bousted, 2002; Reid, 2003; Peel, 2008; Marshall, 2010) show that the concept of personal growth maintains a strong presence in the English classroom. In a study conducted by Peel and Hargreaves in 1995, which took the models of English as defined by Cox (DES, 1989), five versions of English were described: skills; cultural heritage; personal growth; cross-curricular model; and cultural criticism. Following interviews with teachers from the US, UK and Australia, it was discovered that a high proportion of participants, particularly secondary school teachers, “agreed or strongly agreed with the ‘personal growth’ model of English, being the one which emphasises the
development of the individual as understood in traditional humanist terms” (ibid, p.44). In 2008, Peel conducted a new study with teachers from the same countries. He found that, despite critiques, personal growth approaches to English remain appealing to schoolteachers, and that it is still the most commonly used and favoured approach. Indeed, despite differences between countries, approximately four out of every five teachers still prefer this model (Peel, 2008). Nevertheless, Reid (2003) explains that there is a conflict regarding the definition of personal growth, as no coherent unifying concept exists. In his essay, Reid argues that the meaning of personal growth differs from person to person and that it lacks specific practices and beliefs. He enquires whether this concept is, “a delusory ideal [and whether it forms] the processes that actually comprise English […] Or [whether it is] a defensible, desirable and achievable goal” (ibid, p.97).

This is supported by Gerchal et al. (2000), who observe that English teachers embrace different views, some of which seem contradictory. Several teachers supporting the personal growth model also agree with poststructuralist views in which, “the meaning of the text is governed by historical and cultural factors” (ibid, p.45). Gerchal (2000) attributes this confusion to the notion of reading as a means to “escape from self” while reading imaginative texts. This, he claims, is very different from the “cultivation of self”, which is exactly what Dixon (1967) encouraged; to develop the self and the language as a whole, together, in which there is no escape from the child’s reality or personality, but rather to free oneself from all teaching methods established by the literary tradition (Sawyer, 1998, in Reid, 2003).

According to Bousted (2002), some research into this issue has accepted the personal growth concept defined by Cox (DES, 1989), in which he states that it, “focuses on the child: it emphasises the relationship between language and learning in the individual child,
and the role of literature in developing children’s imaginative and aesthetic lives” (Goodwyn, 1992, p.4). For Bousted (2002), this idea of personal growth, in conjunction with the notions provided by the Cambridge and London schools, encompasses contradictory influences, and suggests that the aforementioned research may have, “oversimplified the respondent’s understanding of the term, and its purpose in their practice” (ibid, p.187).

A more recent study, conducted by Marshall (2000), aims to enable teachers to provide their own perceptions about personal growth and English as a concept. Thanks to a procedure in which interviews and questionnaires were ignored, the author created a data collection method in which participants took ownership of the methodology. In this study, teachers were invited to discover who they are, their beliefs, how they think, why they operate the way they do and what lies behind their classroom practice, by identifying themselves as belonging to one of the following groups: Old Grammarians, Pragmatists, Liberals, Technicians and Critical Dissenters. Although teachers had diverse characteristics and belonged to different groups, it was confirmed once again that the concept of personal growth is highly important to the majority, but that it means different things to each individual. Teachers have different perceptions and notions of personal growth, together with different practices which might provoke conflicts between a teacher’s philosophy and his/her actual classroom practice (Marshall, 2010). This is supported by Burgess (1996), who believes that the concept of personal growth is complicated and contains contradictory forces. This confuses teachers, who tend to draw upon different pedagogical conceptions and traditions affecting their own philosophies and classroom practice (ibid).
Regarding the South American situation, one of the most prominent authors on personal growth through language is Paulo Freire (see Freire, 1970, 1973, 1985, 1998; Freire and Shor, 1987). Freire was a Brazilian educator and philosopher who received widespread recognition for his literacy method based on “conscientização” and dialogue (Nyirenda, 1996). His contribution to pedagogy has been so extensive that for certain authors, such as Taylor (1993), Freire is, “the greatest living educator, a master and a teacher” (ibid, p.1). The concept of “conscientização” is understood as, “a process of developing consciousness (through literacy) but consciousness that is understood to have the power to transform reality” (ibid, p.52). Similarly, for Sanders (1978), “conscientização” is, “an awakening of consciousness, a change of mentality involving an accurate, realistic awareness of one’s locus in nature and society; the capacity to analyse critically its causes and consequences, comparing it with other situations and possibilities… psychologically it entails an awareness of one’s dignity” (ibid, p.12).

In 1959, Freire began experimenting with new methods of teaching adults to read and write. These methods related to awakening and of students becoming aware of their real situation and social reality, in which pessimism and fatalism abounded, making them understand their own ability to shape their realities and manage their lives (Fritze, 2013). Freire strongly supported the concept of liberating education, in which he criticised its, “banking style”. He described the latter as when teachers simply act as depositors of narration, leading students to, “memorise mechanically the narrated content” (Freire, 1970, p.52), turning students into containers to be filled by the educator. When this occurs, education becomes an, “act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor” (ibid, p.52). This style of teaching deprives students of their ability to imagine, create and reflect, restricting their acquisition of knowledge. For Freire,

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5 Conscientização: Consciousness.
knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, “through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world and with each other” (ibid, p.52).

For Freire, personal growth relates to the ability to question and change our reality (Taylor, 1993), because the critical understanding of situations leads to critical action (Freire, 1970, 1971, 1975). He strongly encouraged offering students the means by which to replace the, “passive perception of their reality by that which was critical so that they could do something about it” (Nyirenda, 1996, p.6).

3.2 Personal Growth and Learning English as a Foreign Language

In discussing the connection between personal growth and learning English as a foreign language, it is necessary to understand that each student has a different motivation for learning the language, and that not all learners have the same goal. For some, learning English as a foreign or second language is about obtaining new tools for securing new job opportunities and taking part in the globalised world (see Byrd, 2013; Cardenas and Glas, 2013; Diaz et al., 2013). Conversely, for others, it relates to obtaining new skills to increase self-esteem and personal development while being able to express feelings, thoughts and ideas in a different language (see Kormos and Kiddle, 2013; Taylor et al., 2013; Hadi, M. et al., 2014; Malkova and Kiselyova, 2014). In other words, the growth of students as individuals and the importance they place in nurturing aspects, such as critical thinking, creativity, imagination and aesthetic taste, are, according to Carter and Long (1991), incredibly important characteristics during the lives and throughout the personal development of students.
Fernandez (2013) explains that personal growth in the EFL classroom can be both useful and important. Because teachers push, incite and increase students’ curiosity, while also providing space to let students’ emotions flow, they will be made to feel something, as well as prompted to think critically. Once the student wishes to express these feelings and thoughts, he/she will have to use his/her foreign language, in this case English, as a communication tool. When we ask students to express themselves using their L2, for example in producing new texts or dialogues, student involvement and response will emerge. Almost unconsciously, they become increasingly connected on a personal level to the language learning process and begin to feel a sense of ownership towards it, making it far more meaningful as a result (ibid).

According to Kormos and Kiddle (2013), the inclusion of a personal growth approach in the EFL classroom can bring benefits far greater than simply comprehending or using the language automatically. It goes beyond learning vocabulary, grammar or semantics, which while necessary, are not everything. Rather, it can have a strong impact on students’ creativity, imagination, interpretation, critical thinking and reflection.

### 3.3 Personal Growth and Learning English as a Foreign Language in Chile

Once Chile began to undergo rapid growth and development, different educational policies were implemented to help those Chilean students regarded as the future generation of workers by the State. These students were seen as having important skills that would enable them to cope with the new demands of globalisation. Among the most important policies implemented was the one relating to English (Birdsall et al., 1997). Wright (2004) explains that globalisation is a phenomenon that does not simply affect the behaviour of a
society, but one that also causes a huge impact on language, as people need to find a way to communicate with those countries in which their own first language it is not spoken. This is why English has been considered and adopted as the most successful means of communication; the global lingua franca (ibid). This worldwide hunger to learn and manage this lingua franca also spread to Chile. As Muñoz (2010) explains, in 2003, MINEDUC announced that Chile needed to become a bilingual country. This need was based on the international projection of the country regarding business and trade, as well as the impact of globalisation, rather than because of its geographical location. Indeed, Chile is surrounded by Spanish speaking countries (with the exception of Brazil), and interaction with speakers of other languages, such as English, is not particularly prevalent or common (ibid).

There is widespread acknowledgment and consensus in Chile that English can provide numerous opportunities to people, since it, “opens different doors and (…) is required by the academic and working world” (Muñoz, 2010, p.51). Some Chileans see English as a means of gaining power over their compatriots, and believe that those who speak the language have more opportunities in life than those who do not. Chileans also feel that English is today’s communication solution in a globalised world (Wright, 2004). Byrd (2013) adds that the Chilean government invests a great amount of money every year in EFL teaching and learning, “with the hope of making Chileans proficient in English and helping Chile reach developed country status” (ibid, p.5). English language development, according to Williams and Cooke (2002), is a correlation between education and economic development, in which the only way in which a country can develop is by training its citizens who are willing to participate in the internationalised world.
Chilean government leaders, who have favoured and encouraged the creation of English language policies and programmes, are motivated by the economic development it can bring to the country. Byrd (2013) contends that Chilean views are based on UNESCO outlines, which state that there is a need to adopt English, “as a foreign language in order to participate in the global community” (ibid, p.23). Rohter (2004) supports Byrd, explaining that several Ministers of Education have expressed the connection between English acquisition and neoliberal development discourse. For example, Sergio Bitar, former Minister of Education, once said, “we know our lives are aligned more than ever to an international presence, and if you cannot speak English, you cannot sell and you cannot learn” (ibid, p.84).

Therefore, throughout the discourse surrounding these EFL policies, much has been said on Chilean development, its economy and globalisation. Little, however, has been spoken of the concept of personal growth and how learning a foreign language can positively influence a student, going beyond him/her simply being viewed as a future worker. This latter point is indeed taking place, despite MINEDUC documents (2010-2015) claiming that every Chilean student should learn the necessary skills to use the language as a tool to allow them access to international information, as well as to communicate in foreign contexts (Muñoz, 2010). MINEDUC documents also state that when a student learns a foreign language, he/she increases his/her personal development and growth, as well as doing so for academic or personal reasons. Simultaneously, the documents state that learning another language helps to develop cognitive skills, while also increasing social skills, such as tolerance, understanding and acceptance of, “different lifestyles, cultures and ways of thinking” (ibid, p.26). Nevertheless, the curriculum and national programmes fail to reflect these points.
Examples can be found in research conducted by Castillo and Contreras (2014), in which they explain that every subject in Chile has a different curriculum. The curriculums contain two types of objectives: fundamental objectives, relating to knowledge and contents; and fundamental transversal objectives, covering personal perception, personal growth and self-esteem, among other features. In the English curriculum, the fundamental transversal objectives refer to, “knowing and understanding the world in which we live” (ibid, p.34). These aim to provide students with a general understanding of English culture, promoting learning strategies, such as imagination, curiosity, inference, selection and interpretation, while also being able to communicate in different social scenarios (ibid).

Despite the fact that the English curriculum includes certain concepts relating to personal growth, this is not its central theme. Rather, skills related to the use of the language itself, as a tool for simple communication, are more prevalent.

This is also evidenced in MINEDUC course books, which are provided to every public and semi-public school in Chile and are free of charge for families. Herrada et al. (2012) claim these books are poor quality, unchallenging, unengaging, fail to promote critical thinking and give precedence to exercises focused on grammar, rather than additional skills more related to the personal growth of students. In addition, these books lack any type of exercise in which discussions can take place. As such, there is little reinforcement of skills relating to inferring, reflecting, thinking, analysing or forming opinions. Cabezas (2015) has evaluated numerous MINEDUC textbooks and has discovered several characteristics showing the lack of correlation between what the Ministry claims and what is being put into practice. The author explains how these texts impose identity and maintain current social order, presenting realities that represent and act like a privileged group, imposing one particular world view by, “means of specific discursive practices, not explicitly recognised and hidden within the discourse delivered in the series of textbooks” (ibid,
p.101). Cabezas (2015) passionately believes that Chile wishes to educate its people in English as a foreign language with the simple aim of perpetuating an invariable view of society, in which, “English textbooks are meant to legitimise the oppressor’s position of power and inequality” (ibid, p.101). He continues by arguing that giving real power to Chileans through learning a second language, as the curriculums and syllabi claim, is utopic and false (ibid). Herrada et al. (2012) and Cabezas (2015) also explain that, due to the aforementioned reasons, teachers do not hold these textbooks in high regard. However, these two studies have also found that teachers are doing little to reverse this situation, by continuing to adopt the books, instead of adapting them. The authors claim that changing or modifying the textbooks is necessary for encouraging personal abilities that go beyond cognitive or academic knowledge to address human development.

This leads to the role of EFL teachers and the importance of their training in relation to the presence of personal growth in the EFL classroom. Barahona (2014) has conducted analysis into twenty five English teaching programmes, interviewing 380 trainee teachers, to discover different characteristics among future English educators. She discovered that one of the most important aspects was training teachers to work as, “active mediators of knowledge and constructors of new knowledge” (Barahona, 2014, p.49). Another central characteristic for EFL teacher training is to train teachers to engage with student processes, whether physical, psychological and/or cognitive (ibid). According to Barahona’s (2014) research, Chilean universities are educating EFL teachers to be committed to national society and who will play an active role therein in combatting inequality. Conversely, these programmes see English language teaching and language learning as a tool for social change, and they aim to train teachers to, “acquire a good command of the language to use in the classroom as a vehicle to contribute to the education of responsible citizens” (Barahona, 2014, p.56). Indeed, concepts such as poverty, social justice, critical thinking,
social awareness, responsible citizens and inequality are highly prevalent and repeated throughout curriculums and syllabi designed by different Chilean institutions (ibid).

Regarding trainee teachers interviewed, Barahona (2014) discovered that most regard teaching as a social mission, whereby a teacher is in a position to help other people, influence their lives and, “shape students’ characters” (ibid, p.59). Barahona (2014) even shares a moving quote in which a trainee teacher expresses his opinion on being an EFL teacher: “…I’m not just teaching subjects but educating people. That is crucial to me. You have to say, ‘I’m not educating so you can speak English quickly. No, I’m educating you to make you a good person who is also able to speak English’” (ibid, p.59). As a result, there are future teachers who expect to change Chilean society and hope to create a more equitable system. This provides evidence of curriculums which encourage this type of social outlook. Nevertheless, it seems that once the curriculums are put into practice, this change is not actually occurring (see Byrd, 2013; Mizala and Romaguera, 2000; McKay, 2001; Herrada et al., 2010; Abrahams and Farias, 2014; and Section 4.4 below).

4. Educational Context

4.1 Chilean Education

Prior to the 1973 coup, Chile had a free public education system. Following the overthrow of democracy, Chilean life underwent a number of changes, with education particularly affected. During the dictatorship itself, numerous neoliberal policies were implemented in Chile (Anderson, 2011). Such policies (see Section 1) endorsed the continued privatisation of the education sector, prioritising the right of school choice over the right to equal
education. Furthermore, education was perceived as a service, whereby schools were presented as a product available for purchase by families (Cabalin, 2012).

Once the military regime had ended, two decades later, democracy returned to Chile. Subsequent governments belonged to the “Concertacion”, a democratic, left-of-centre political coalition. Successive administrations promised that Chilean education would achieve high standards, in conjunction with full equity, pledging to provide the same high level of education to all Chilean students. Unfortunately, this has still not occurred, leading to widespread discontent and dissatisfaction among the Chilean people. For example, in April 2006, huge numbers of students took part in protests, strikes and school takeovers in a social movement called, “the Penguin Revolution” (Byrd, 2013). This movement strongly criticised education policies and the government was forced to modify educational regulations (ibid).

According to Donoso (2011), the demands of this student movement began initially with requests for free student transport passes. Focus then shifted to the poor quality of education, which in turn, led to demands calling for better quality within the national system. The attention of students was focused on securing the abolition of the LOCE, which they saw as, “a dictator’s heritage we must be rid of” (Waissbluth, 2011, p.5). They felt this law was negatively affecting Chilean education, which they believed had fallen into the control of private institutions rather than the State. In June 2006, President Bachelet announced that a new law would be passed by 2009 to replace the LOCE; the Ley General de Educación, (The General Education Act) or LGE. This new Act sought to implement substantial changes to schools and guarantee improved access to education. Its

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6 This name arose from the black and white uniforms worn by most Chilean school students, especially those attending public institutions.

7 For more information on this law, please see: http://bcn.cl/ msm
proposals included ensuring the quality of schools and teachers by supervising how resources were spent (Byrd, 2013). The Act was passed in early 2009, prompting an outpouring of satisfaction among Chilean students. However, four years later, another round of large-scale protests erupted in the form of a new movement, known as the “Higher Education Students’ Movement”. As Silva (2013) explains, in May 2011, a group of university students began complaining about the slow rate of progress of the education system since LOCE had been replaced by LGE. Students had expected significant change, but the system seemed the same. This movement grew in strength and by the following winter it was gaining momentum (Cabalin, 2012).

Two years later, in March 2014, the government of Sebastián Piñera came to an end and Michelle Bachelet became President for the second time. In May 2014, another big announcement was made by the new President, in which she spoke of a new educational reform, the motto of which was, “Educational Reform: fulfilling the dream of quality education for all” (MINEDUC 2014). Although efforts to improve the status quo are largely appreciated by Chileans, people see no significant or meaningful change that may result in genuine quality and equity being introduced within the national education system.

In fact, several protests and demonstrations are currently taking place in Chile. By the start of the academic year, students had already begun gathering and showing their discontent for the new educational reform, which they claim as failing to genuinely meet their demands. The situation shows no signs of improvement. During a protest on 14 May 2015, in Valparaiso, a port city one hour from Santiago, two men were killed. Ezequiel (18 years old) and Diego (24) were students participating in a demonstration. As they painted graffiti on a wall, they were shot dead by the son of the property’s owner (BBC News, 2015). This tragic event ignited the whole situation, with students now claiming to continue the fight
and protesting with increasing determination and passion to uphold the memory of Ezequiel and Diego.

### 4.2 Inequality in the Chilean Education System

Following the implementation of the educational reform under the dictatorship (see Introduction and Section 4.1), the military regime attempted to reduce expenditure across several areas (Gauri, 1998). In addition, the education budget transferred money from higher to lower education. As a result of the budget reduction, resources for maintaining expenditure were insufficient and the value of the monthly subsidy per student, both primary and secondary, dropped by 20% between 1982 and 1987, failing to recover its previous value until 1994 (ibid). This decline in the education budget was primarily due to the growth in the number of poorer children, who were highly dependent on the education system (Birdsall et al., 1997). The effect of this reform was particularly deep. As Torche (2005) explains, prior to the privatisation reform, almost 80% of Chilean pupils attended public schools. Private schools charged moderately high tuition fees and largely catered to wealthy families. These schools did not accept the government voucher because it did not cover their tuition fees. Thus, the voucher system facilitated the participation of a new private sector in the market as a provider of publicly financed education (ibid). Although private schools receiving subsidies from the government existed in Chile before the privatisation reform, they only received about half the budget of public schools, with subsides strongly affected by inflation (Espinola, 1992). Consequently, these schools functioned as a form of charity rather than an element of the education market.

Several voucher schools arising after the reform were managed by non-profit organisations and religious institutions, although the majority were run by private companies. According
to Hsieh and Urquiola (2003), these companies exploited Chilean education as a lucrative business. All such schools competed against public schools for student places. As a result, voucher schools became successful in highly populated urban areas, where their easy access was highly appealing to middle-class families who could not afford expensive private schools (Mizala and Romaguera, 2000). Parry (1996) claims that voucher schools were built in the richest areas of the country, making it easier for wealthy people to attend, and making the business more profitable in the process. Furthermore, these schools were able to select students based on their own private criteria, unlike public schools, which were legally obliged to accept every applicant student.

Yugsi (2014) states how researchers have explored the relative differences in teaching outcomes through the use of Simce (see Carnoy, 1998; Mizala and Romaguera, 2000; Hsieh and Urquiola, 2006; Matear, 2006). This supports the idea that municipal schools have access to substantially poorer learning materials and incompetently trained teachers (Yugsi, 2014). Matear (2006) supports this view, explaining that children from wealthy families attending private schools learn more and achieve higher levels of educational performance and proficiency.

In 2014, Simce reported that schools categorised as the most disadvantaged in the country were unable to achieve expected results, in both Language and Mathematics testing. Most schools did not even achieve the minimum score, whereas wealthier schools obtained excellent results (Educacion2020, 2014). This is backed up by Bos et al. (2014) in their study with BID\textsuperscript{8} Educación. This research found that Chile, compared to eight other South American countries including Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Colombia, in a test provided

\textsuperscript{8} BID: Inter-American Development Bank
by PISA⁹ and given to 15 years olds to measure Mathematics and Language, was the country with the greatest difference in student educational attainment based on social status. While in Argentina and Brazil, the difference between wealthy and poorer schools differed by about 50 points, in Chile it reached 99 points. In addition, Santiago et al. (2013) have explained the significance of families within the Chilean education system. For example, private schools select students based on interviews with parents, as well as entry tests and other resources that encourage the selection of students with specific characteristics that positively influence achievement, such as socio-economic background. Parents tend to choose schools attended by children with a similar status and background to their own, thereby reinforcing the effects of selection and “creaming”.

Another significant difference between private and public schools is the tangible inequality in teacher supply and student resources. This disparity reveals a direct correlation with levels of student achievement (Yugsi, 2014). In a study conducted by Torche (2005), 95% of children from the wealthiest income quintile were found to have completed secondary school in 2000, compared to just 30% of children from the poorest quintile. This has profound consequences on students wishing to continue their studies and attend Chilean universities, since the privatisation reform not only affected primary and secondary levels but also higher education (see Brunner, 1994; Torche, 2005; Matear, 2006).

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⁹ PISA: Programme for International Student Assessment.
4.3 Personal Growth in Chilean Education

The Chilean education model initially focused on making education accessible to everyone (see Aedo and Larranaga, 1994; Lehmann, 1994; Medlin, 1996; Winkler and Rounds, 1996; Mizala and Romaguera, 2000; Cox and Lemaitre, 2010). Firstly, as part of its approach, it placed a strong emphasis on Language and Mathematics. Chilean education has been subject to numerous reforms, and different governments have introduced distinct policies. During the dictatorship, Chilean education had a strong market labour orientation, with students perceived as future workers (Aedo and Larranaga, 1994). At the time, curriculums and programmes ignored concepts relating to personal development. Subsequent governments, on the other hand, tried to address these concepts in order to provide more holistic training to future generations, with the ongoing aim of ensuring a more equal education system (ibid).

According to Cox and Lemaitre (2010), the reform of the 1990s was a response to the main problems that had existed since the 1980s, mainly relating to low quality and, “unequal social distribution of learning results” (ibid, p.162). For the first time, skills that were not simply academic began emerging, as both governments during the 1990s attempted to teach students, “to think abstractly and systematically; to communicate, collaborate, and experiment…” (ibid, p.163). During these reforms, the learning approach also underwent modifications, whereby the views, opinions, and social and personal contexts of learners were introduced in the classroom for the first time (Aedo and Larranaga, 1994). The importance of increasing students’ self-esteem and perception was also acknowledged, through an initiative called, “The 900 schools programme”. This presented new teaching methods in which students were able to express themselves, actively participate in the classroom and feel like genuine participants in their own learning process (Cox and
lemaitre, 2010). This initiative was enhanced in 1997, with the introduction of a new more flexible and decentralised education curriculum (ibid). Under this new regime, certain social and communicative skills, such as the ability to investigate, organise, communicate, think analytically, interpret and express opinions and ideas, became essential (Mízala and Romaguera, 2000).

This process was rectified through the Chilean ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990 (Castillo and Contreras, 2014). This Convention defines education as the process in which cultural legacy is transferred to new generations, developing national growth, promoting social mobility and working as a cohesive agent for every society and for democracy by educating citizens with abilities that go beyond the academic (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990). The importance of general well-being within the education system was also included in the UN Human Development Report (HDR) 2012, in which considerable weight was given to, “the image and self-evaluation that each person has about himself or herself” (HDR, 2012, p.55). This report also highlighted educational context and the curriculum as tools for building new skills in younger generations in Chile. It stated that education can positively affect the development of personal abilities relating to the well-being of Chileans (Castillo and Contreras, 2014). This document also notes that schools, curriculums, teachers and all actors in Chilean education, should promote and develop general skills that help students to construct meaningful life plans, through which they will feel satisfied with their lives and the society in which they live (HDR, 2012). Taking all this into account, the Chilean curriculum morphed into a more humanistic prospectus, in which the main aim is to, “provide each student with intellectual and moral tools that comprehensively allow them to live their lives fully as human beings, workers and citizens” (Cox, 2003). Furthermore, skills
relating to practical and cognitive aptitudes as well as motivation, attitudes, emotions and values, have a strong presence (HDR, 2012).

This same report stated that the quality of the education system is not something that, “might or might not exist” (HDR, 2012, p.20). Rather, it claimed, it should be mandatory and a central component of education, in which children are encouraged to develop their physical and psychological abilities, talents and capacities to the maximum; develop human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect their parents, their own identity, their culture and the realities and backgrounds of others; obtain tools that will help them live in a society where they need to be responsible, sensible, comprehensive, peaceful, tolerant, equal and friendly with all national and ethnic groups (Castillo and Contreras, 2014). To make these objectives more official, the Chilean legal system included a definition of education in which all the aforementioned concepts were included (Law 20.370, General Education Act, 2009). The aim is to encourage every actor in education to focus on meeting these objectives.

Following the inclusion of new concepts more closely related to personal development, textbooks, curriculums and syllabi were also updated. In 2011, DESUC\(^{10}\) analysed several textbooks provided to children in public and semi-public schools. The aim was to evaluate these books, in Mathematics, Language, History and English, and to discover whether these new concepts were being introduced. Results were mixed. On one hand, some objectives relating to how students felt about their participation and role in society, their ability to establish social relationships, their awareness of current global affairs and their respect of others, seemed to be fully covered. On the other hand, additional areas relating to self-perception, esteem, knowledge and understanding were not fully addressed by the

\(^{10}\) DESUC: Sociological Studies Department, Universidad Católica de Chile.
textbooks (DESUC, 2011). The most concerning discovery was the absence of the objective of encouraging students to identify their own abilities in order to shape their own life project.

In order to discover the effectiveness of these modifications, the 2013 and 2014 Simce measured, for the first time in the history of Chilean education, not just cognitive or academic abilities but those relating to self-growth. The 2013 results acknowledged that students’ self-perception and validation were, “adequate”, while school motivation was “low”. Compared to academic results, this factor did not vary according to the social background of students or their gender. Regarding respect for classmates, teachers and parents, results were, “high” among higher socio-economic groups, and “low” in lower ones, with girls/women more respectful than boys/men. Regarding the feeling of importance within society, participation therein and valuing democracy, results were “high” in private schools and “low” in semi-public and public schools (Simce, 2013), with no significant differences recorded between genders. In the 2014 Simce, results remained unchanged. Here, an additional ability was measured: “healthy habits”. This related to the importance for students of eating healthily, exercising, not smoking and not drinking (Simce, 2014). Results showed that these issues were irrelevant to students from lower socio-economic groups, becoming increasingly relevant to those from higher socio-economic backgrounds (ibid).

4.4 English as a Foreign Language in Chile

In 1998, MINEDUC introduced a comprehensive reform of the Chilean school curriculum (McKay, 2001). The updated version outlined new teaching objectives across several study areas for primary and secondary schools. As such, the English curriculum underwent
certain changes. For example, the subject became mandatory for all students in the final two years of primary school and the final year of secondary school (from Years 8 to 14). It was believed that the new curriculum, “should reflect the role of English in the world today, the scope of worldwide communications networks, the geographical and regional characteristics of Chile and the demands of the Chilean labour market” (Mckay, 2001, p.141).

One of the most significant changes to the English curriculum was a new emphasis placed on receptive skills (reading and listening), rather than productive skills (speaking and writing). Justification related to the belief that most Chileans needed to read or listen to English, since the language is presented within technical or business settings, making productive skills less necessary (ibid).

Chilean students are supposedly measured on how much English they have learnt in accordance with MINEDUC standards. Evaluation tests relate to Cambridge-ESOL examinations taken by eighth grade (primary school) and fourth year (secondary school) students. The objective of these examinations is to test the performance of students and gauge whether they have achieved international standards (Muñoz, 2010). As Dizzia (2011) explains, this particular test is called Simce. The first Simce in English was applied in October 2010. It measured English proficiency in receptive skills, while ignoring productive skills. The results, “published in mid-March 2011 were shocking. A mere 11% of students reached a passing level” (Dizzia, 2011, p.10). Additionally, this first Simce in English provided evidence that public and semi-private schools performed at lower levels than private schools. This demonstrated how unequally English is taught in Chile and how educational quality relates to the school attended.

11 For full results, please see: http://www.agenciaeducacion.cl/wp-content/files_if/informenacionalderesultadosimce2010247mb.pdf
The Simce in English was applied again in 2014. Results showed no significant changes, with the pass level increasing from 11% to 18%\textsuperscript{12} (Agencia de la Calidad de la Educación, 2014). Moreover, as in 2010, the difference in results between advantaged and disadvantaged schools was notable; while 83% of the former obtained pass marks, this figure was just 0.8% among the latter (ibid, 2014). The most recent Chilean Census, compiled in September 2012, also provides an insight into how many Chileans speak the English language. According to the Chilean National Institute of Statistics (INE), only 1,585,027 out of 16,634,603 Chileans can hold a basic conversation in English. This represents just 9% of the population, while barely 2% can be considered bilingual (ibid, 2012). Another noteworthy factor relating to how English is taught and learnt in Chile concerns EFL teachers. The quality of teachers is highly relevant, given their central role throughout the entire educational process. Unfortunately, recent studies (Herrada et al., 2012; Abrahams and Farias, 2014; McBride, 2010) have demonstrated that Chilean EFL teachers lack the necessary proficiency and methodology skills necessary for teaching the language.

Despite the low level of English of Chilean pupils nationwide, differences exist among students. Those attending private schools achieve better levels than those studying at more disadvantaged schools. This shows that inequality in Chilean education has also affected the EFL classroom.

4.5 Inequality in the EFL Classroom

As explained previously, several studies and tests (Zapata et al., 2012; Abrahams and Farias, 2014; Agencia de la Calidad de la Educación, 2010, 2012, 2014; Simce Tests, 2010, 2012, 2014) have demonstrated the unequal nature and variation in proficiency of students using English as a foreign language in Chile. It should be noted that the best results are achieved by students who have studied English from a younger age. In Chile, English is compulsory from Year 8 to 14, with education on the subject prior to Year 8 depending on the school (McKay, 2011). Several public schools do not teach English to earlier years because they are unable to spend additional money on English teachers or materials, whereas wealthier schools begin teaching the language in nursery school (ibid).

Simce 2010 demonstrated that 20% of students obtaining certification began learning English in nursery school, while 5% of students began in Years 4 or 5, and just 3% in Year 8. Simce 2014 confirmed these findings: 26% of students who began English in nursery school obtained certification: 8% of students who began English in Years 4 or 5 did likewise; and 4% of certified students belonged to the group which began in Year 8 (ibid).

Another important factor and difference is the number of hours per week that Chilean students are exposed to the language. MINEDUC states that the minimum number of hours of English per week is two (Herrada et al., 2012). As a result, schools have the freedom to either increase this number, or simply to match it. In Chile, 45% of schools teach two hours of English per week; 37% teach three or four hours per week; and 18% teach more than four hours. Accordingly, 87% of public schools teach two hours of English per week, compared to 91% of private schools that teach more than four hours (Estrategia Nacional de Inglés, 2014). Furthermore, 25% of private schools, categorised as bilingual, also teach additional subjects, such as Science, History and Arts in English (ibid). Simce tests from
2012 and 2014, demonstrate that, on average, 80% of students attending more than four hours of English classes per week obtain better results than those with two hours per week. Abrahams and Farias (2014) claim that teachers working at wealthy schools differ from those working at less wealthy institutions. Their research discovered that most teachers working at fee-paying private schools attended better universities and had completed related postgraduate studies. Better qualified teachers tend to apply to better schools, while those who attended moderate universities or have not undertaken training courses, usually work at public schools. In related research, Herrada et al. (2012) analysed 3,079 teachers and discovered that more than half had attended private universities or professional institutes, and that a third had not studied English as their main degree, since they were teachers of other subjects or primary school teachers. This research also discovered that teachers working at public schools have less proficiency, rely on old-fashioned teaching methodologies, do not give clear instructions and do not speak as much English as they should during class (ibid). This was confirmed by Simce tests, which showed that 37% of students attending classes in which the educator taught the entire class in English had obtained certification, compared to 3% of students in which classes were taught in Spanish. Between these two extremes, 7% of students who obtained certification attended English lessons in which Spanish was spoken most of the time, compared to 11% of those who had classes in which English was spoken most of the time (Simce 2010, 2014).

4.6 Research Questions

Sections 3 and 4.3 provide information on the extent to which the concept of personal growth in Chilean EFL and non-EFL classrooms is recognised and prevalent. This is in spite of what can be found within different government documents, syllabi, programmes
and workbooks. Sections 4.2 and 4.5, on the other hand, demonstrate the unequal nature of the education system and how this impacts on the EFL context. Section 3 assesses perceptions of personal growth and its importance when discussing learning and tackling inequality through the provision of new abilities. Therefore, the aforementioned sections have helped to define the aims of this study.

Since little research has been done on personal growth in the Chilean EFL classroom, and given the fact that the issues of social mobility and tackling inequality are gaining strength in Chile, I aimed to answer the following question:

Are Chilean school teachers of EFL encouraging the personal growth of students in order to tackle inequality? In order to answer such a broad question, I first needed to identify the perceptions and practices of Chilean EFL teachers regarding personal growth and inequality in the classroom. The following questions helped me to do so:

- What do Chilean EFL teachers know about personal growth? Do they relate it with inequality? Do they think inequality exists in the Chilean EFL classroom?
- What do Chilean EFL teachers do in classrooms regarding personal growth and inequality issues? Do they ever talk about these concepts? How are they addressed?
- What is the perception of Chilean EFL teachers regarding addressing personal growth? Do they believe it is beneficial to language learning? Do they believe it is beneficial to tackling EFL inequality?
- If Chilean EFL teachers do not include personal growth and do not discuss EFL inequality, who or what is preventing them from doing so?
The following section will outline the methodology I used to answer and investigate the aforementioned questions.

5. Methodology

5.1 Rationale for using semi-structured interviews

The main objective of my study is to analyse and investigate the perceptions and practices of teachers regarding the concept of personal growth as a tool for tackling inequality in the EFL classroom. As such, while I was finalising my research method, it seemed obvious that a qualitative approach would be the most suitable, as this type of research is, “concerned with subjective opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals” (Dornyei, 2007, p.38). Furthermore, a qualitative approach has the characteristic of providing a clear understanding of the complexities involved, allowing participants to express themselves and to have a voice (Creswell, 2013).

According to Dornyei (2007), regarding qualitative research, such as case studies or ethnography research, there are different ways of obtaining qualitative data, the most common of which are questionnaires and interviews. Since my research aims to investigate the perceptions and practices of teachers, interviews are the most appropriate method for obtaining data. Two of the reasons leading me to this decision include: first, the time and space difference that I, as a researcher, have with my participant(s); and second, because, as Arksey and Knight (1999) stated, the nature of interviews provides the possibility to achieve a better and deeper understanding of teachers’ opinions, experiences and general information. Arksey and Knight (1999) also explain that there are three types of interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured. It should be noted that structured
interviews are incompatible with qualitative research. This is because of the lack of freedom and flexibility they afford participants in providing their answers, and particularly in terms of how little space respondents have to refer to topics they find genuinely interesting or meaningful (ibid). Alternatively, and as Dornyei (2007) suggests, unstructured interviews permit interviewees to take different and unpredictable directions, in which interruptions or limitations are prohibited, unless concepts require clarification.

Since I am aiming to conduct an in-depth analysis of the information provided by participants, structured interviews are not the most suitable option. Furthermore, unstructured interviews are also unsuitable, because I will provide specific categories on which interviewees will have to reflect. As a result, I have selected semi-structured interviews, because they allow a study to be conducted in which there is a balance between flexibility and structure, permitting the in-depth data analysis required and deserved by the topic (Gillham, 2005).

Semi-structured interviews are usually conducted face-to-face. However, due to geographical restrictions, I foresaw the need to seek a different method. Gillham (2005) claims that alternative distance methods can be relied upon when no other option is available. Such alternatives include video, telephone and email interviews. Although telephone interviews seem like a viable alternative, my interviewees are in Chile, meaning the telephone conversations would incur great financial costs. Therefore, the internet was a solid alternative, for example Skype conversations or email interviews. According to Ratilaslova and Ratislav (2014), the internet is increasingly used as a medium of communication around the world; the number of internet users increased, “by 676 million, 300%, between 2000 and 2013, according to Internet World Stats” (Ratilaslova and
The internet provides researchers with new methods of data collection, such as Skype conversations or email interviews.

Interviews conducted via Skype would have been a possible alternative, although they would have been difficult to schedule due to time zone differences between Chile (GMT - 3:00) and the United Kingdom (GMT +1:00). Although Skype interviews would provide an experience similar to face-to-face interviews, email interviews seemed more appropriate, as I wanted to provide my participants with time to reflect and think about the issues addressed. Rather than looking for a spontaneous answer, I wanted an approach that made participants contemplate their perceptions, experiences and opinions. This is supported by James (2007), who explains that email interviews provide an opportunity to generate narratives that show interviewees’ lives, together with allowing them to think and reflect about their experiences. This enables them to provide deeper and thoroughly thought-through answers.

As with all methods of research, using email interviews has its advantages and disadvantages. These are discussed in the following section.

5.1.1 Advantages and Disadvantages of email interviews

According to Ratilaslova and Ratislav (2014), email interviewing introduces numerous benefits to qualitative research, such as cost efficiency and lower time consumption compared to other types of interviews. However, by using this approach, researchers are unable to obtain the information they need and with the necessary depth required for these types of studies. Lowndes (2005) also adds that email interviews are monetarily economical, as they require no specific equipment, travel costs or additional expenses.
Another advantage of email interviews is that, although interviews tend to be a time consuming method, due to having to find a location in which to conduct the interview, gathering the necessary equipment and undertaking the transcription process, email interviews are less time consuming. Transcription is not required and the researcher simply has to copy and paste the answers (ibid). Furthermore, when using email interviews, the researcher is not bound to one conversation at a time, as he/she is able to interview several participants simultaneously (East et al., 2008). Similarly, Selwyn and Robson (1998) claim that email interviews are positive when working with shy participants or those who have difficulties expressing themselves when talking, and that these types of individuals feel more comfortable writing than speaking. In a study conducted by Ratilaslova and Ratislav (2014), in which email and face-to-face interviews were compared, the quality of the data obtained via email interviews was found to be extremely similar to that obtained through face-to-face conversations. These authors claim that participants are usually more focused during email interviews, even though the nature of the reply varies; responses submitted by email are denser, more structured and more explicit than those arising from face-to-face interviews. This can be explained due to the fact that participants have more time to think about, reflect on and check their answers. Interviewees can consider whether their answers convey what they really want to communicate, provoking a more careful communication (ibid).

In addition, as Bampton and Cowton (2002) explain, participants will answer questions in a comfortable environment such as their homes, and in their own time. Furthermore, the researcher has more time available to prepare any response deemed necessary. In order to ensure a genuine richness in the quality of the answers, Meho (2006) suggests providing proper follow-up questions to help maintain the flow of the interview. He also suggests including the questions in the body of the email, rather than in an attached file. Questions
need to be easy to understand, as there is little room for explanation. If the researcher provides too much information, this may narrow the interpretations of participants, negatively affecting the quality of the data and simultaneously coercing answers from interviewees.

Bampton and Cowton (2002) argue that if there is a considerable amount of time left between a round of question and answer, and then the subsequent round, the entire conversation may lose spontaneity. This can be avoided by asking one question at a time, following a sequence, instead of asking them all at once. It is also crucial to check and, ideally, double-check if the interviewee has genuinely understood the questions and that no confusion exists.

As is evident, email interviews have many advantages, as well as certain disadvantages. One common disadvantage is that interviewees can use abbreviations, colloquial expressions and emoticons, bringing a less formal tone to the whole process (Lowndes, 2005; Gibson, 2010). On the other hand, Meho (2006) sees the use of emoticons and acronyms as substitutes for nonverbal cues, which are present in face-to-face interviews but absent in email ones. He claims that the interviewer should encourage participants to use emoticons if they are familiar with them, which will, “lessen the loss of nonverbal cues and will add depth to the data” (ibid, p.457). Kralik et al. (2006) states that nowadays, everyone is used to using abbreviations or emoticons that help them enhance messages, lending them a more positive element. Another disadvantage relates to the fact that emails can be accumulated or ignored for long period of times (ibid).
5.2 Participants

5.2.1 Selection and Recruitment

Study participants were selected through colleagues, friends and acquaintances, as well as through sending emails to different educational research groups in Chile. These groups, in turn, helped me by forwarding the emails to additional educational groups. I decided to use a non-probability sample, since I do not aim to generalise my results (Cohen et al., 2013) but rather, to represent a particular sample. As the participants of this research were recruited under my selection criteria, I selected purposive sampling as the appropriate non-probability sample (ibid). This means that the way in which I selected my interviewees was intentionally influenced, because I do not intend to make sweeping generalisations or to analyse or represent a large number of teachers.

As such, I considered teachers with certain characteristics that met, in Dornyei’s (2007) words, my predetermined criteria. This consisted of the following aspects: firstly, it was crucial that half of my sample taught in municipal schools and the other half in private schools, ensuring opinions and perspectives were gauged from two different educational worlds; secondly, participants had to teach at the secondary level, thereby ensuring the same student type in terms of age and maturity; thirdly, interviewees had to have internet access and basic user knowledge for replying to my emails and maintaining contact; finally, participants had to be Chilean citizens, teaching in any city in the country.

Initially, some teachers who had shown a desire to participate began losing interest, stating that they thought inequality was a permanent condition in Chile. Furthermore, some people from Facebook groups or who were contacted via email explained that they had zero notion of the concept of personal growth. Eventually, I was able to incorporate six teachers into this study and to complete the interview from start to finish. I had to select an even
number of participants in order to guarantee the same amount of teachers from public and private schools. Six participants is a solid number, given that, as is the case with all qualitative research, the main objective is not to generalise, and in studies of this nature, samples should remain small (Creswell, 2013). When conducting qualitative research, small participant samples are necessary, as they provide richer and more detailed answers that can be easily and deeply analysed (Ritchie et al., 2014). By working with a large participant sample, I would have had to conduct numerous interviews and dedicate great amounts of time to analysing the answers provided. I would require several months or even years to analyse such information, and this is not a viable option.

5.2.2 Description\textsuperscript{13}

The table below outlines the main characteristics of participants completing the interview. It provides the city in which they teach, the type of school in which they work and their age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>School location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ema</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Private Catholic</td>
<td>Santiago, Chile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noelia</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Private Catholic</td>
<td>Santiago, Chile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paulina</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Private non-religious</td>
<td>Valparaiso, Chile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlos</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Public non-religious</td>
<td>Talca, Chile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Public non-religious</td>
<td>Talca, Chile</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{13} All interviewee names were substituted with pseudonyms.
5.3 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was provided by the E&M Research Ethics Panel on 26 March 2015. Given that interviews were conducted in line with the strategies of Dornyei (2007) and Graham et al. (2007), I began the interviewing process by sending all participants an information sheet (see Appendix A). This sheet outlined all the research objectives, as well as how the data would be collected and the rights of participants regarding confidentiality and consent. Once willing participants were confirmed, they were informed a second time about the non-pressurised decision in taking part and issues of confidentiality. I also asked them to provide their consent via a consent form (see Appendix B). Once all interviews had been conducted, the information was saved in different Word documents under their pseudonym names, thereby ensuring anonymity and confidentiality throughout the entire investigation.

5.4 Email Interviews

Email interviews took place from mid-May to early July 2015. This allowed participants over a month to submit their replies, at their convenience. In designing the interviews, I used an interview guide (see Cohen et al., 2013; Dornyei, 2007; and Appendix C). The content covered topics relating to inequality and personal growth in the EFL classroom, teacher opinions or practices on these issues, and comments regarding related encouragement received from the school community.

The aforementioned guide provided questions on the research topic, with a flexible rather than structured question sequence, in line with the needs and perspectives of both myself
(the author) and the participants (Cohen et al., 2013). The first email sent to participants included instructions on the answer format, as well as information on the deadline and possible reminders that might be sent throughout the process, as suggested by Meho (2006). Having been given the option of answering in either English or Spanish, all interviewees submitted their responses in the former.

Yeo et al. (2014) suggest beginning the interview process with questions relating to participants’ lives, such as their educational background and work experience. Spencer et al. (2014) explain that this approach helps participants and the researcher to set the tone of the study and to make interviewees more comfortable and relaxed. Once a reply had been received following the first email, the subsequent seven questions were asked. These questions were designed to collect the most in-depth data possible (ibid). Although some questions requested specific data, interviewees were free to expand upon their answers, with few restrictions or constraints. Indeed, most participants provided comprehensive answers, with the exception of Paulina and Noelia, who were generally more concise. No follow-up questions were required, with the exception of Paulina who, having skipped two questions, had to be contacted again.

Kyale and Brinkmann (2009) have claimed that email interviews are asynchronous, meaning that immediate rapport is not required. This provided me with sufficient time to fully assess the answers and analyse the data, requesting more information as necessary. I concluded the interview process by explaining my research to participants and how their information would be used. They were offered access to my study upon its completion.
5.5 Data Analysis

Once the data had been gathered, I began its evaluation using thematic analysis. According to Spencer et al. (2014), this type of analysis allows the researcher to discover, infer, interpret and report patterns of meaning within the data. Accordingly, while examining the interviews, I was able to trace important themes relevant to my research question. I used Braun and Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis proposal, in which six phases have been defined for analysing interviews. These phases as outlined below.

The first phase relates to understanding the data until you, “are familiar with the depth and breadth of the content” (ibid, p.87). In doing so, it is necessary to read the data several times, but in an, “active way” (ibid). This means searching for recurrent meanings and patterns, together with topics or key words. As such, I printed copies of the interviews and began highlighting words. This helped me to determine codes and concepts included in the first coding list as part of the next step.

The second phase relates to generating initial codes from the data (ibid, p.88). According to Creswell (2013), coding means labelling the data or categorising it into small groups. It is important to ensure the codes are as closely related as possible to the actual data provided, rather than interpreting the information. At this point, I began coding each highlighted part, by selecting key words in order to maintain authenticity. I also coded as many patterns as possible (see Appendix D for an example), in accordance with Braun and Clarke (2006), who claim that, “you never know what might be interesting later” (ibid, p.89). This step is connected to the subsequent one, as phase number three relates to searching for common patterns among the codes, also known as themes. Accordingly, I grouped similar codes under broader labels or potential themes, organising them into main and sub-themes.
In phase number four, all potential code themes found in step three need to be refined. Braun and Clarke (2006) state that themes should be clearly identified and distinct from one another, so I combined themes with similar ideas and discarded those lacking sufficient data. I reviewed all the information with different themes and repeated the process four or five times. This was done until I was able to establish a clear notion of the themes identified and their connection to the information. The next step involves defining and naming the themes by locating the essence of each one (ibid). These names should be, “concise, punchy and immediately give the reader a sense of what the theme is about” (ibid, p.92). As such, I named each theme according to the particular data captured and then reviewed it one more time. Here, I tested whether parts of the data selected could be associated with the names of the themes. I tried to provide names that genuinely reflected the data selected, so each one would be easily identifiable.

The final phase, number six, relates to producing the final report, in which the researcher should provide a, “concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive and interesting account of the story the data tells” (ibid, p.93). Braun and Clarke (2006) propose providing vivid abstracts that genuinely capture the essence of what the researcher wants to demonstrate, going beyond simply describing data to making, “an argument in relation to your research question” (ibid, p.94). In accordance with these suggestions, I will now report the results of my analysis, in conjunction with relevant discussions.
6. Results and Discussion

This section will outline the results of my analysis and discuss the findings in relation to the literature review provided in Section 3. Additionally, this section will include an analytical discussion, as well as certain suggestions, for improving teachers’ practices based on the aforementioned line of thought.

Following Cohen et al.’s (2013) advice, in this section findings will be presented and organised by research questions (RQ) (see Section 4.6), with the aim of presenting relevant data while maintaining coherence and organisation. This also avoids an incongruity between theory and analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006), since the following discussion provides a clear connection between both.

A. Discussion

6.1 Personal growth

6.1.1 Teachers’ Knowledge

RQ. - What do Chilean EFL teachers know about personal growth?

To answer to this question, the following themes obtained from the interviews were taken into account:

Skills, tools and development

When asking teachers what “personal growth” means for them, it should be noted that all of them shared a similar definition, with concepts such as skills, abilities, tools and
For example, “...personal growth is the development of skills, abilities and emotional intelligence, that gives persons the possibility to monitor his/her inner drives... this is very important” (Ema, AD, p. 91). Similarly, another teacher explained that for her, personal growth, “has to do with obtaining the necessary abilities to face the world... criticise what is around us and also being able to reflect upon different topics related to society” (Noelia, AE, p. 95). Society and becoming a social being were clearly important for some teachers; as Paulina explains, “personal growth has to do with how people move from being solo beings to social beings” (AF, p. 96), while Noelia confirms that, “once one is able to do that [reflect upon different topics from society] [they become] a more active participant of it [society]” (AE, p. 95). Being able to think critically is also a characteristic of well-developed personal growth for Daniel, who states that, “personal growth is the way a person develop (sic) themselves so as to improve critically as a human being” (AH, p. 100).

Despite these similarities, for other teachers personal growth was more related to obtaining tools and abilities that would make them better professionals or have more successful lives. Carlos explains that personal growth is, “a set of tools you learn to undertake actions leading to success in different areas of life” (AG, p. 97). Paulina seems to agree with this, as she explains that, “if a person possesses personal growth... he knows how to increase it and gives importance to it [and] this person will be more successful” (AF, p. 96).

Juan provides a very interesting perception of personal development, relating it more with talents, by claiming it, “... is an essential part in our lives as human beings. Without it we never reach our full potential. Only by allowing ourselves to grow personally do we really take advantage of our many talents” (AI, p. 102).

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14 This refers to Appendix D, page 91. This key will be used in all quotations taken from the interviews henceforth.
After reading participants’ answers, it was motivational to be able to confirm the positions of several authors (see Section 3.1), who state that there is not just one definition of the concept of personal growth; rather, that it varies from person to person. This is not only highly interesting, but also extremely important to bear in mind throughout the course of this study.

6.1.2 Perceptions

Regarding teacher perceptions of personal growth in the classroom, as well as its connection with tackling EFL inequality, the following questions were asked:

RQ. - Do EFL teachers relate personal growth with inequality? Do they believe it is beneficial to tackle EFL inequality?

Themes arising from the interview and which helped me answer these questions were:

Identity and self-esteem

All teachers claimed to incorporate personal development into their lessons; “I regularly include it in my classes” (Noelia, AE, p. 95), and in general, showed a positive attitude towards it; “I’m all for including personal growth in my lessons” (Juan, AI, p. 103). Concepts such as identity and self-esteem arose during this part of the interview, being referred to as a process that can occur in the classroom, causing a positive effect on students; “Students start developing awareness about who they are as individuals, which help (sic) them define their identity” (Noelia, AE, p. 96). Daniel, shares this view, claiming that, “…when encouraging personal growth, we can help students form their identity, as
they are developing skills, abilities and characteristics that are going to be their essence for the rest of their lives” (AH, p. 100).

Similarly, Carlos explains that:

“Self-esteem in our students can be strongly worked when including personal growth in the classroom. We can speak about different things or create tasks and activities that will make them feel better about themselves” (AG, p. 99). Juan, has similar thoughts; “I strongly believe that if students grow as persons... increasing their self-perception and esteem, and [when including personal growth] making them know that they are capable people who can reach their dreams” (AI, p. 103).

Overall, it can be said that teachers notice the importance and positive effect that personal growth can have in the EFL classroom. However, do they see any connection between this and tackling EFL inequality?

**Tackling EFL Inequality**

When discussing the extent to which personal growth might help tackle EFL inequality, teachers in general agreed that it could have a positive influence on learning; “...if students grow as persons, they will definitely contribute to class in a better way and EFL inequality will be bound to decrease” (Juan, AI, p. 103). Daniel adds; “... [when] encouraging students’ personal growth we can tackle personality issues, or poor cultural background knowledge... by working in all these areas we can reduce inequality” (AH, p. 101). Noelia agrees, stating, “I believe this could definitely help reduce EFL inequality as students [when including personal development] are also able to understand their strengths and limitations when learning a foreign language” (AE, p. 96).
When discussing how personal growth could help tackle EFL inequality, significant importance was given to the role of teachers: how, when and with what frequency they encourage students’ personal growth. For Daniel, “there is a rampage of efficiency and velocity in the EFL classroom that disregards important issues like students’ personal growth” (AH, p. 101). He goes on to criticise the importance teachers place on content and states that, “many other issues must be addressed [...] prior to attaining high levels of proficiency in the language” (ibid). Ema agrees, claiming, “...we [teachers] have to educate not just academically but also [to] give students the nurture they need personally in order to have academic achievements in their future” (AD, p. 93). Cristian believes that, “including personal growth as part of teaching planning can have a positive influence on students” (AG, p. 99). He adds that, “...teachers should receive training on these topics [personal growth] and they must be dealt with responsibility...” (ibid).

As demonstrated, these teachers believe that including personal growth in their lessons can be useful and that it can help tackle EFL inequality. Nevertheless, it should be noted that for one of them, Paulina, this was not the case. Rather, she responded that, “[even though it] is important to talk about personal growth... I don’t see the connection between it and EFL inequality” (AF, p. 97).

6.1.3 Practice

The following questions were asked to discover the presence of personal growth encouragement and the actual practice of teachers:

*RQ: What do Chilean EFL teachers do in classrooms regarding personal growth and inequality issues? Do they ever talk about these concepts? How are they addressed?*
Themes arising from the interviews were:

**Discussions**

Opportunities for discussions and conversations were highlighted by four of the teachers as a method for encouraging students’ critical thinking and their ability to reflect on different topics: “*I like to deal with several globally relevant topics that will foster critical thinking, which I believe contributes to personal and social growth*” (Juan, AI, p. 103). In Paulina’s case, she explains that she encourages personal growth, “…*usually through conversations that include all of my students based on topics that we are covering at that time*” (AF, p. 97). Similarly, Noelia explains that, “*I usually use my classes to discuss about (sic) different topics, to foster critical thinking and help students relate their own experiences to the topics we are discussing... generally related to current affairs or controversial issues*” (AE, p. 95). For Noelia, discussion opportunities among students, “*invite [them] to reflect on their own doing (sic) and how to improve as social beings*” (ibid).

Juan has a similar opinion regarding helping students to become better social beings; “*I want my students to express themselves and to feel that they won't be censored nor (sic) discriminated against in our class discussions. When someone says something offensive, I like to see my students negotiate and realize that what they've said could have been nicer... that's another way of encouraging personal growth*” (AI, p. 103). Paulina holds a similar view of the positive effect of discussions in the classroom; “*I take the opportunity to use them [discussions], aiming to have students sharing different points of view, which will make them exchange information and opinions, increasing their tolerance and general relationships with others*” (AF, p. 97).
Juan adds that this type of task also allows students to engage in self-criticism, ensuring they can, “...analyze their performance and be self-critical about their study habits or their everyday manners. This type of growth is very important since we live in a society with many different people, all of whom deserve respect and equal opportunities. We're social beings, so your individual characteristics have an effect on society” (AI, p. 103).

Ema says something similar. In her opinion, the general/cultural line she follows in her classes, “...is oriented towards providing the elements of self-growth [that] students achieve in order to become more integrated and better humans in the future: better citizens, professionals, and even better friends and future parents” (AD, p. 92-93).

**Materials**

Regarding the presence of personal growth in terms of teacher practices, another recurrent theme was the importance of materials and educational resources: “I give them [students] some reading material, personality quizzes, famous people bibliographies and so on...” (Carlos, AG, p. 99). He continues; “I try to show them that new possibilities can be found and that they can manage their future” (ibid). For Daniel, materials play a crucial role when it comes to encouraging students’ personal development; “I don’t prepare specific material... but I tend to adapt all the materials provided by each institution, so the topics are not just about unimportant matters in life” (AH, p. 100). He then goes on to criticise the materials provided by the Ministry, explaining that, “...most of the materials they give us are about what we call the 3 Ds, ‘Dating, Dieting and Dinner parties’, which does (sic) not allow [for] any personal growth” (ibid). Daniel explains his solution to this problem:

“... at the beginning of the semester I try to just talk to students, asking them their interests, worries, hopes, wishes and dreams (not really systematically or structured);
from there [I] adapt all the materials, from a simple example I give them as a sentence, or [I] start a class with a key word, or sometimes even change a whole unit topic and replace it by (sic) another one. I also tend to use [controversial] topics that are avoided in EFL textbooks... for me, by addressing these topics, we could allow personal growth in a better way’’ (ibid).

The situation is similar for Ema, who states that, “...sometimes the topics provided by the books are not very interesting or connected to developing students’ personal growth, so in more than one opportunity I’ve seen myself changing the topic or modifying it” (AD, p.92).

6.2 Inequality in the EFL Classroom

6.2.1 Perceptions

RQ. – Do teachers think inequality exists in the Chilean EFL classroom?

Regarding the existence of inequality in the EFL context, all teachers, regardless of whether they work at a private or public school, agreed on the existence and seriousness of inequality in the EFL classroom. According to Daniel, “... as I have worked in so many places, I am more than aware of all the inequalities within Chilean EFL classrooms” (AH, p. 100). Paulina commented that, “I think that there is inequality... it is very bad and massive [in scale]...” (AF, p. 96).

During the analysis of the interviews, there were three recurrent themes, which are described below.
The Chilean education system

Regarding EFL inequality, some teachers blamed the current Chilean education system; “I think that there’s a lot of inequality in different educational contexts in Chile. In fact, I wouldn’t say it is only found in EFL classrooms, but in all aspects of the Chilean educational system” (Noelia, AE, p. 95). Carlos has a stronger view, claiming that, “Inequality is one of the foundation principles in Chile. The administration, income distribution, education and access are all based on inequality” (AG, p. 98). Paulina also has a strong opinion on the matter; “I blame the educational system that we have... it is so badly organized and so negatively affected by the dictatorship period that we went through... all of the inequalities we see in the country are based on this dysfunctional educational system” (AF, p. 96).

This is strongly connected with the existence of extremely evident social classes in Chile. This affects Chilean education, as well as the EFL context.

Social classes

The concept of social class or status was commonly repeated by the participants during discussions of EFL inequality; “...if you’re poor, you’re doomed to share a classroom with partners with a very low command of English language” (Carlos, AG, p. 98). Similarly, Ema states that, “Some very talented students are actually exposed to very deprived schools, in which English is badly taught, and they never got to learn what they could have learned” (AD, p. 92). This is also important for Noelia, who explains the difference she has witnessed in distinct schools, depending on their social status; “… [there are schools] where students have a high social and economic status, which leads to [them] having more resources... cultural baggage... [than] on the other hand... students [who]
come from very dissimilar social realities, which definitely affects the dynamic of the class…” (AE, p. 95).

The teachers are aware of the connection between the status or social class of students and the school they are able to attend and, as a consequence, the EFL training they receive. For this reason, the concepts of resources and teacher type were also debated.

**Resources and teachers**

“There are schools that have a lot of resources, both human and financial… that makes things different for the pupils, and well, also for teachers” (Ema, AD, p. 92). Ema then explains the impact of resources on students and teachers; “… it’s not the same working in a place where you, as [a] teacher, have access to the best resources and can teach through videos, songs and fun activities, [compared to] schools where there is not a single radio to do listening activities... [this] affects the achievements of students” (ibid). Paulina agrees, stating, “… there are students who have access to massive resources, such as... internet, films, radios, English lab and others... and there are others that don’t even have [anything] to eat, not to mention materials [with which] to study” (AF, p. 96).

Carlos also mentions the importance of teachers from public and private schools, discussing how the latter group tends to outperform the former. Accordingly, he says that, “… [in public schools, there are] teachers who have broadly lost their language skills in English because of poor money incentives and scarce possibilities to receive training abroad” (AG, p. 98). Ema adds that, “The best teachers, the most committed ones, and most of the time, better trained and qualified, are usually working in the private sector because they have better salaries there…” (AD, p. 92). Paulina also thinks that, “… it is unlikely students from public schools have access to English speaking teachers,
diminishing with that (sic) the possibilities of being exposed to English language” (AF, p. 96).

To conclude, it should be noted that EFL inequality is relevant for the teachers and that, according to their answers, they are making efforts to tackle it. For example, Daniel states that, “... my practice is completely related and directed to improve (sic) my students’ performance and help (sic) them learn English” (AH, p. 100). Noelia adds, “I would say that inequality is a relevant factor to consider, and be aware of, in my teaching practice, in order to help with its disappearance and [to] finally have an equal educational system in our country and also EFL management” (AE, p. 95).

6.2.2 Practice

The next question was asked to discover whether teachers are actually addressing EFL inequality in their lessons, based on their practices.

RQ. - What do Chilean EFL teachers do in classrooms regarding inequality issues? Do they ever talk about it? How is it addressed?

Four of the six participants claimed to be addressing EFL inequality in their classrooms. The main theme arising from their answers is described below.

Reflections

The most common method used by the teachers in addressing EFL inequality was by having their students reflect upon the reality in Chile. For example, Daniel noted that, “I always address [these] differences and inequalities with my students, so we can come up with ways of addressing them together. I try to always include topics of... EFL
inequalities, to be discussed with my students” (AH, p. 101). Paulina, who works at a private school, said, “Sometimes I talk to them [the students] about how lucky they are as they have the chance to attend a good school with good teachers of English... I don’t talk about this very often, but sometimes when I see that they are demotivated, I do.” (AF, p. 97). Ema, who also works at a private school, claims, “… I try to make them reflect about (sic) how fortunate they are as they are students of an elite school, where they have great teachers, materials and resources. I try to make them realise that a lot of children in the country do not have the same opportunities” (AD, p. 93). Carlos, who works at a public school with disadvantaged students explains that, “If I have students with very evident problems with language acquisition I help them realise that this is due to our unequal system. I usually tell my students that it’s not their fault to be (sic) part of this system, they are just victims of the history of the country.” (AG, p. 99).

Noelia and Juan claimed that addressing EFL inequality it is not particularly important for them. Noelia explained that, “I regularly address social inequality, but not necessarily linked to EFL inequality” (AE, p. 96). Juan said that addressing this issue is unnecessary, because, “…if students are self-critical, they know where they stand” (AI, p. 103).

6.3 Personal growth and language learning

I wanted to discover whether teachers could see any connection between discussions related to personal growth and language learning. Accordingly, the following question was asked:

RQ. -Do teachers believe that discussing personal growth and including it in the lesson can improve language learning?
The main theme arising from answers to this question is described below.

**Meaningfulness**

Teachers responded that the learning process will always be more successful if it includes meaningful experiences for students; “... when discussing topics related to personal growth, students will be discussing topics that are meaningful to them, and meaningfulness it (sic) is always positive in the learning process of a second language” (Paulina, AF, p. 97). This is also connected to the discussion of topics easily relatable to students; “When students start talking about topics that can relate to their own lives, the learning that takes place becomes meaningful. Therefore, the language learning process is enriched and long-lasting” (Noelia, AE, p. 96). Continuing with the concept of topics, Carlos believes that, “... connect[ing] contents with someone’s own experience can always help in teaching-learning processes. It awakes (sic) latent vocabulary and students feel like participating when the topic is familiar” (AG, p. 99).

For Daniel, dealing with issues that allow personal growth help, “... students feel more engaged with the class and the content, therefore improving language learning...” (AH, p. 101). Juan, meanwhile, claims that, “Discussing is a skill for which language is required... by discussing and negotiating topics related to personal growth students are using what they've learnt and developing further, hence... learning” (AI, p. 104).

This can be connected to Dixon’s (1967) principles, whereby the idea of sharing one’s opinions and reacting to the different voices that can be heard in the classroom, through the methodology of discussions, allows for growth through language. However, none of the participants referred to Dixon or his premises.
6.4 Prevention

RQ. - If Chilean EFL teachers do not include personal growth and do not discuss EFL inequality, who or what is preventing them from doing so?

Following analysis of all the interviews, it can be stated that all participants try to include personal growth in their lessons (see Section 6.2.3), although they incorporate different approaches or methodologies in doing so. Regarding EFL inequality in the EFL classroom (see Section 6.3.2), it should be noted that four out of six teachers have introduced discussions on the topic. Of the two that have not, Noelia mentioned it twice, whereas Juan never discussed the issue. The reasons provided by these two teachers for not discussing EFL inequality in their lessons is not related to any particular person or thing preventing them from doing so, such as a superior in their school who censors certain topics. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that when asked whether the school in which they work encourages them to include personal growth and/or discuss EFL inequality, teacher answers were mainly in the negative: “This has never happened” (Paulina, AF, p. 97); “No, never” (Carlos, AG, p. 99); “Not, at all” (Daniel, AH, p. 101); “No, the school has never encouraged me to do so” (Juan, AI, p.104); and, “Not really. Not in my current school or the previous ones I’ve worked in.” (Noelia, AE, p. 96). Ema was the only teacher who referred to discussions on personal growth, saying, “It’s explicit in the academic project of the school through the general/cultural line. However putting it into practice is another thing... there are not (sic) specific activities or suggestions coming from the school where they encourage to address (sic) these issues” (AD, p. 94).

No specific theme arose from the interviews on this particular issue. All answers were short and, as mentioned previously, all of them were in the negative. It is concerning that despite personal growth being referred to in curriculums, reforms and syllabi created by
the Ministry of Education (see Section 4.3), in which the “Fundamental Transversal Objectives” (see Section 3.3) claim to give importance to education in terms of personal, intellectual, moral and social development, schools, seemingly, are not truly encouraging teachers to put the theory into practice.

B. Discussion

This section will include a brief discussion on the most striking findings of the previous section.

When teachers discussed their perceptions of the concept of personal growth, it was possible to confirm the claims made by Reid (2003); that there is not simply one definition of this concept. The perception of some teachers was related to either becoming a better social being, a better professional or to developing talents. Despite these differences, the concept itself related to positive characteristics useful to student development. It was particularly interesting to note that despite personal growth being acknowledged by participants as relevant, and that it is included by each of them via different approaches and frequency, not one of them referred to its connection with language, culture or inequality until the issue was put to them in the form of a question.

This might be related to a lack of knowledge of more formal concepts (see Section 3.1). Rather than having formal knowledge of personal growth, it seems that Chilean EFL teachers have more of an intuitive understanding. Nevertheless, they did debate issues and named methodologies, such as discussions and conversations, which are connected to Freire’s (1970) “conscientização”. These concepts relate to raising awareness, consciousness, and the capacity to analyse and criticise one’s own reality and society.
However, none of them referred to the author by name. Likewise, while some teachers make a connection between the use of language and personal growth, which is strongly linked to Dixon’s (1967) personal growth model, none of them named the author.

Regarding the concept of self-esteem development, it is interesting to note that all of these teachers are concerned about the self-perception of their students and believe in the usefulness of helping them to discover their own identities, not only as students, but also as social beings. This is also related to making students understand that they can follow their dreams and, in the process, achieve social mobility. Some teachers complained about how much emphasis is given to content, or in Freire’s words, “banking style” (Freire, 1970), which clearly prevents the inclusion of personal growth in the classroom.

Regarding language proficiency and the extent to which the inclusion of personal growth may impact students when learning English as a foreign language, teachers placed great emphasis on the use of discussions about meaningful topics. They explained how these topics had to be relatable to students, making them more interested, motivated and active in class. Some of the teachers saw a positive connection between debating topics relevant to students and the possible language proficiency they could achieve when using language learnt. This relates to what Fernandez (2013) explained as the moment in which students wish to express their feelings, opinions and thoughts, and see themselves in need of using their foreign language, in this case English, almost unconsciously. They then begin to connect themselves with their language learning process, making step-by-step progress.

Regarding the topic of EFL inequality, it was unsurprising to note how each participant agreed that this is a present and ongoing reality in Chile. In terms of their perceptions towards the presence of personal growth and its possible positive impact as a tool for tackling inequality, opinions varied. One of the teachers believed that the connection
between these two concepts does not exist, whereas the others thought it most probably does. Although the teachers provided passionate comments regarding the positive effect of this approach, in terms of their actual praxis, only one methodology arose; discussions.

Discussions and reflexions again arose when teachers spoke about their approach to addressing the topic of EFL inequality. In practice, they explained, this means making students reflect on how fortunate or unfortunate they are in terms of the quality of education they are receiving. I understand why teachers would do this. However, these kinds of reflections might produce a negative result if not used properly. As such, the teachers are, in a way, classifying their students and making them feel, “either innocent or guilty” (Britzman et al., 1995, p.160) of their social status. This may reinforce a sense of antagonism and even resentment among students. This is discussed by Freire (1970), who explains that more privileged individuals will recognise themselves as “oppressors”, while the less privileged will become the “oppressed”. Once people have acknowledged that they belong to a particular group, their attitudes can be either positive or negative. The “oppressed” must, “perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform” (Freire, 1970, p.31). Similarly, the “oppressors” might have to deal with a sense of guilt which might be, “rationalized… through paternalistic treatment of the oppressed… holding them [the oppressed] fast in a position of dependence” (ibid). As a result, teachers need to be extremely careful when using these types of activities, ensuring they create a positive, rather than a negative impact on students.

Simultaneously, the teachers who prefer not to discuss EFL inequality in their classes, claiming that their students, “know where they stand” (see Section 6.2.2) actually make the
problem invisible in the classroom. It is therefore unlikely that students will be able to
gauge the importance of the situation.

I truly believe that discussions constitute a highly positive educational resource and that
they provide an opportunity for sharing opinions and expressing feelings. Nevertheless, I
believe that finding a balance is key, and that teachers should also include additional
methodologies and resources. Such techniques will be discussed in the following section.

C. Suggestions for improving practice

This section will outline a variety of examples for improving teachers’ practice. The aim is
to encourage the personal growth of students and, ideally, to help tackle EFL inequality.

I do not wish to discourage teachers from conducting conversations, discussions or
activities that help their students to reflect. Rather, I wish to suggest certain considerations
that should be taken into account. Firstly, it is crucial that teachers include discussions
within a given context, not just as a random activity that is unconnected with the lesson. I
truly value participants who claimed that they take concepts from the textbook or syllabus
and connect them with personal growth or inequality. However, it is highly unlikely that
students will be able to discuss, reflect and think about EFL inequality without the
provision of any sort of meaningful context. Such conversations would seem unconnected
to the nature of the class and the students themselves (Pennycook, 2001, p.159). Similarly,
I invite teachers to discuss topics which keep their students informed about national
current affairs, in order to broaden their general knowledge. However, teachers must
always be careful not to impose their own worldview on students. Freire (1998) explains
that teachers sometimes, “impose on their pupils their own ‘reading of the world’” (ibid,
p.111), depriving students of forming their own opinions and readings. Of course, teachers may bring their own reading of the world into the classroom, but simply in order to, “… bring out the fact that there are other ‘readings of the world’, different from the one being offered” (ibid).

Regarding resources, I would suggest the inclusion of a wide variety, and not overusing discussions or conversations. Bringing interesting texts to class that educate on the state of different issues such as social inequality, EFL inequality and the Chilean education system can be useful and appropriate. Such resources can, simultaneously, provide opportunities for discussing concepts related to personal growth. Exposing students to films or short stories in which the story of a person who began life with very little and then achieved success might also be successful in the classroom. Carlos, one of the teachers, claimed that he sometimes asks students to complete personality quizzes. This seems like a decent idea, as students will be able to think in more depth about their own characteristics and identify their strengths, talents and abilities. As a result, this increases their personal development in the process.

Another idea would be to ask students to write and produce their own stories, poems or to create short plays, in which the problem of EFL inequality or issues related to personal growth are addressed and analysed. This could also be beneficial for students. As Carter and Long (1991) explained, this type of exercise gives students the opportunity to work on their creative skills while increasing their linguistic abilities. Hanauer (2012) supports this view, explaining that such activities stimulate learners to explore their own lives, as well as increasing their interest in what is happening to their peers. In some way, this helps students to be less self-centred and to become better social beings, which, as mentioned
previously, is also related to personal growth. In addition, it provides students with the opportunity to practise their language skills and to enhance their linguistic competence.
7. Conclusion

Cohen et al. (2013) claim that a researcher needs to find a motive to enquire after a particular line of research. In my case, this motive was based on a problem that I encounter day after day in my role as an English teacher. There is a clear problem in Chile; the unequal nature of the education system. This issue affects my field of expertise, because the way in which English is taught it is also extremely unequal.

There are several studies into the unequal nature of the Chilean education system, as well as its presence in the EFL context. These have been discussed in the literature review of this paper (See Section 3). However, little research has been done on the presence of personal growth in the Chilean EFL classroom, and whether EFL teachers are doing anything to tackle inequality; both general and in the EFL sphere. Accordingly, I aimed to answer the following question: Are Chilean school teachers of EFL encouraging the personal growth of students in order to tackle inequality?

To answer this question it has been necessary to conduct an in-depth investigation into the salient concepts and definitions. This has been done in conjunction with different perceptions from scholars, researchers and numerous studies, from diverse parts of the world, such as Europe, Australia, North America and South America, regarding the concept of personal growth. The paper has also investigated the main reasons as to why Chile has become one of the most unequal countries regarding education, and how this inequality affects the who, what, why, when and how of those Chileans learning English, as well as how the language is being taught.

To conduct such research, this study aimed to gauge the perceptions and practices of Chilean EFL teachers relating to personal growth, inequality and EFL inequality in the
classroom. Using semi-structured email interviews, six Chilean EFL teachers provided opinions, experiences, and their own accounts of this situation.

One of the first findings of this dissertation is the lack of formal knowledge and training regarding discussions of the topic of personal growth. Nevertheless, in most cases teachers provided interesting answers which have allowed me to further understand what this concept means to them as individuals. Regarding teachers’ perceptions and practices, it has been motivational to note how all of them understand the positive presence played by activities encouraging the personal growth of their students.

According to their answers, Chilean EFL teachers are indeed encouraging the personal growth of students. However, not all of them are aiming to achieve the same results or, as my main research question asks, to tackle inequality. Teachers’ answers varied regarding how much, when, and why they are including personal growth in their classes. Some of them show great interest and dedication, claiming to spend large amounts of time preparing resources and adapting materials to help them successfully address this concept. Others simply do so incidentally and improvise the insertion of this topic into their lessons. Moreover, for some teachers the connection between strong and well-defined personal growth, self-perception and development can help tackle inequality. This is because, they believe, as students achieve a better understanding of the broader picture they are able to take a step back from themselves and their lives, becoming more conscious of their existence and eventually becoming motivated to do something to change their situation. This has been called, “… the moment when we not only lived, but began to know that we know, and therefore to know that we could do more” (Freire, 1998, p.98), and it helps students to understand that, “… we cannot exist without wondering about tomorrow, about what’s ‘going on’” (ibid).
It was interesting to discover that not all teachers have the same approach, and that they do not all place the same amount of emphasis on this concept. As such, not all of them are encouraging their students’ personal development in order to tackle educational inequality.

This finding is noteworthy. While the topics of inequality and EFL inequality have been discussed in certain sections of this study, all teachers agreed that they exist. It should be noted that I had predicted consensus in this area. It would have been extremely shocking and challenging to have encountered a participant who disagreed with the existence of this factor. By asking teachers whether they discuss this situation with their students, their responses provided evidence of how the issue is addressed in both private and public schools. Regarding the former, it is mainly undertaken through efforts at making students realise how privileged they are. In the latter, the approach, despite its tendency to victimise students, is to help them understand their situation and to find an appropriate exit. This is strongly related to Freire’s premises regarding his idea of using education for liberation, whereby the person begins to perceive the, “root causes of [his/her] place in society - the socioeconomic, political, cultural… of our personal lives” (Wallerstein, 1987, p.34). Furthermore, this means that students are able to increase their self-perception, “towards the actions and decisions they make to shape and gain control over their lives” (ibid).

It is concerning to discover that inequality it is not being discussed with the relevance and strength that it deserves. I believe that if this issue it is not discussed in detail with students, it simply becomes invisible, that everyone becomes used to the status quo and that, eventually, it disappears from view. Discussing inequality and EFL inequality should be part of all EFL classrooms, regardless of the type of school. The issue should be discussed and students helped to understand that they can become active participants of change, as Freire postulates in all of his premises (1970, 1973, 1985, and 1998).
Chilean governmental research and documents claim that several reforms and programmes and widespread investment have been implemented in the country in order to tackle inequality in education. Nevertheless, the problem still exists and, in fact, it seems to become more entrenched on a daily basis. Simultaneously, teachers declare their awareness and concern about the issue, and claim to be doing something every day to contribute to its reduction. However, by analysing their positions, as this research paper aims to do, it can be seen that those same teachers are failing to put words into practice.

It has been moving to discover the passion of these teachers in terms of their stated intent to help change the situation, as well as to read that inequality is actually an important issue for them. However, the fact they are failing to put this into practice in a serious, well-prepared and in-depth manner is concerning. Rather, inequality is regarded as extra content or material which is only sometimes addressed. Teachers need to take their practice seriously, so those who, “do not study… who do not fight to have the material conditions absolutely necessary for their teaching practice, deprive themselves of the wherewithal to cooperate in the formation… of the students” (Freire, 1998, p.82). It is crucial that educators spend more time studying, learning and understanding, which, although demanding and difficult is, “very pleasant” (Snyders, 1986; in Freire, 1998, p.82). According to this study, it seems that some teachers are failing to do this.

As some of the participants of this study stated, this is probably connected to how much pressure teachers feel regarding covering course contents and the overuse of the “banking education” style. As mentioned previously, Chilean curriculums and MINEDUC documents state that teachers need to encourage personal growth to help students realise that they can access improved opportunities in life, as well as for understanding society, the country and the world. Nevertheless, the reality is that in schools, teachers are not
encouraged to pursue these approaches by their superiors, but rather to primarily cover the required topics and contents and to prepare students for passing tests.

Unfortunately, there is no one simple solution to tackling inequality and EFL inequality in Chile. This study has been unable to deliver a perfect formula or to provide a concrete answer to the problem. Simultaneously, due to the limitations of this research, it cannot be stated that by encouraging personal growth in the Chilean EFL classroom, the unequal nature in which English is taught in Chile, and inequality in general, will be tackled. However, it has allowed six Chilean teachers to reflect and think about their own knowledge, training, perceptions and practice, as well as their roles in actively participating towards tackling inequality.

And that is one of the main contributions of this research: to motivate and invite other EFL teachers to critically reflect upon their practices and to be able to identify whether they are actually playing an active role in tackling EFL inequality. Perhaps it is not based on encouraging personal growth. Perhaps several teachers in Chile have their own ideas and systems, which would be fantastic. This research simply provides an opportunity for EFL teachers to exchange opinions and to discuss an issue that sometimes, despite its frequent presence on the front pages of the national newspapers, tends to be forgotten.

7.1 Limitations of the study

One of the principal limitations of this research relates to its small sample. This means that its findings cannot be generalised among Chilean EFL teachers or among a wider population. Nevertheless, and as explained in Section 5.1, one of the characteristics of qualitative research is not to make generalisations. However, I believe that a greater
number of participants would have provided more in-depth information and greater amounts of data.

The interview process went well and all participants provided full and complete answers in the estimated time, in which fluent communication was maintained. However, face-to-face interviews might have provided further information that could not be obtained from written answers, such as gestures and expressions that might have offered me, the researcher, an opportunity to gauge whether these answers were genuinely honest. Nevertheless, teachers are perfectly capable of saying that they do things that, in reality, they do not do in face-to-face conversations. This is what Cohen et al. (2013) explain as a phenomenon that sometimes occurs when teachers do not do as they say. Therefore, teacher responses in this study may not be representative of their practice, and perhaps a supplementary research approach would have been useful in order to clarify the answers provided.

7.2 Implications and future research

This research delivers a preliminary account of certain perceptions and practices of Chilean EFL teachers regarding personal growth and EFL inequality in their classrooms and lessons. However, further investigation is required to guarantee that the inclusion of personal growth and the encouragement thereof in lessons can provide a useful and real impact on students’ lives and perceptions in order to tackle inequality. A reasonable approach for discovering whether this is possible would be to conduct more interviews in conjunction with ethnographic research, in which the interaction between teacher-student can be examined (Cohen et al., 2013). This could be done by preparing a set of materials, resources and lesson plans in which personal growth is encouraged. The lesson plan could
also address issues such as inequality and EFL inequality, thereby enabling their practical implementation by teachers. This would help gauge what really happens in the classroom when these topics are included and addressed. It would also help to discover whether, under these circumstances, teachers remain reluctant to include the content, or if they face other difficulties that deprive them from doing so. This exercise would help to ensure a better understanding of the attitudes, perceptions and practices of teachers.

Word Count: 19,852
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9. Appendices

APPENDIX A- Information sheet for interview participants

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

REC Reference Number: KCL/14/15-146

Are Chilean EFL Teachers encouraging students' personal growth in order to tackle inequality?

- I would like to invite you to participate in this postgraduate research project which forms part of my MA in English in Education. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

- The aim of the study is to investigate whether, how and when Chilean teachers of English as a foreign language encourage personal growth in their lessons in order to tackle inequality.

- I am inviting Chilean teachers of English who have been teaching English in municipal, or private schools in Santiago, Chile, for at least one year, and who are between 25 and 60 years old.

- If you agree to participate, you will receive an email in which you will be asked to provide your consent. I will then send you the first question to your email address, so you can answer it at a time convenient for you. The email interview will continue until all the information needed has been collected. This interview will be then transferred to a Word document which will be held in a secure place. Even if you have decided to take part, you are still free to cease your participation at any time and to have research data/information relating to you withdrawn without giving any reason up to the point I begin writing up on 1st July 2015.

- What is said in the interview is regarded as strictly confidential and will be held securely until the research is finished. All data for analysis will be anonymised. In reporting on the research findings, I will not reveal the names of any participants.

- The UK Data Protection Act 1998 will apply to all the information gathered with the interviews.

If you have any questions or require more information about this study, please contact me using the following contact details: Soffia Carbone, email address: soffia.carbone@kcl.ac.uk

If this study has harmed you in any way or if you wish to make a complaint about the conduct of the study you can contact King's College London using the details below for further advice and information: Bethan Marshall (supervisor), email: bethan.marshall@kcl.ac.uk

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering taking part in this research.
APPENDIX B- Consent form for interview participants

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH STUDIES

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

Title of Study: Are Chilean EFL Teachers encouraging students’ personal growth in order to tackle inequality?

King’s College Research Ethics Committee Ref: KCL/14/15-146

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. The person organising the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part. If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

I confirm that I understand that by ticking/initialling each box I am consenting to this element of the study. I understand that it will be assumed that unticked/initialled boxes mean that I DO NOT consent to that part of the study. I understand that by not giving consent for any one element I may be deemed ineligible for the study.

Please tick

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information and asked questions which have been answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. Furthermore, I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data up to 1st July 2015.

3. I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes explained to me. I understand that such information will be handled in accordance with the terms of the UK Data Protection Act 1998.

4. I understand that my information may be subject to review by responsible individuals from the College for monitoring and audit purposes.

5. I understand that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained and it will not be possible to identify me in any publications.

6. I consent to my interview being kept in a Word document and held in a secure place.

7. I understand that I must not take part if I fall under the exclusion criteria as detailed in the information sheet and explained to me by the researcher.
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<td>What did you study?</td>
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<td>Where have you worked?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you like it?</td>
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<td><strong>Personal Growth</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>What do you know about personal growth?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is it relevant for your practice?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Inequality in the EFL Classroom</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>What do you know about inequality in the Chilean EFL classroom?</td>
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<td>Do you think that there is inequality in the different EFL classrooms all throughout the country?</td>
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<td><strong>Practice-Personal Growth Encouragement</strong></td>
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<td>Do you ever address personal growth in the classroom? How?</td>
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<td>Do you include personal growth in the classroom?</td>
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<td><strong>Personal Growth and Language Learning</strong></td>
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<td>Do you think that discussing personal growth and including it into the lesson can improve language learning?</td>
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<td>What is the relation between both?</td>
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<td><strong>School Encouragement</strong></td>
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<td>Has the school where you work ever encouraged you to include personal growth in the classroom or to discuss about EFL inequality?</td>
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APPENDIX D- Interview with Ema

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<th>Interview</th>
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<td><strong>1.</strong> Can you explain me a bit your career so far? For example, where did you study? Where have you worked? What has it been like? Do you like it? And so on.</td>
<td><strong>Development of skills,</strong> abilities and emotional intelligence. Monitor his/her inner drives. Empathy, developed personal growth.</td>
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<td>Regarding your first question, I would like to point out I am a 41 year old English teacher. I studied at Universidad de Santiago in Chile from 1992-1997. I have worked in the private sector and the public sector. Both as an English teacher and a coordinator. Regarding my experience as a teacher. I have worked at schools twice and in general, in the first school (a bilingual school) I had a very good experience. Teachers and children, were in general, kind and the experience of teaching proved to be interesting, although it was highly demanding. The preparation of literature lessons up to the level of the students was hard work, but I enjoyed it a lot. Classes in general consisted of discussing a literary piece which ranged from fiction to drama. I decided to leave that school because I was offered a position a state university. I wanted to try, so I resigned after my second year of working there. My experience at university was completely different. At the moment I am working at a Catholic private school life and I am very happy now. For one thing I am not working as a coordinator which was not really my vocation, but the most important is that people I work with are kind and gentle. I have learned that the working environment and the type of work you are assigned to do is the most important part of the job.</td>
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<td><strong>2. What do you know about personal growth? Is it relevant for your practice?</strong></td>
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<td>What I believe is that the more the teacher has developed personally, the better teacher he/she will be. I believe personal growth is the development of skills, abilities and emotional intelligence that gives the persons the possibility to monitor his/her inner drives. For a teacher this is very important. A teacher who is not able to realize when he/she is demotivated to carry out a task, will be unable to modify his practices, or make decisions based on the inner drives. Also, someone who has not developed empathy will very unlikely develop a good teaching practice. Empathy comes from a developed personal growth, which enables the professional to open to the different. In class, and as a teacher you are always challenged by the difference: different students, different backgrounds, and different cultures and should take into account.</td>
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15 It is important to point out that the beginnings and endings of the interviews were cut up as they do not contain information regarding the study. In addition, some of the initial part of the questions were not included as well since they only connect the previous information with the new question. This will be the case for all the interviews from now on.
account these differences to develop good practice. I think personal growth is really very important.

3. What do you know about inequality in the Chilean EFL classroom? Do you think that there is inequality in the different EFL classrooms all throughout the country? Is inequality relevant for your practice?

Of course there is inequality. There are schools that have a lot of resources, both human and financial. That makes things different for the different pupils, and well, also for teachers. Some very talented students are actually exposed to very deprived schools, in which English is badly taught, and they never get to learn what they could have learned. There's also inequality in terms of teachers. The best teachers, the most committed ones, and most of the time, better trained and qualified are usually working in the private sector because they better salaries there, so I would say that although all the improvements Chile continues to show inequality. Of course inequality is relevant to the teaching profession, it's not the same working in a place where you, as a teacher, have access to the best resources and can teach through videos, songs, and fun activities, that at schools where there is not a single radio to do listening activities. Of course this is going to affect the achievements of the students.

4. Do you ever address personal growth in the classroom? How? Do you include personal growth in the classroom? Do you prepare materials or lessons that allow discussing personal growth or improving students’ personal growth? How? Why?

I usually try to address personal growth in the classroom through the affective objectives in Blooms taxonomy. For me personal growth is related to the development of ethics and feelings as well as the cognitive part. I usually address these issues when introducing a new unit, and try to see what students think of certain issues. Sometimes the topics provided by the books are not very interesting or connected to developing students’ personal growth, so in more than one opportunity I’ve seen myself changing the topic or modifying it. I also use instances such as evaluation to teach responsibility and commitment. I also do it, when students have to give an oral presentation, I try them to learn that there are some certain things they should be able to achieve as this is something is going to be useful when they graduate. There are four lines in the academic model of the college where I work: the general/cultural one; the linguistic, professional and practicum. Especially the general/cultural line is oriented towards providing the elements of self-growth that students need to achieve in order to become more integrated and better humans in the future; better
citizens, professionals, and even better friends and future parents.

Self-growth students need to achieve to become more integrated and better humans.

5. Do you ever address EFL inequality in your lessons?

I usually use some historical events, to make students think about our own reality in Chile and explain to them how things have changed in time and why we have so much inequality in the educational system. I try to make them reflect about how fortunate they are as they are students of an elite school, when they have great teachers, materials and resources. I try to make them realise that a lot of children in the country do not have the same opportunities. I sometimes try to take examples from the book that discuss inequality. For example, in the textbook that we are currently using, Speak out, there's unit 5 that talks about travelling, and one of the places that appears in the unit on a video is Bolivia. The other day I watched the video with my students and we discussed the inequality problems that Bolivia faces, as it's probably the poorest country in South America.

Make students think.

Chilean educational system.

Takes examples from the book.

Reflections.

6. What is your opinion about including personal growth in the classroom? Why? Do you believe that including that encouraging students’ personal growth can help tackle EFL inequality?

I believe personal growth is vital to defeat inequality. The people who have been raised in an enriched environment with have better opportunities to succeed in the future, and I don't only mean the material poverty. I mean the cultural poverty which has become a serious issue in our country. It's very hard to make students read something because they have been raised in homes where there are no books. This sort of cultural poverty has a tremendous impact on self-growth. I believe we, as a society, need to pay attention to this, we have to educate not just academically but also give students the nurture they need personally in order to have academic achievements in their future.

Personal growth is vital to defeat inequality.

Cultural poverty: tremendous impact on self-growth.

We have to educate, not just academically.

Give students the nurture they need (self-esteem, identity)

7. Do you think that discussing personal growth and including it into the lesson can improve language learning? What is the relation between both?

I believe of course that someone with a higher personal growth can become a better learner. Personal growth is connected to
1. Can you explain a bit your career so far? For example, where did you study? Where have you worked? What has it been like? Do you like it? And so on.

I studied at USACH and became a teacher of English in 2010. Before getting my professional degree, I went abroad as an exchange student and I was part of the TESL Programme at Thompson Rivers University. In 2011, I went to Canada again to get my master's degree in Second Language Education from McGill University. For both of these experiences abroad, I was awarded a scholarship.

In terms of my professional experience, I worked in two private "elite" schools in Chile from 2009 to 2011, and at the same time I worked in a school for children with cancer in a hospital in Chile. Once in Canada, I worked as a private English teacher and as a teaching assistant at McGill University. In 2014, I came back to Chile and started working at another private school.

Finally, I have to say I love my profession. I feel extremely passionate about teaching and I don't see myself doing or enjoying anything else. I've always felt this is what I came here

8. Has the school where you work ever encouraged you to include personal growth in the classroom or to discuss about EFL inequality?

It's explicit in the academic project of the school through the general/cultural line. However, putting it into practice is another thing. I try to do it whenever I can, but there are not specific units where these issues are addressed, or specific activities or suggestions coming from the school where they encourage to address these issues.
to do and I try to improve every day. I believe a teacher should never stop learning and that we should always put our students first.

2. What do you know about personal growth? Is it relevant for your practice?

What I understand about personal growth has to do with obtaining the necessary abilities to face the world. This means, being able to communicate with others, to criticise what is around us and also being able to reflect upon different topics related to society, and once one is able to do that, being a more active participant of it. It is important for my practice as I think that help students in several ways and we as teachers should not be only focused on contents and knowledge, but also on how our students are going to face the world we live in.

3. What do you know about inequality in the Chilean EFL classroom? Do you think that there is inequality in the different EFL classrooms all throughout the country? Is inequality relevant for your practice?

I think that there's a lot of inequality in different educational contexts in Chile. In fact, I wouldn't say it is only found in EFL classrooms, but in all aspects of the Chilean educational system. Based on my personal experience, I have worked in places where students have a high social and economic status, which leads to having more resources; not only in terms of materials, but also regarding the cultural baggage that these students possess. On the other hand, I’ve also had the opportunity to work in institutions where students come from very dissimilar social realities, which definitely affects the dynamics of the class and the way students relate to each other. Therefore, I would say that inequality is a relevant factor to consider, and be aware of, in my teaching practice, in order to help with its disappearance and finally have an equal educational system in our country and also EFL management.

4. Do you ever address personal growth in the classroom? How? Do you include personal growth in the classroom? Do you prepare materials or lessons that allow discussing personal growth or improving students’ personal growth? How? Why?

I always address personal growth in my classes and I think that, as a teacher, that aspect is one of my strengths. I usually use my classes to discuss about different topics, to foster critical thinking and help students relate their own experiences to the topics we are discussing. These topics are generally related to current affairs or controversial issues that invite students to reflect on their own doing and how to improve as social beings.

5. Do you ever address EFL inequality in your lessons?

I regularly address social inequality, but not necessarily linked to EFL inequality. I have discussed it once or twice, but not as a specific topic.

6. What is your opinion about including personal growth in the classroom? Why? Do you believe that including that encouraging students’ personal growth can help tackle EFL inequality?

I regularly include personal growth in my classes and, as I’ve seen good results, I would encourage all teachers to do so. Students start developing awareness about who they are as
individual, which helps them define their identity. Additionally, I believe this could definitely help reduce EFL inequality as students are also able to understand their strengths and limitations when learning a foreign language.

7. Do you think that discussing personal growth and including it into the lesson can improve language learning? What is the relation between both?

I certainly think so. When students start talking about topics that can relate to their own lives, the learning that takes place becomes meaningful. Therefore, the language learning process is enriched and long-lasting.

8. Has the school where you work ever encouraged you to include personal growth in the classroom or to discuss about EFL inequality?

Not really. Not in my current school or the previous ones I’ve worked in.

APPENDIX F- Interview with Paulina

1. - Can you explain me a bit your career so far? For example, where did you study? Where have you worked? What has it been like? Do you like it? And so on.

I studied to be a teacher at PUC, from there I went to work in Francisco de Asis School, it was a rather new school with different ideas about what to expect from children and how to deal with them. After that I went to work to Verbo Divino School, a very traditional school where many important economists, and politicians have studied. After that I went to work at British Institute, where I was the coordinator of teachers. I’m currently working at another private school which is quite prestigious and elitist.

2. What do you know about personal growth? Is it relevant for your practice?

I think that personal growth has to do with how people move from being solo beings to social beings. If a person possesses personal growth, and all throughout his life, he knows how to increase it and gives importance to it, this person will be more successful on relationships and activities related to others. I think that personal growth also has to do with being able to grow as a person, becoming a better one day after day. It is important for my practice, yet I don’t always think about it, while planning my lessons or preparing material.

3. What do you know about inequality in the Chilean EFL classroom? Do you think that there is inequality in the different EFL classrooms all throughout the country? Is inequality relevant for your practice?

I think there is inequality, unfortunately it is really bad and massive. I blame the educational system that we have, as it is so badly organized and so negatively affected by the dictatorship period that we went through. All of the inequalities we see in the country are based on this dysfunctional educational system. There are students who have access to massive resources such as access to Internet, films, radios, English lab and others, from all kinds and there are others that don’t even have to eat, not to mention materials to study. Regarding English, it is unlikely students from public schools have access to English
speaking teachers, diminishing with that the possibilities of being exposed to English language.

4. Do you ever address personal growth in the classroom? How? Do you include personal growth in the classroom? Do you prepare materials or lessons that allow discussing personal growth or improving students’ personal growth? How? Why?

I address personal growth, but not as a part of programmed thing, but as something incidental. I usually do it through conversations that include all of my students based on topics that we are covering at that time. I never plan these discussions, they just appear in my lessons and I take the opportunity to use them, aiming to have students sharing different points of view, which will make them exchange information and opinions increasing their tolerance and general relationships with others.

5. Do you ever address EFL inequality in your lessons?

Yes I do, but again incidentally not planned. For example, sometimes I talk to them about how lucky they are as they have the chance to attend a good school with good teachers of English or that they have access to things that other kids don’t have, such as Internet, travelling, or native teachers. I don’t talk about this very often, but sometimes when I see that they are demotivated, I do.

6. What is your opinion about including personal growth in the classroom? Why? Do you believe that including that encouraging students’ personal growth can help tackle EFL inequality?

I think it is important to talk, discuss about personal growth in the classroom, but I don’t see the connection between it and inequality. I might have an impact in inequality, but not more impact than it would have in any area of education, from my point of view.

7. Do you think that discussing personal growth and including it into the lesson can improve language learning? What is the relation between both?

I think that it might have a positive influence, as when discussing topics related to personal growth, students will be discussing topics that are meaningful to them, and meaningfulness it is always positive in the learning process of a second language.

8. Has the school where you work ever encouraged you to include personal growth in the classroom or to discuss about EFL inequality?

This has never happened.

APPENDIX G- Interview with Carlos

1. - Can you explain me a bit your career so far? For example, where did you study? Where have you worked? What has it been like? Do you like it? And so on.

I got graduated from college in 2001. I have been working mainly in educational management and teaching. My major is Applied Linguistics and I have an acceptable command in English, Japanese, and Portuguese and of course Spanish which is my mother
tongue. I have worked for different institutions in Chile as a teacher or manager. I have enjoyed my experience so far. I have had the chance to travel around the globe and meet many people. I have also taken some courses in countries such as UK, France and USA which has enhanced my vision as an educator and manager.

I currently manage the Language Department at a public school and also work as an EFL teacher in the same school.

2. **What do you know about personal growth? Is it relevant for your practice?**

Personal growth is the set tools you learn to undertake actions leading to success in different areas of life. I use it as a component of my class especially when dealing with students with low self-esteem or those belonging to more deprived social segments. When using it as a tool, it can become in a very interesting way to achieve your goals as a teacher since your students will be more connected with your ideas and can go for the extra mile. A more motivated student should perform better or at least have the ability to keep going and face failure in a positive way.

3. **What do you know about inequality in the Chilean EFL classroom? Do you think that there is inequality in the different EFL classrooms all throughout the country? Is inequality relevant for your practice?**

Inequality is one of the foundation principles in Chile. The administration, income distribution, education and access are all based on inequality. Chile is not a homogenous country, it is socially quite diverse. Only 3% is fluent in English by the way. Now, when facing an EFL classroom, if your students don’t belong to the 20% richer in Chile, the English language background your students will have will be extremely basic. They hardly evidence a minimum command of some basic grammar rules and vocabulary. In spite Internet access in Chile is the best in Latin America, the exposure to English language doesn’t reflect a significant improvement in vocabulary acquisition and speaking skills.

At school level, if we explore the less privileged two quintiles of the society, you will discover that their language skills are also poor in their mother tongue. When teaching these groups you have to take into consideration that they know nothing or almost nothing of English. Access to quality education in Chile depends highly on your incomes; if you are poor you are then doomed to share a classroom with partners with a very low command of English language and teachers who have broadly lost their language skills in English because of poor money incentives and scarce possibilities to receive training abroad (English speaking countries). At state run university level the story is more or less similar, access will depend on your incomes with a few exceptions (poor students) that are easily subject to English language training as their language skills are fine.

Inequality is an issue. It makes it difficult the teaching-learning process since language skills are not widely present in students.

4. **Do you ever address personal growth in the classroom? How? Do you include personal growth in the classroom? Do you prepare materials or lessons that allow discussing personal growth or improving students’ personal growth? How? Why?**
Personal growth is a cross sectional value that must be taught at home as well. I try to include this kind of topics in my lessons especially when it comes to teach students with low self-esteem, I give them some reading material, personality quizzes, famous people biographies and so on. I try to show them that new possibilities can be found and that they can manage their future.

5. Do you ever address EFL inequality in your lessons?

If I have students with very evident problems with language acquisition and I help them realise that this is due to our unequal system. I usually tell my students that it’s not their fault to be part of this system, they are just victims of the history of the country. I try to give them extra classes or engage them with extra practice activities with more advance students or TAs. Inequality is a side product of our neoliberal system, therefore, we teachers must be prepared to face this situations in a natural way and resources should be provided to us so that we have perform a better job.

6. What is your opinion about including personal growth in the classroom? Why? Do you believe that including that encouraging students’ personal growth can help tackle EFL inequality?

Self-esteem in our students can be strongly worked when including personal growth in the classroom. We can speak about different things or create tasks and activities that will make them feel better about themselves. When working with issues such as self-esteem can definitely help students to tackle different situations in life. English can be a challenge as well and including personal growth as part of teaching planning can have a positive influence on student. Teachers should receive training on these topics and they must be dealt with responsibility, otherwise they can even trigger depressions or other mental disorders. A student with a higher self-esteem can effectively face situation and problems even with English language.

7. Do you think that discussing personal growth and including it into the lesson can improve language learning? What is the relation between both?

Motivation or the way you connect contents with someone’s own experience can always help in teaching-learning processes. It awakes latent vocabulary and students feel like participating when the topic is familiar. Practice and involvement are two key components when learning a new language, therefore personal growth can be a great help.

8. Has the school where you work ever encouraged you to include personal growth in the classroom or to discuss about EFL inequality?

NO, never.

APPENDIX H- Interview with Daniel

1. - Can you explain me a bit your career so far? For example, where did you study? Where have you worked? What has it been like? Do you like it? And so on.
Well, I have an undergraduate degree in Teaching English as Second Language and a Master degree in Linguistics from USACH, one of the oldest state universities in Chile. I have worked in many places, in the secondary education in “public” and voucher schools, in tertiary education institutions, “public” and private universitites and what we call “popular” school (not institutionalized teenagers and adult primary and secondary education). Every place has its own positive and negative sides, so I have pretty much liked every place I have worked in. I could say that I like “popular” school the better, because there you really create and construct knowledge with the students and the community, not imposing what any particular institution imposes over them. Nowadays, I’m working as an EFL teacher at a public school with secondary students.

2. What do you know about personal growth? Is it relevant for your practice?

I think that personal growth is the way a person develop themselves so as to improve critically as a human being in knowledge and self-awareness. I do not really know any specific formula or path to be follow to allow personal growth, but I believe that this can be achieve mainly by collaborative practices immersed in a critical environment. So as a teacher I try to make it a relevant part in my performance.

3. What do you know about inequality in the Chilean EFL classroom? Do you think that there is inequality in the different EFL classrooms all throughout the country? Is inequality relevant for your practice?

As I have worked in so many places, I am more than aware of all the inequalities within Chilean EFL classrooms. I believe this is due to the difference in the access to education, which is different depending on the amount of money you have to obtain. In every institution they impose a certain level of language mastering that differs depending on the type and social class of the establishment you are working in. At the begging this inequality mattered more than now in my practice; as a teacher I had to choose either to compel with my bosses parameters or with what my instruction, education, moral values, and common sense told was the right thing to do. To exemplify this I could mention that in most voucher school their parameters are set by Simce so you have to “teach to the test”, in public school their parameters are discipline and lesson planning paper work, in private universities students are treated as clients so they are always right and not matter how low their performances are they should be “help” to approve each class etc. However, for me now, it does not matter the institutions’ “recommendation” my practice is completely related and directed to improve my students performance and really help them learn English as much as possible to reach their goals.

4. Do you ever address personal growth in the classroom? How? Do you include personal growth in the classroom? Do you prepare materials or lessons that allow discussing personal growth or improving students’ personal growth? How? Why?

I think I always do it as much as possible, or at least try to. Most of the time, because of the time consuming day to day life, I don’t prepare specific material directed to personal growth for each class, but I tend to adapt all the materials provided by each institution, so the topics are not just about unimportant matters in life. Most of the materials they give us are about what we call the 3 Ds “Dating, Dieting and Dinner parties”, which does not
allow any personal growth. Because of this, at the beginning of the semester I try to just talk to students, asking them their interests, worries, hopes, wishes and dreams (not really systematically or structured); from there adapt all the materials, from a simple example I give them as a sentence, or start a class with a key word, or sometimes even change a whole unit topic and replace it by another one. I also tend to use the topics that are avoided in EFL textbooks: PARSNIP (Porn, Alcohol, Religion, Sex, Narcotics, ISMs and Politics), for me by addressing these topics, we could allow personal growth in a better way.

5. Do you ever address EFL inequality in your lessons?
Yeah sure, I always address this differences and inequalities with my students, so we can come up with ways of addressing them together. I try to always include topics of inequality, among them, EFL inequalities, to be discussed with my students. I have tried to find for a solution to this, and what can help making our system more equal, but so far that has not happened.

6. What is your opinion about including personal growth in the classroom? Why? Do you believe that including that encouraging students’ personal growth can help tackle EFL inequality?
Yes, of course. There is a rampage of efficiency and velocity in the EFL classroom that disregards important issues like students personal growth. Everything is about answering test, being able to speak and right in a short time, not matter what. So I think that there are many other issues that must be addressed which are actually prior to attaining high levels of proficiency in the language. When encouraging personal growth, we can help students form their identity, as they are developing skills, abilities and characteristics that are going to be their essence for the rest of their lives. Then, encouraging students’ personal growth we can tackle personality issues, or poor cultural background knowledge that may make the learning more difficult. By working in all these areas we can reduce inequality.

7. Do you think that discussing personal growth and including it into the lesson can improve language learning? What is the relation between both?
This has to do with what I said in the previous question, there are previous problems that need to be solved like personality issues, or poor cultural background that can hamper language learning. Apart from that, I think that when dealing with issues that allow personal growth, students feel more engage with the class and the contest, therefore improving language learning, or any learning for that matter.

8. Has the school where you work ever encouraged you to include personal growth in the classroom or to discuss about EFL inequality?
Not at all, or at least not explicitly in general. In the “popular school” we create the school curriculum and contents together, with teachers, students, neighbor, and the whole community in general, so there we self-impose the inclusion of personal growth as the basic of our teaching/learning practice.
APPENDIX I- Interview with Juan

1. - Can you explain me a bit your career so far? For example, where did you study? Where have you worked? What has it been like? Do you like it? And so on.

I studied to become an English teacher at UNAB. I did my practicum in different bilingual and private schools, which I enjoyed, but I always felt I was neglecting the socially aware aspect of my life that has been rooted in my family since I was a child. For that reason, when I graduated, I took a full-time teaching position at a school for underprivileged children in Lo Barnechea, near a location called Cerro 18. I've also been involved in the ACCESS programme, a micro scholarship programme from the US Embassy in Chile which provides English classes to students from public schools, and offered them the chance to grow artistically through workshops in which they get to express themselves and practice their English at the same time. Many of these children actually grow up to love English and get scholarships to become English teachers themselves, which makes me really proud. And those who don't or can't pursue higher education get jobs where their English really becomes an asset, as in international call centres or hotel receptions. In the ACCESS programme, I was in charge of the drama club and the film club, position which I got because of holding an M.A. on teaching through drama. Today, I’m working as an English teacher in a public school teaching students from the last two years of secondary level.

2. What do you know about personal growth? Is it relevant for your practice?

I think personal growth is an essential part of our lives as human beings. Without it, we never reach our full potential. Only by allowing ourselves to grow personally do we really take advantage of our many talents. Besides, if you are a fulfilled individual, it reflects on your professional life as well. It is as though you got to a much needed balance. I try to exploit my talents both in my personal and professional life, and I encourage my students to do the same. As I like acting and singing, I put much of that in my teaching, and students notice and appreciate it when you pour your talents into what you do.

3. What do you know about inequality in the Chilean EFL classroom? Do you think that there is inequality in the different EFL classrooms all throughout the country? Is inequality relevant for your practice?

Inequality in the Chilean EFL classroom is evidenced, in my experience, by several factors. First, there's the concept of motivation: some students are just more intrinsically motivated to want to learn English. Some might find it interesting as a language; some like it because of the music they listen to; some play video games which are in English; and some might have more of an instrumental motivation and decide to like English because they see it as a good tool for their professional future. This type of student tends to shine brighter in the English class, even if they do not get the best marks in other classes, and they're often engaged in the lesson and actively participate. Second, there's exposure. Students who are more exposed to the language outside of the classroom have a better chance at practicing, which makes them seem better at learning the language, putting those who are not as exposed at a disadvantage. Finally, there's the concept of linguistic intelligence or capability. Some students are linguistically smarter than others, which in turn reflects on their performance and the way they face the lesson. Students who lack
linguistic capabilities tend to feel inferior and even neglected during the language class, even deeming learning English as unnecessary and pain.

If we have all of that in just one classroom, the differences among classrooms within the same school is still noticeable. If you compare similar schools, the differences are bigger. And if you compare different types of schools, the differences in the level of equality are abysmal.

In my practice, I've always tried to consider the aforementioned factors because it is important for me that everyone learn and have a good time in my class. For this reason, I try to plan different activities for different classes, and even for different students within a group.

4. Do you ever address personal growth in the classroom? How? Do you include personal growth in the classroom? Do you prepare materials or lessons that allow discussing personal growth or improving students’ personal growth? How? Why?

I like to deal with several globally relevant topics that will foster critical thinking, which I believe contributes to personal and social growth. I want my students to express themselves and to feel that they won't be censored nor discriminated against in our class discussions. When someone says something offensive, I like to see my students negotiate and realize that what they've said could have been nicer. In case things get out of hand with a person's opinion, I like to steer the conversation in a different direction and then have a private chat with that student. That's another way of encouraging personal growth.

I also like for my students to analyze their performance and be self-critical about their study habits or their everyday manners. This type of growth is very important since we live in a society with many different people, all of whom deserve respect and equal opportunities. We're social beings, so your individual characteristics have an effect on society.

5. Do you ever address EFL inequality in your lessons?

Not really. I think that if students are self-critical, they know where they stand. I do give extra help to students who ask for it and I tend to group students for collaborative tasks making sure no one will feel threatened or not challenged.

6. What is your opinion about including personal growth in the classroom? Why? Do you believe that including that encouraging students’ personal growth can help tackle EFL inequality?

I strongly believe that if students grow as persons, and this means, becoming better humans and also increasing their self-perception and esteem, and making them know that they are capable people who can reach their dreams. They will definitely contribute to class in a better way and EFL inequality will be bound to decrease. I'm all for including personal growth in my lessons.

7. Do you think that discussing personal growth and including it into the lesson can improve language learning? What is the relation between both?
Discussing is a skill for which language is required. For this reason, by discussing and negotiating topics related to personal growth students are using what they've learnt and developing further, hence improving their linguistic skills and learning. Besides, learning is not only about contents. To me, learning is about life-changing and mind-opening experiences.

8. Has the school where you work ever encouraged you to include personal growth in the classroom or to discuss about EFL inequality?

No, the school has never encouraged me to do so.