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Teachers' perception regarding misbehaved adults in the EFL classroom

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Abstract

Currently, a huge number of English teachers in Mexico are required in basic education. In addition, there are job opportunities working with adults in language institutes. Then, English teachers face several challenges while trying to manage their classrooms and trying to control their misbehaved students. This study aims to explore the experiences of English teachers with misbehaved adults and how these situations affected their perception of their teaching identity and teaching overall. To answer this question, I gave two questionnaires to six English teachers who have experience working with adults. The results concluded that misbehaved adults show negative attitudes and they misbehave in different ways in the language classroom. In addition, the study revealed that teachers faced challenging situations while they were novice teachers and it affected the way teachers perceived themselves. Moreover, these incidents had a negative impact on the teachers' affective domain.

This study suggests that novice teachers need to find strategies to cope with these challenges in their early years of teaching. At the same time, they need to be aware of the possible consequences that these situations may have in their perception of themselves as teachers. In addition, teachers need to take into consideration the students' background which may influence their attitudes in the language classroom.

Resumen

Actualmente en México se requiere un gran número de maestros de inglés en educación básica y también hay oportunidad laboral en institutos de idiomas para trabajar con adultos. Con respecto a esto, los maestros de inglés enfrentan diversos retos al mismo tiempo que intentan manejar sus salones e intentan controlar a sus estudiantes con mal comportamiento. En relación a esto, este estudio pretende explorar las experiencias de maestros de inglés que han trabajado con adultos con mal comportamiento y como estas situaciones afectaron la percepción de su identidad docente y la enseñanza en general. Para responder esta pregunta, hice dos cuestionarios a seis maestros de inglés que tienen experiencia trabajando con adultos y los resultados concluyeron que los adultos con mala conducta muestran actitudes negativas y se portan mal de maneras diferentes en sus salones de clases. Adicionalmente, el estudio mostró que los maestros enfrentaron situaciones desafiantes mientras eran maestros novatos y que, además, esto afectó la manera en que se percibían como maestros. Asimismo, estos incidentes tuvieron un impacto negativo en el dominio afectivo de los maestros.

Este estudio sugiere que los maestros novatos necesitan encontrar estrategias para lidiar con estos retos que se enfrentan en los primeros años de enseñanza. Al mismo tiempo, los maestros necesitan considerar los antecedentes y el entorno de sus alumnos, el cual puede influenciar sus actitudes en el aula de idiomas.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

One of the main concerns that teachers have is how to handle misbehavior. It is common to hear about misbehaved young learners as they tend to be the focus of attention in language education. Still, there is not enough information regarding how adults misbehave and the consequences that it has in novice teachers. It is important to explore how these experiences affect teachers and their teaching identity, as facing these challenges as novice teachers can determine if they will continue teaching or not. The study explores teachers' perspectives on misbehaved adults. Therefore, it becomes crucial to understand the perspectives of teachers, and how their affective domain is affected. Of course, for some teachers it is less difficult to deal with misbehavior. However, for others, it becomes a difficult task. In this chapter, I reveal my motivation to carry out this research project. Also, I mention the methodology used in this study and I state and explain the research questions that guided it. Moreover, I describe in detail the research site and the participants of this thesis. Finally, I illustrate the outline of this project.

1.2 Motivation

I have been teaching for two years. In my own experience as a novice teacher, it was difficult to deal with misbehavior from adult learners. Hence, it was important for me to know how other teachers felt when they had to face these challenges. When I faced these difficult situations with misbehaved adults in the classroom, I thought that it was only me. I considered that, perhaps, it was due to my lack of experience in teaching. I thought several times about quitting my job because of the anxiety and vulnerability these situations brought to me. At the same time, every time it became more difficult to deal with it. At the end, I was just waiting for the class to finish, so I could stop interacting with my students. Through the research process, I found that it was a common situation in the early years of teaching of experienced teachers. I also understood that there were patterns in the adult learners' negative

attitudes in class, and that it was common to perceive how these situations affected the classroom environment. In this thesis, I identified different ways in which adults misbehave, which tend to be common in the language classroom. Throughout this thesis, I realized that novice teachers go through several challenges in their early years which sometimes affect their perception of teaching and their teacher identity. Then, recognizing how adults misbehave in the language classroom and knowing how it affects the classroom environment become important for novice teachers who lack of experience with mixed classrooms. Furthermore, this thesis was also a way to learn from the past experiences and grow professionally as a teacher.

1.3 Methodology and research questions

This thesis was carried out through the qualitative research method. In this way, the participants had the opportunity to express their perceptions and options in an extended way. Therefore, the study was carried out through an instrumental case study using an email questionnaire and an online questionnaire. As previously mentioned, I wanted to explore the perceptions of English teachers regarding misbehavior of adults. As I wanted to know in depth how these situations affected these teachers, I formulated the following research questions.

1)   What are the perceptions of EFL teachers regarding misbehaved adults?

2)   Did any of these situations affect their teacher identity? If so, how?

3)   How do teachers perceive problematic situations with misbehaving adult learners?

The main intention of these questions is to explore what the teacher participants think about misbehaved adults. As these experiences sometimes have consequences on the teachers' perception of teaching, I want to know if these incidents affect somehow their teacher identity or confidence in the classroom. At the same time, I intend to understand how teachers perceive these problematic situations and what they consider are the possible reasons for adults to misbehave.

1.4 Research site and participants

The research site of this research project was a language institute in Leon, Guanajuato. This is a recognized public language institute that has been on service for twenty years. They offer different language courses such as Spanish for foreigners, English, French, German and Italian. In this institute, English courses are the ones that have a greater demand. It also offers courses for children, teenagers and adults. So, there is an opportunity for learners of any age to learn a foreign language. The number of students per class varies according to the number of students interested in the class schedule so it can vary from six students up to twenty-five.

The highest percentage of students in this language institute are teenagers and young adults. Teenagers study high school and most of them are required to demonstrate a level of English when they graduate. In addition, an important part of the young adults studies a degree. There are also students who study a degree and have a job-sort of repeating part of the previous sentence. Also, there are other students who only work as they have already finished their degrees. Their necessities vary from educational to professional matters. Young students want to learn English in order to graduate from college, and adult students want to learn the language in order to get a promotion in their jobs. There is a small percentage of learners who want to learn English as a hobby, or to travel around the world with their relatives living abroad. The majority of this small percentage are senior citizen learners. Most of them are retired, and they just learn English to visit their relatives abroad or because they want to spend their time learning something.

The majority of the courses has mixed classrooms. These mixed classrooms include students from 16 years old and up. Therefore, it is common to find teenagers, young adults, adults and senior citizens in the same class. This often is a challenge for teachers as adults and senior citizen learners demand attention from the teacher a great part of the class time.

The participants of this study were six Mexican English teachers from 24 to 40 years old. Four participants have a degree in English Language Teaching (ELT), one of them has a degree in psychology and only one participant does not have a degree. All of them have different years of experience in the teaching field, and the range of years of experience is between two and twenty years.

1.5 Thesis outline

In this chapter, I explained my motivation and reasons to conduct this research, the methodology and the research questions that guided this project. Also, I described the research site and the participants.

Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature that supports the analysis of the data. The main concepts are novice teachers, discipline, classroom management, characteristics of adult learners, misbehavior and attitudes such as isolation, reticence and labelling. In addition, this chapter also presents the teacher's emotions such as vulnerability, insecurity and points out the difference between attitudes and emotions.

In Chapter 3, I restate the research question, explain in detail the qualitative research approach, the instrumental case study method and the technique used to carry out this research. In addition, I also identify the research site and offer a brief description of the participants, the process of data analysis and coding and the ethical concerns.

Next, Chapter 4 presents the analysis and the interpretation of the data collected in this thesis which is supported by relevant literature. The concepts that I present are negative attitudes, student isolation, teacher labelling, types of misbehavior identified by the participants, adult behavior that resembles the behavior of a child, teacher behavior and its impact on the students and teacher emotional response to misbehavior.

Finally, in Chapter 5 I restate the research questions and I present the findings in this study and the implications for teaching. I also state the limitations that I found and the future research in the language teaching field.

Chapter 2

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the concepts which supported this study which provide a foundation for the study at hand. I start with a description of discipline and its importance in this study. In addition, I define the concept of negative attitudes, and I introduce concepts that are relevant for this thesis, such as reticence, isolation and labelling. Moreover, I distinguish the difference between attitude and emotion, and I explain the emotions revealed by the participants. Furthermore, I address the concept of novice teachers and its importance in this research project. Finally, I present a small summary of the content of the chapter.

2.2 Novice teachers

Teaching can often be difficult, especially for novice teachers. In this study, the perceptions of English teachers regarding their experiences with adults' misbehavior are presented. Hence, it is important to define what is a novice teacher. Gatbonton (2008) defines novice teachers as "those who are still undergoing training, who have just completed their training, or who have just commenced teaching and still have very little (e.g. less than two years) experience behind them" (p. 162). In this study, the majority of the instructors that encountered their first challenges in teaching were novice teachers and had little time teaching. So, they had to learn how to overcome their classroom difficulties over time. Ambrocio (2011) claims that "novice teachers often have had little teaching experience and so have to develop [competences] in order to apply them effectively in their real classroom situation" (p. 3). Of course, strategies for dealing with misbehaved students take time to develop as novice teachers struggle to find adequate classroom management strategies due to their little or no experience at all. The experiences that they go through in their classes might be crucial in deciding if continue teaching or not. At the same time, novice teachers "feel negatively as they are immersed with the ESL teaching context and realize the differences between what they expect and the realities" (Nguyen, 2018, p. 246). Therefore,

it is possible that teachers feel overwhelmed about the challenges of teaching, which could lead to change their profession. In addition, misbehavior tends to be a difficult task for teachers as it affects their affective domain. Ambrocio (2011) mentions in her study that "[novice teachers] have to confront students' misbehavior during their classes and these situations often irritate them" (p. 3). For this reason, novice teachers and their lack of experience in classroom management and inexperience in following a discipline system is a subject that needs to be studied in detail as it affects the educators' personal and professional life as "[disruptive behavior] is generally frustrating for them because they believe they lack classroom management skills" (Ambrocio, 2011, p. 3). This could cause the teachers to feel insecure or develop negative feelings towards teaching. Thus, it is convenient to define first what entails discipline and classroom management.

2.3 Discipline and classroom management

As discipline is connected to misbehavior, which is the core of this study, it is important to define it first. *The Greenwood Dictionary of Education* (2011) defines *discipline* as "a system of positive guidance, affirmation, and redirection that encourages the child to regulate his or her own behavior, minimizing the occurrence of culturally unacceptable or harmful activities" (p. 144). Then, according to the definition, discipline is the guidance that instructors use to encourage students to reduce the activities that are intolerable in the classroom. Lewis (1999) claims that discipline is "generally represented as what teachers do in response to students' misbehavior" (p. 155). Here, the author describes discipline as a response to misbehavior. Such discipline from the teacher, in order to change the students' behavior, could be also categorized as a reinforcement or a punishment from the students' perspective. Solnick et al. (1977) state that "stimuli are classified as reinforces or punishment, not because of inherent properties but rather as a result of their effects on the behavior they follow" (p. 415). Learners and teachers could classify an action as a reinforce or a punishment, and this might influence the way the students react to it. It is possible that learners interpret in the wrong way the teacher's reaction as "given stimulus may function as a reinforcer under some conditions and as a punishment in others" (Solnick et al., 1977, p. 415). Therefore, the way the teacher reacts to misbehavior will determine if learners

understand if is correct doing it or not even though the signals are clear for other teachers. Although teachers around the world learn how to guide their students to behave in their classrooms, this research demonstrates that there seems to be a consistent arise of discipline problems. It is important to mention that, in this thesis, the concepts of discipline problem and misbehavior will be used interchangeably.

2.3.1 Discipline problem

Discipline problems constantly arise in language classrooms around the world. Therefore, it is fundamental to define the concept of a *discipline problem*. Wadden and McGovern (1991) refer to discipline problems as "negative class participation" (p. 121) and define them as a "wide range of passive and active behaviors—from sleeping to disruptive talking—which are detrimental to classroom learning" (p. 121). It is observed that the authors mention examples of what is considered as misbehavior. Therefore, this negative class participation affects the classroom learning environment as it is shown in this thesis. On the other hand, Harmer (2007a) refers to a discipline problem as a "problem behavior" (p. 180) and mentions that it "can take many forms: constant chattering in class, not listening to the teacher, disengagement from what's going on (a kind of passive resistance), blunt refusal to do certain activities or to do what they are told, constant lateness and even rudeness" (p. 180-181). Here, the author mentions some other known forms of misbehavior from students which can be easily identified by educators, such as chattering, disagreement, refusal to work in class, lateness and rudeness, etc.

Moreover, teachers and students are affected by discipline problems. Sun and Shek (2012) believe that a discipline problem is "an activity that causes distress for teachers, interrupts the learning process and that leads teachers to make continual comments to the student" (p. 1). The authors give a definition that involves the consequences of misbehavior in the classroom climate. Similarly, Roache and Lewis (2011) found out in their study conducted in Victoria, Australia that "teachers appear to respond by increasingly employing a style of management that combines punishments with aggressive and hostile behavior" (p. 142). As a result, the negative impact that misbehavior has on teachers and students is

noticeable. Although most of the studies on misbehavior are focused on young students, the negative feelings that teachers experience regarding adults' misbehavior are similar. Misbehavior, as previously mentioned, also affects the classroom environment. Teachers need to become professionals while dealing with misbehavior. According to Ratcliff et al. (2010), "problems tend to distract both teachers and students making it difficult for either to focus on learning experiences" (p. 307). Then, teachers learn over time some fundamentals of what is known as classroom management.

2.3.2 Classroom management

It is not clear whether classroom management fundamentals are taught in teacher trainee courses or not. Still, it is often through experience that teachers develop efficient classroom management strategies. Latz (1992) mentions that defining classroom management is difficult as it is one of the most complex aspects that teachers have to arrange in a language classroom. The author also reports that "management includes not only discipline, but also numerous other activities such as planning, monitoring, transitions, and the sequencing of classroom tasks, whereas discipline focuses on specific problems or events that occur during actual instruction" (Latz, 1992, p. 1). The distinction that the author makes in his definition of classroom management is important for this study as instructors had to deal with the problems that emerged in their classroom. On the other hand, Merç and Subaşi (2015) reported in their study on pre-service teachers that "teaching techniques and styles, teaching point, materials and activities could be the sources for classroom management problems" (p.61). Consequently, the source of misbehavior and failure of classroom management strategies often relies on the teacher. Therefore, teachers have to prepare themselves to overcome these challenges as it is "one of the primary concerns of both novice and experienced teachers" (Latz, 1992, p. 1). In other words, classroom management becomes a challenge for both novice and experienced teachers. Furthermore, there are important factors to consider, for instance, age. It might be difficult to use classroom management strategies with adult learners as they could be used to a different group dynamic. As adult learners are an important part of this study, it is essential to describe them.

2.4 Characteristics of adult learners

The main aspect of this research project is focused on the misbehavior of adult learners. The *International Dictionary of Adult and Continuing Education* (1999) defines an adult as "one who has achieved the legal chronological age, which a society has legislated as adulthood" (p. 4). This term refers to the population who has reached the legal age in their countries or that simply were categorized as adults by their community. In the aspect of education, Muthusami et al. (2017) define adult learner as "someone who is 25 years of age or older and is involved in learning activities" (p. 19). Then, it is considered an adult any person who is older than 25 years. Furthermore, Mathews-Aydinli (2008) defines an adult as someone who is "generally considered to range in age from 16 to 90-plus" (p. 199). This definition fits better into the concept of the language center where the participants of this study work. This is probably an accurate definition for what the participants consider as an adult. Regarding the characteristics of adult learners, Ross-Gordon (2003) points out that "the adult learner is responsible for making personal decisions in day-to-day life, in many cases decisions that also affect others. Similarly, adults are assumed to prefer self-direction in determining the goals and outcomes of their learning" (p. 43). That is, adults prefer to be self-directed so they can achieve their goals in learning. Moreover, Harmer (2007a) implies that adult learners rely on their previous life experiences and tend to be more responsible when it is about learning a language. Harmer (2007a) mentions that:

> Older learners often (but not always) have a wider range of life experiences to draw on, both as individuals and as learners, than younger students do. They are often more disciplined than adolescents and apply themselves to the task of learning even when it seems fairly boring. (p. 15)

However, some studies found that teaching adult learners might be a challenging task for instructors. For instance, Harmer (2007a) points out that "students who have had negative learning experiences in the past may be nervous of new learning […] they may also have strong views about teaching methods from their past, which the teacher will have to take into account" (p. 15). Taking this into consideration, educators have to analyze their adult students' previous experiences and views as they "also represent a group of learners with unique expectations and needs" (Mathews-Aydinli, 2008, p. 198). The majority of adult

learners have had countless experiences in life and it is reasonable that they could have unique expectations in different aspects, for instance, teaching. At the same time, Dobmeier and Moran (2008) mention that "adult educators have had to face the challenges of disruptive behavior by adult learners in the classroom and in other learning settings" (p. 29). This could be related to the unique expectations and needs of adult learners as all of them have different experiences and expectations regarding education. Additionally, Finn (2011) states that "it is essential that instruction be approached and designed from an adult perspective" (p. 36). This refers to the teachers' necessity of having different perspectives while planning a lesson. Therefore, it could be difficult for teachers who have mixed classrooms as they may have younger students that probably would not fit into the adult perspective. Unfortunately, this is an aspect of teaching that causes trouble to educators around the world.

2.4.1 Misbehavior of adult learners

When it comes to misbehavior, it is usual to think about children or young people. Therefore, most of the literature available is based on young learners. Still, there is a large population of English teachers around the world who work in mixed classrooms with adults. The majority of the participants of this research project experienced particular situations with misbehaved adult learners. Khasinah (2017) reports in her study that "being undisciplined belongs to all age groups of students, young learners and also adult learners …[so], disruptive behavior is not confined to only one age group" (p. 80). Here, the author emphasizes that students of all ages can misbehave in the language classroom. Moreover, Harmer (2007a) describes types of misbehavior that are commonly seen in the adult's language classroom in the following paragraph.

> Teachers of adults can experience a range of behaviors such as students who resist the teacher's attempts to focus their attention on the topic of the lesson and spend the lesson talking to their neighbors, or who disagree vocally with much of what the teacher or their classmates are saying. They may arrive late for class or fail to do any homework. And, whatever the causes of this behavior, a problem is created. (pp. 15-16).

In this thesis, the teachers describe types of misbehavior that they encountered in their language classrooms. Concerning this, Dobmeier and Moran (2008) point out that the disruptive behaviors found in adult learners are lack of focus on tasks, expression of negative feelings through actions and violent or harmful behavior. The reasons for adult learners to misbehave in the classroom could stem from different sources. For this research project, focusing on adult learners and their misbehavior is important as the participants of this research project found challenging to overcome these situations. In addition, previous research mostly focuses on young learners, leaving behind misbehaved adults.

2.5 Attitudes

An important part of this research project focuses on the attitudes that misbehaved adults had in the language classroom. Then, it is crucial to define what is an attitude. According to *The Cambridge Dictionary of Psychology* (2009), an attitude is a judgment of an object and offer the following definition:

> Attitudes are evaluations of objects occurring in ongoing thoughts about the objects or stored in memory. Attitudes can be influenced by and can influence beliefs, affect, and behavior in relation to the attitude object. However, attitudes can be distinguished from affective feelings in that attitudes entail a cognitive evaluation. (p. 59)

Based on this, an attitude is the judgment of something stored in an individual's mind. It tends to be influenced by some factors, but it is based on a logic evaluation. In addition, Gardner (2006) suggests that "attitudes are considered to have cognitive, affective, and conative components and can be further characterized in terms of their direction, magnitude, intensity, ambivalence, cognitive complexity, embeddedness, flexibility, salience, and consciousness [and] on the basis of other aspects of behavior" (p. 349). Here, Gardner (2006) states the type of components such as cognitive, affective and conative and how attitudes are directed in terms of aspects, such as behavior. The participants of this research project found a link between the attitudes of their students and their misbehavior.

There has been previous research on English language teaching and the learners' attitudes (Asghar et al., 2018; Goktepe, 2014; Al-tamimi & Shuib, 2009). For instance,

Masgoret and Gardner (2003), while examining attitudes in language learning, came up with the concept of 'attitudes towards the learning situation' which "refers to the individual's reaction to anything associated with the immediate context in which the language is taught" (p. 127). This definition fits into what this study reports regarding students' attitudes in the language classroom, although most of their attitudes were negative. The main negative attitudes found by the participants were reticence, isolation and labelling.

2.5.1 Reticence

The concept of reticence might be equally compared to rejection, as students reject to participate in class for different reasons. Carter and Henrichsen (2015) describe the reticent student as "someone who does not anticipate success incommunicative transactions involving speech" (p. 16). Moreover, Carter and Henrichsen (2015) distinguish that reticent behavior could be a response of the students due to anxiety which is caused by a phenomenon in the classroom.

Previously, some studies have been carried out to understand Asian students and their apparent reticence in the language classroom. Liu and Littlewood (1997) argued that "if students do show reluctance to speak English in class, our results show that it is not because they do not want to" (p. 374). That means that Asian students do not speak in class because of the influence of their cultural traditions as "students are influenced by the Confucian tradition [which entails that] is thought to instill the impropriety of shining in front of one's peers" (Liu & Littlewood, 1997, p. 375). Then, Asian students' reluctancy is influenced by this principle of not shining in front of their peers and it also includes not being encouraged to ask any question to their instructors. Furthermore, Aghazadeh and Abedi (2014) found in their study that some of the sources of reticence of Iranian EFL learners were lack of confidence, previous educational experiences, introversion and extroversion, anxiety, among others. At the same time, Aghazadeh and Abedi (2014) assume that "when people are asked to speak in a second or foreign language, they become more apprehensive and tense and thus more unwilling to participate in conversations" (p. 79). In addition, Hamouda (2013) found that some of the causes that lead to Saudi students to have a reticent behavior are their constant comparison with peers, lack of practice due to size class or class time, fear of losing

face in front of others, lack of interest in English class, among others. The causes for a reticent or rejecting behavior seem to be clear in theory although not in practice as it is difficult to determine the reasons behind reticence in the classroom. In addition, these reasons are dynamic and they tend to change over time. However, most of the studies carried out are based in Asian countries. There is little about reticent behavior in Mexican students.

2.5.2 Isolation

As previously mentioned, reticent students experience negative feelings, for instance, anxiety and lack of confidence. Then, they are likely to isolate themselves from the rest of the class. Previous studies have demonstrated how harmful is isolation for students. With this in mind, Erichsen and Bolliger (2010) argue that "[isolation] indicates a very real and relevant issue in improving the learning environment and overall success in academic and professional development" (p. 311). Similarly, Soo and Goh (2013), as part of their study on reticent behavior, state that negative attitudes "restrict students from progress, and intended course learning outcomes might not be achieved" (p. 66). Furthermore, Erichsen and Bolliger (2010) distinguish the concept of *academic isolation* "as a feeling of marginalization and anxiety in adapting to new learner roles and relationships and stress concerning the ability to perform in a teaching and learning environment" (p. 311). The participants of this research project identified some cases of isolation from misbehaved adult students, which clearly affected their performance in class. The study of Havik et al. (2015) suggests that some of the causes for isolation are emotional instability, poor classroom management as there is a lack of class structure, order and organization and poor and difficult relationships with students at school. That is, most of the causes are regarding to the classroom setting.

2.5.3 Labelling

Misbehavior of adults is represented in several ways. One of this is known as labelling. In order to explain what labelling entails, it is convenient to describe the *labelling theory*. Inderbitzin et al. (2017) explain the labelling theory as the classification of individuals that were involved in negative events, which might provoke a negative reaction from people around. This theory could be also represented in teaching following previous negative

experiences in class. Either teachers or students who were involved in negative events could be judged and labelled by the others. At the same time, this reaction from other people could cause the individual involved to cause future deviant events. So, if a teacher is labelled as irresponsible because of a previous event, future students will see this teacher as irresponsible. This, for instance, can have consequences on the teacher's behavior in future events. Furthermore, Fine (1997) explains that *labelling* is a "prescribed reaction to deviance: these include the process of identification, judgment and punishment" (p. 167). In other words, the author claims that, if a student or teacher is labelled as a bad or inefficient person, they will become bad or inefficient. Besides that, studies show the effects of the use of labels on other people. For instance, Scheff (2010) recommends avoiding labelling, ridiculing and rejecting people and "because of the effect they are likely to have on the social relationship, feelings of rejection and embarrassment" (p. 1). The author also mentions that, as a result of labelling, "one loses face and gains embarrassment, shame, or humiliation" (Scheff, 2010, p. 2). As demonstrated in this study, this is a type of negative attitude that misbehaved adults do in their classrooms. Then, it is important to avoid these attitudes in the language classroom, either from the teacher or the students. For instance, some teachers might label their students as lazy, problematic or misbehaved. On the other hand, students could give names to their teachers such as unexperienced or irresponsible. For example, the use of the words *niña* or *niño* or 'kid' from an adult student to a young teacher can affect the teacher's perception of him or herself. These situations could affect teachers' affective domain, as it will be presented in the following section.

It is also important to distinguish the difference between attitude and emotion. On one hand, attitudes are judgments of people, objects or situations that entirely depend on the person's rational thinking as attitudes tend to be consistent. In addition, attitudes are learned by the individuals, and as a consequence, they can lead the individual to act. Generally, these last for a long time. On the other hand, emotions are affective responses to people objects or situations, which entirely depend on previous experiences. At the same time, these emotions are subjective as people perceive acts differently. Moreover, as emotions can be perceived as positive or negative, they provoke a physical change that is easily perceived through body language or gestures. Generally, these last a short time as they tend to be episodic.

2.6 Emotions

The affective domain of language teachers is an important field of study which has been explored in depth. In this thesis, the participants mentioned the emotions they felt when they had to overcome situations with misbehaved adults. Then, it is crucial to define first what is an emotion. According to *the Cambridge Dictionary of Psychology* (2009), an emotion is "a neurophysiological response to a stimulus that excites a coordinated system of bodily and mental responses that inform us about our relationship to the stimulus and prepare us to deal with it in some way" (p. 179). In other words, an emotion is a state of mind that responds to a stimulus which can be a situation, an object, a person, among others. Then, depending on our response to the stimulus, our system prepares us to react to it depending on the feelings that it provokes us. To complement this, Anderson (1999) explored the affect in language learning and claimed that the presence of negative emotions compromises the learning potential. Luckily, it is claimed that teachers are "becoming increasingly aware of the importance of negative emotional factors and of ways to handle them" (Anderson, 1999, p. 2). Then, teachers use their own resources to learn how to handle emotional factors in the classroom.

The classroom environment is a place where many emotions emerge in every class. Indeed, teachers are affected the most because of several circumstances, being discipline problems one of it. According to Zembylas' (2003) article on teacher emotions, "teachers invest their selves in their work and so they closely merge their sense of personal and professional identity" (p. 216). Then, instructors have to learn how to separate their personal life from their teacher identity. Notably, Schutz and Lee (2014) identify the concept of *emotional labor* as the effort that teachers make to present their role as teachers, but at the same time, being able to repress their emotions. With this in mind, Schutz and Lee (2014) report that "teachers sometime find it necessary to suppress or avoid displaying certain emotions in the classroom" (p. 173). Equally important, Song (2016) acknowledges that one of the invisible rules of the classroom is that teachers must control their bad emotions, so they only show to the students their positive emotions. Song (2016) also adds that "teachers mask their experienced emotions and express expected emotions that are considered

legitimate in a given context" (p. 633). This, of course, is something that teachers assume at the moment that they are in front of a class although they have not been asked to do so.

As part of the previously mentioned emotional labor, teachers assume that they have to hide their negative feelings in front of their students. Indeed, one of the main sources of stress for teachers is their students' misbehavior. Specifically, Nguyen (2018) points out that "a greater number of studies report the negative influence of ESL learners on ESL teachers' emotional state" (p. 248). Furthermore, the author outlines that the difficulties that educators face are "low basic competence, passiveness, noisiness, uncooperative attitude, impoliteness, lack of motivation, tiredness, and varied other characteristics" (Nguyen, 2018. p. 248). Then, the difficulties that teachers face in their classrooms lead to a number of emotions that they experience. In this study, the three main emotions were vulnerability, insecurity and frustration.

2.6.1 Vulnerability, insecurity and attitudes versus emotions

Due to previous experiences with misbehaved students, teachers may develop a sense of vulnerability. Kelchtermans (1996) defines vulnerability as "one way in which teachers experience their interactions with other actors in the school and the community. It thus encompasses not only emotions (feelings), but also cognitive processes (perception, interpretation)" (p. 307). In other words, it is how teachers interpret their interactions with people that are part of their working environment which involves feelings and perceptions. Although vulnerability can be provoked by several causes, most of the times it has to do with the interactions that teachers have with their students. Kelchtermans (1996) also states that professional efficacy in the classroom is a source of vulnerability for teachers. Professional efficacy, which is demonstrated when students learn, depends on several factors of which the teacher may have little control. So, teachers have a "sense of disappointment and powerlessness, especially at the beginning of their careers, towards pupils who did not manage to learn the curriculum" (Kelchtermans, 1996, p. 313). The feelings of powerlessness and disappointment that the teachers had were part of the vulnerability they felt when their students did not learn in their classes. Additionally, Song (2016) states that "teachers are likely to experience protective vulnerability when they are anxious and fearful, and they tend

to avoid or move away from any event that they consider potentially causes a threat" (p. 634). That is, if teachers feel vulnerable at a certain moment, they might move away from it. This could cause a novice teacher to quit their job, considering a failure for their teaching practicum.

As a result of misbehavior, teachers often feel insecure due to negative experiences in their classrooms. Especially novice teachers, who "often indicated negative emotions, like feeling helpless, being aware of their shortcomings, feeling angry or feeling insecure" (Pillen et al., 2012, p. 253). This is because novice teachers tend to have different expectations of what teaching should be. Then, this might provoke some tension regarding the instructors' teacher identity. At the same time, if a novice teacher is younger than their coworkers, there is uncertainty about the possible outcomes of it. As Pillen et al. (2013) remark, "professional identity tension seemed to be caused by the fact that they felt insecure, because of their age and were afraid of not being taken seriously by colleagues or students" (p. 668). As a consequence of this sense of insecurity, several educators around the world doubt about continuing in the teaching field. Pillen et al. (2012) show in the results of their study that these types of negative experiences have a huge impact in beginning teachers. Then, it is recommended by the authors to leave them alone, so they experience it and find a solution to it.

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, the main topics of this research project were presented and supported by relevant literature. First, discipline was analyzed along with the terms of discipline problems and classroom management. Second, adult learners were described along with the term misbehaved adults. Third, the concept of attitude was defined, and the terms of reticence, isolation and labelling were explained. Fourth, the meaning of emotion was stated and the concepts of vulnerability and insecurity, along with the distinction of attitude and emotion, were pointed out. Finally, a small section about novice teachers was presented. In the following chapter, the methodology used in this thesis will be mentioned.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the steps that were followed in order to carry out this research project. First of all, I offer a description of the research question that I used in order to carry out this research project. Second, I describe the paradigm used. Third, I explain the method. Later on, I define the techniques used in this project. Further in the chapter, I describe the research site and the participants. Next to it, I provide a description of the data analysis procedures and ethics followed. Finally, I state my conclusions of the chapter.

3.2 Research question and objective

The objective of this research project was to analyze the perceptions of a group of English teachers regarding adults' misbehavior in a language center in Leon, Guanajuato. The questions that I attempt to answer are the following ones:

1) What are the perceptions of EFL teachers regarding misbehaved adults?
2) Did any of these situations affect their teacher identity? If so, how?
3) How do teachers perceive problematic situations with misbehaving adult learners?

3.3 Qualitative approach

For this project, I decided to use a qualitative approach. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), this paradigm is "an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 25). Qualitative research was appropriate because the focus of this research was on a group of teachers and their perceptions. In addition, Mack et al. (2005) explain that "it seeks to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population it involves" (p. 1). At the same time, this qualitative paradigm is effective to collect specific information, such as

"values, opinions, behaviors and social contexts or particular opinions" (Mack et al., 2005, p. 1). Drawing on these claims, a qualitative approach was adopted in this study to explore teachers' perceptions regarding misbehaved adults.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) also mention that the data is analyzed and categorized in different themes or topics, and at the same time, the researcher makes interpretations of its meaning. This paradigm focuses on the individuality of each person; therefore, it aims to describe variation, relationships, individual experiences and group norms (Mack et al., 2005). This offers the researcher a wide variety of possibilities in terms of interpretation. According to Dörnyei (2007), qualitative research uses recorded interviews, some texts such as field notes, journals or documents, and photos or videos. When processing the data, these are "transformed into a textual form […] because most of the qualitative data analysis is done with words" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 38). That is, the researcher gives meaning and interprets the words of the participants. Dörnyei (2007) states that "data should capture rich and complex details, [therefore] almost any relevant information can be admitted as qualitative data" (p. 38). The main distinction that the qualitative paradigm offers is the analysis of words, rather than numbers, and the possibility of open-ended questions and responses. One of the main advantages of this approach is the use of open-ended questions, which gives the participants the opportunity to "respond in their own words" (Mack et al., 2005, p. 4). This flexibility gives the researcher unanticipated meaningful responses. For the above reasons, the qualitative paradigm in this research project was appropriate.

3.4 Case study

For this research project, I used a case study methodology. A case study methodology examines situations in case-based inquiries. Schwandt and Gates (2018) claim that a case is an instance or incident or something and it has several forms, for instance, a person, or a location. Hood (2009) explains that this type of method is for a researcher who seeks to understand the social situations through an extended analysis of the particular. There are different definitions for a case study. Stake (as cited in Dörnyei, 2007) defines it as the study of "the particularity and complexity of a single case" (p. 151). For instance, the researcher

finds an issue in a social context and studies it. In the field, there are plenty of situations that researchers might find interesting. At the same time, there is a necessity to find the causes or consequences of it. Dörnyei (2007) states that "almost anything can serve as long as it constitutes a single entity with clearly defined boundaries" (p. 151). Hood (2009) explains that the researcher needs to define the participants and their site. Moreover, the researcher needs to include contextual features that show the relationship between the participants and the site. Taking this into consideration, the researcher will define which tools are more appropriate for it. Moreover, Dörnyei (2007) mentions that the case study "is not a specific technique but rather a method of collecting and organizing data so as to maximize our understanding of the unitary character of the social being or object studied" (p. 152). A case study is a method to collect information about the participants in order to understand it and make sense of it.

In this research project, I chose an instrumental case study because it was the most appropriate. In this type of case study, the case is "studied with the goal of illuminating a particular issue, problem or theory" (Hood, 2009, p. 70). Therefore, it helps the researcher to obtain a deeper understanding of the issue they are studying. According to Hood (2009), the instrumental case study requires interpretation, evaluation and description from the researcher. Furthermore, Dörnyei (2007) defines that an instrumental case study is "intended to provide insight into a wider issue while the actual case is of secondary interest; it facilitates our understanding of something else" (p. 152). Thus, the researcher analyzes a situation and provides insight into it for others that might be interested on it.

3.5 Technique

In a case study, there are different techniques that might be used. Richards (2003) describes a technique as "a specific procedure for obtaining information informed by the research methodology employed" (p. 13). In order to obtain information for this research, I used email and online questionnaires. As Richards (2003) claims, "there are several ways of collecting the appropriate data which differ considerably in context of money costs, time and other resources at the disposal of the researcher" (p. 17). As the participants of this study

mentioned that they had only a little available time due to their busy daily activities, I decided that the most appropriate technique could be e-mail and online questionnaires. Thus, they would have time to answer to the question at any time they had available. At the same time, there was a mismatch of schedules among them and me.

At first, I sent an e-mail questionnaire to the participants in order to select the most appropriate of them for this research project. The questionnaire was in English and there were only four questions (Appendix 1: E-mail questionnaires). After reading their responses, I chose the participants and asked them if they could answer a second questionnaire. Subsequently, I sent them the link to answer it (Appendix 2: Online questionnaires). This online questionnaire was also in English, and there were seven questions. For this questionnaire, I used Google Forms because it has a design easy for them to follow, so the participants would not feel confused or lost. Furthermore, they could decide when and where to answer.

According to Kothari (2004), a benefit of e-mail questionnaires is that they provide the participants with enough time to think about their answers and give an appropriate response. Moreover, it is easy for the researcher to reach participants who are not easily approachable. On the other hand, Kothari (2004) states that there is a low rate of response while using questionnaires. Additionally, there is little control once the questionnaires were sent out, and it is possible that participants omit some responses or offer ambiguous responses.

3.6 Research site

The main focus of this research project is a group of English teachers located in Leon, Guanajuato. The research site is a public language center in the city which offers different language courses, having its biggest demand on English courses. This is a well-known language center that every year increases its number of students. There are approximately 2,000 students enrolled each semester. There are language courses for children and adults which last four years. Adults courses admit students from 16 without establishing a limit of age. Therefore, it is common to find mixed classrooms with adolescents, young adults and

elders. The majority of the students are young adults, while there is only a small percentage of elderly people in this language center. There is not specific information about the percentage or male or female students in this language center.

3.7 Participants

The participants chosen for this research project were selected according to certain requirements. The most important one was if any of them had had any experience with misbehaved adults in the classroom. Second, they had to be English teachers of the same language center. Half of the participants have an ELT degree, and the rest of them just started to work in the field because they had the opportunity to do it. All of them have experience working with mixed classrooms with adolescents, young adults and elders. They are four women and two men between the ages of 24 to 39 years old, and all the teachers are Mexican. In order to maintain the confidentiality of the participants, I have chosen to use pseudonyms (see Table 2), as well as other information regarding the participants.

Table 3. 1 Teacher profile

Participant	Age	Nationality	Working experience	Working experience with adults	Degree in ELT
Bianca	24 years	Mexican	Yes	5 years	Yes
Carla	27 years	Mexican	Yes	2 years	No
Gerardo	28 years	Mexican	Yes	3 years	No
Olivia	32 years	Mexican	Yes	2 years	No
Samuel	39 years	Mexican	Yes	15 years	Yes
Sandra	35 years	Mexican	Yes	9 years	Yes

In this study, the coding will include the pseudonym of each participant and it will include the initials of the section where it was placed. In order to help the reader to localize

the specific data used, each extract of data will have a different number that will vary according to its order of appearance in each section.

For this research, the number of participants chosen was six. At the beginning, I sent out an email questionnaire to ten participants, but I only received seven responses. After these participants sent me their answers, I chose only six of them because they had had experiences with misbehaved adults. Then, I proceed to send to the participants the online questionnaire.

3.8 Data analysis

In order to analyze the data obtained from this thesis, I decided to organize the data in themes or categories, and I assigned a code for each of the participants' responses. As I had created two questionnaires in English, I sent the first one through email and the second questionnaire was in an online platform. When I received all the responses, I started to organize the data. I assigned a code for each participant, and I extracted the majority of their responses. At the same time, I added some possible topics for each of the participants' responses. At the end, I categorized the different topics in themes. In order to organize the data, I decided to use a thematic analysis method for this study. According to Braun and Clarke (2012), thematic analysis is a method for "identifying, organizing and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set" (p. 57). As a result, the researcher has the opportunity to compare and analyze all the data collected, so they can identify important patterns in data. One of the benefits of doing thematic analysis, according to Braun and Clarke (2012), is that it "allows the researcher to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences" (p. 57). That is, the researcher has the opportunity to observe the similarities in the responses of the participants or the data they collected. After identifying the themes, I decided to use the strategy of coding.

3.8.1 Coding

In the qualitative paradigm, one of the strategies for data analysis is coding. Maxwell and Chmiel (2014) explain that "in coding, the data segments are labeled and grouped by

category; they are then examined and compared, both within and between categories" (p. 24). This procedure is commonly used in qualitative research due to the importance of each participant's words. Maxwell and Chmiel (2014) mention that by creating coding categories, the researcher is able to separate material on a specific topic from the rest of the data. At the same time, these categories that were created are connected. These categories, in Maxwell and Chmiel (2014) words, are "organizational categories [that] are broad areas or issues that are often established prior to data collection" (p. 25). Then, they help the researcher to identify certain topics or subjects in each of the segments of the data collected, so they can be analyzed.

After the researcher has established the organizational categories, substantive and/or theoretical subcategories are required. These are the "ones that address what is actually taking place, or the actual understanding of this that the participants have" (Maxwell & Chmiel, 2014, p. 25). In this research project, I included both subcategories. Maxwell & Chmiel (2014) define substantive categories as "descriptive" (p. 25). That is, it is an explanation from the perspective of the researcher of the participants' beliefs and opinions. At the same time, Maxwell and Chmiel (2014) describe theoretical categories as those that "place the coded data into an explicit theoretical framework" (p. 25). Then, this interpretation of the data represents the researcher's concepts.

3.9 Ethics

In order to respect the participants' privacy and consent, I gave them a consent letter beforehand (Appendix 3: Consent letter). Rallis and Rossman (2009) emphasize that "gaining the informed consent of participants is crucial for the ethical conduct of research" (p. 276). It is important that the participants agree to participate and are protected. Before sending them the questionnaires, I talked to all of them and I explained them the purpose of this project. I also asked them if they wanted to participate in this research. Moreover, I reaffirmed that their participation was voluntary, and they had the opportunity to leave it at any moment. Then, I gave them the consent letter (Appendix 3: Consent letter), so they could sign it. Rallis and Rossman (2009) argue that a researcher is unable to promise anonymity

but confidentiality since they know the identity of the participants. Therefore, I assured them the confidentiality of their responses by giving each a pseudonym.

3.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I offered an overview of the process to carry out this research project. Furthermore, I offered additional important details, for example, the type of case study that will be used. For instance, some of the topics that were covered include the paradigm and method used in this research. Moreover, I stated the techniques that were used in order to collect data. I also included information about the research site and the participants, and how I organized the data. Finally, I emphasized the ethics followed in this research. In the following chapter, I will present the analysis of the data collected.

Chapter 4

Data analysis

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I start by restating the research questions that guided this study and mentioning the themes from data. Next, I define negative attitudes and present student isolation and teacher labelling. Afterward, I report the types of misbehavior that the participants identified in their students. Later on, I explain child-like behavior from students. Next, I state how teacher behavior affects the classroom. Following that, I describe the teacher emotional response to misbehavior. Finally, I present my conclusions.

The data in this research project was collected through questionnaires (see Appendices 1 and 2). Moreover, I guided this research by establishing the following research questions:

1) What are the perceptions of EFL teachers regarding misbehaved adults?
2) Did any of these situations affect their teacher identity? If so, how?
3) How do teachers perceive problematic situations with misbehaving adult learners?

In the following table, I will present the categories that emerged from the data analysis.

Table 4. 1 Themes from the data

Themes from data
• Negative attitudes
o Student isolation
o Teacher labelling
• Types of misbehavior identified by the participants
• Adult behavior that resembles the behavior of a child
• Teacher behavior and its impact on the students
• Teacher emotional response to misbehavior

In the following sections, I will discuss the participants' excerpts as I will include relevant literature to support my arguments.

4.2 Negative attitudes

Negative attitudes in the classroom were common for these participants. For instance, Carla mentions what she perceived from some of her adult learners.

> *I could perceive a bad attitude and lack of interest in general. (CarlaNA1)*

Here, the participant describes it as a bad attitude and lack of interest towards her class. Hosseini and Pourmandnia (2013) report that "students have positive or negative attitudes towards the language they want to learn or the people who speak it" (p. 63). Then, it might be possible that a percentage of adult learners do not feel comfortable with the language they are trying to learn. On the other hand, it is also possible that the "interaction between teachers, learners and the learning situation develop positive or negative attitudes in the learner" (Hosseini & Pourmandnia, 2013, p. 69). So, it is not possible to determine if Carla's students had a negative attitude because of their attitude towards the language or her and the class. Moreover, learners demonstrate their discomfort in class in other ways, as Carla describes here.

> *They refuse to cooperate with the other students therefore they make them feel uncomfortable so their participation and behavior in the class or the activity changes causing a negative result of what I am trying to teach them. (CarlaNA2)*

It is possible that the participant's students were experiencing a reticent behavior instead of a negative attitude. This type of negative attitude is known as reticence, and it is common among adult students. According to Soo and Goh (2013), reticent behavior includes features such as "social withdrawal or avoidance due to their feelings of ineptitude towards social communicative events and public performance" (p. 66). This type of behavior has been considered as a source of anxiety, "frustration, and failure for both instructors and students" (Soo & Goh, 2013, p. 66). As it could be difficult for instructors to notice some of the factors of this behavior, it could be interpreted as a negative trait from the students. Soo and Goh (2013) mention that reticent behavior is attributed to individual personality and socio-cultural factors. Taking this into consideration, and the students' age and personality, it may be part of their culture and type of persona, and not necessarily intentional or negative. This behavior

has different outcomes for the teacher and the rest of the classroom. Olivia mentioned that she had problems with the class because of it in the following extract.

> *I have had other students who never want to work in teams and sometimes they frequently have problems with the rest of the group. (OliviaNA3)*

This denotes that the reticent behavior of some learners disrupts classwork. At least, the participant mentions her concerns about reticent students in her class. It seems like a common pattern among different participants. For example, Bianca also mentioned that this disruptive behavior affects the classroom environment.

> *This kind of behavior always makes the group uncomfortable and unwilling to participate when they are disrespected as well, since in most cases they want to avoid any kind of conflict or confrontation. (BiancaNA4)*

Bianca describes how a negative behavior disrupts the class environment, and evokes negative feelings on the rest of the group. This, of course, has negative consequences for the students' development and the reticent students themselves. As Carter and Henrichsen (2015) mention, it causes "students to withdraw from interaction and become passive spectators" (p. 16). This could be interpreted in both directions, taking into consideration reticent students and the rest of the group. In addition, these attitudes have serious consequences for the students' interaction as they want to avoid "humiliation, embarrassment and criticism" (Carter & Henrichsen, 2015, p. 17). Aghazadeh and Abedi (2014) mention that other representations of this behavior are lack of confidence, introversion, extroversion and anxiety. In this situation, it is important to know how Olivia deals with these situations in her classroom or how the students themselves deal with their attitudes and emotions. Unfortunately, reticence affects the student's development of communicative skills. Indeed, these negative attitudes in the classroom affect the students' performance. As Hosseini and Pourmandnia (2013) note, "having positive or negative attitudes towards a certain language and the way learners perceive that language can exert considerable influence upon their performance on the language itself" (p. 70). Hence, teachers need to find strategies to help

learners to overcome these attitudes in the classroom. In the same way, students could isolate themselves from the group as a consequence of their anxiety.

4.2.1 Student isolation

As previously mentioned, reticence has several factors and consequences for the classroom environment, such as the disruption of it. At the same time, sometimes as part of the reticent behavior, these students isolate themselves from the group and vice versa, which leads to a negative classroom environment. Sandra, for instance, made a comment regarding this.

> *The group rejects that kind of students, so little by little either these students start getting adapted and controlling their impulses, or the group ends up expelling them from the group dynamic. (SandraSI1)*

Sandra seems to notice that expelling students with negative attitudes from group dynamics is a common routine in her classrooms. Soo and Goh (2013) mention that "it [the behavior] restricts students from progress, and intended course learning outcomes could not be achieved" (p. 66). At the same time, other participants mentioned similar situations in their classroom. For instance, Olivia also mentions how the group avoids the reticent student.

> *Usually the group starts to avoid this student or if they don´t have any option, they don´t enjoy the activity. (OliviaSI2)*

Again, this participant mentions how this lack of engagement in the classroom activities affects the group environment. Hamouda (2013) claims that "engaging in classroom discussions is one of the most problematic areas for students, as identified by both teachers and students themselves" (p. 18). Then, it is a problem for the entire classroom if the students with a negative behavior do not participate in the class' dynamics. It is interesting to notice that the participant assumes that the group where the reticent student works does not enjoy the activity. It would be interesting to know what she took into consideration when

mentioning this. Carla also mentioned how the negative behavior of a student affected her class work.

> *If there are more activities, they [students] do not want to be part of them because of the negative behavior of that student that does not want to be there. (CarlaSI3)*

This participant mentions that other students do not want to work with reticent students because they feel that they do not want to be in the classroom. It is interesting that Carla assumes that these participants do not want to be in class. Perhaps, the participant finds it difficult to identify the students' attitudes and the reasons behind them. Or, it is also possible that she feels rejected by the students because of their negative behavior. Besides these reticent attitudes, some learners tend to label their teachers as it is shown below.

4.2.2 Teacher labelling

It is sometimes common that teachers are given names by students which may be interpreted as derogative by the teachers themselves. This is a comment made by Bianca where she describes her suppositions regarding this.

> *Some of the situations I have faced are being called names such as "niña", implying I am not old, grown, or mature enough and they are superior to me just for being older. (BiancaTL1)*

In her response, the participant describes her perception of the name that her older student used to refer to her. From Bianca's perspective, the student labelled her with a name that could have a negative connotation for her. The use of words to label someone else's behavior is called labelling. According to Inderbitzin et al. (2017), the labelling theory emphasizes the labelling of individuals involved in negative events, which probably causes a negative reaction from society that may lead to future deviant acts. In teaching, this can be interpreted as how students label their teachers based on their experiences with them, which may lead the teacher to act just as the students perceive them. In this case, just by analyzing the adjectives that the participant used to describe its implications, it is noticeable that she

was offended at that time. On the other hand, Sandra, had a situation with her students where they mentioned she was serious in class.

> *After the partial exams they complained about my teaching and the material I had given them, they said I was too serious in class, that I never smiled. I just ignored the fact that they would always have a complaint for each and every activity, I didn't take it personal, although it was, and I never saw them again after the semester ended. (SandraTL2)*

In this case, Sandra's students labelled her as a serious person. As she mentions it, she had had previous situations with her students where they complained about her teaching. Perhaps, the students were not comfortable with her teaching style and they started to label her as a serious person. Sandra did not take it personal, but she thought that it was indeed against her and her classes. It is possible that, as she noticed that her students were not comfortable in her class and that was the reason why they perceived her as a serious teacher, she unconsciously kept acting the same way with them. Hence, it is questionable why she did not do anything to change the students' perspective of her.

Labelling can also be represented by actions against a person and not only the fact of giving names. In Carla's case, as she is a young teacher, she had a situation with one specific learner in one of her classes.

> *It was the first day for that person, he arrived to class and when I told him that I was going to be his teacher he was like: you?? really?? the look on his face told me everything. So, in that moment I felt very uncomfortable. (CarlaTL3)*

In this situation, the participant noticed that her student did not feel comfortable with her being his teacher. This, of course, made her feel uncomfortable. This situation could fit into what Fine (1977) describes as part of labelling as "the process of identification [and] judgement" (p. 167). In other words, even though the student did not give the teacher any name, the gestures he made and the words he used probably were a way to demonstrate that he identified and judged the teacher as a young and unexperienced person. Scheff (2010) mentions that the effect of this type of labelling can be reflected "on the social relationship, feelings of rejection and embarrassment" (p. 1). It is possible that her relationship with the student was affected as she felt somehow rejected and embarrassed in that moment. It is also

probable that the participant experienced "facework" (Goffman, as cited in Scheff, 2010), where, after being labelled, "one loses face and gains embarrassment, shame, or humiliation." (p. 2). After all, being called a name or finding what your students think about you in front of your own classroom could imply a combination of feelings that include shame and humiliation. Moreover, Bianca thinks that her older students have perceptions about her.

> *Some of my elder students see me as an unexperienced person. (BiancaTL4)*

Here, the participant perceives that her adult students think about her as an unexperienced teacher. This is also related to the type of actions against a teacher which make them feel uncomfortable. Probably, the participant could have felt vulnerable thinking about her students perceiving her as unexperienced. Unfortunately, these actions in the classroom make the teachers feel exposed in front of the other students, which can affect their performance in class. Labelling also could be interpreted as disrespect from the students to the teacher, which is a type of misbehavior.

4.3 Types of misbehavior identified by the participants

The participants were asked to write some words to describe adults' misbehavior as shown in Table 4.2. In the participants' responses, the concepts that appear the most are disrespect, irresponsibility and arrogance.

Participant	Keywords used to describe misbehavior
Bianca	*Disrespect, beliefs, age [equal to] experience, age [equal to] maturity, different [equal to] not good*
Carla	*Lack of interest, feel superior.*
Gerardo	*Disrespect, irresponsibility*
Olivia	*Childish, selfish, unconscious, disrespectful, irresponsible*
Sandra	*Stubbornness, pride, arrogance, irresponsibility, impoliteness, disrespect, selfishness, need of attention, absences*
Samuel	*Spoiled, full of themselves, arrogant*

Table 4.2. Keywords used by the participants to describe misbehavior

These concepts may reflect the teachers' experiences with misbehaved adults. These concepts perhaps portray how they perceive and what could influence the students'

misbehavior. Some of the concepts that the participants used to describe misbehaved adults are similar to the ones that are presented in literature. For instance, Sun and Shek (2012) mention concepts such as "disruptive talking, chronic avoidance of work, clowning, interfering with teaching activities, harassing classmates, verbal insults, rudeness to teacher, defiance, and hostility" (p. 1). It is relevant that Bianca mentioned situations related to verbal insults and bullying from her misbehaved adults as it is noted in her response.

> *Adults misbehave by disrespecting others purposely and using their "weaknesses" or areas that might be sensitive to them in order to make them feel less. (BiancaTOMIBTP1)*

It seems that Bianca thinks that adults are disrespectful on purpose while they try to make their classmates feel bad. Harmer (2007b) reports that some problems that practitioners find are "insolence to the teacher, insulting or bullying other students" (p. 126), among others. In addition, Bianca also mentions that these situations have had consequences for both the classmates and the misbehaving adults.

> *It has even escalated to levels in which students answer back and raise their voices, some students even prefer to drop out because of the personal issues that have been provoked. (BiancaTOMIBTP2)*

It seems that some adults have problems to control their emotions, as they prefer to drop out instead of limiting themselves. Dobmeier and Moran (2008) explain that this type of behavior "can result from a learner feeling slighted, ignored, or humiliated by the instructor or by another learner [and] may reflect a continuum of failure to adapt to the learning environment" (p. 34). Then, learners who act aggressively in the classroom probably use it as a response to their integrity being threatened. It could be due to different aspects, including the teacher and peer's attitude towards them. In this case, Bianca describes how one of her adult students misbehaved in class.

> *She had no respect at all for anyone's voice or opinion, she would raise her voice or hit her desk to be paid attention to, or do many other things if any of those didn't work. (BiancaTOMIBTP3)*

Bianca had a particular case with this learner as this type of behavior would be repetitive in class. It is possible that she did this because she wanted to be the center of the

attention and she was feeling ignored at that time. Equally important, some adult learners can feel out of place in a mixed classroom where they work with younger people. It is also possible that they do not feel capable of coping with their younger classmates' knowledge, leading to low self-esteem. At the same time, some students behave in an unusual way that could be interpreted differently, as Olivia mentions here.

> *I have a student who constantly yawns during my classes, specifically while she is working in an activity. (OliviaTOMIBTP4)*

Although the reasons why the student yawned are unknown and diverse, Olivia takes it as a negative act. It may be assumed that, for her, it is disrespectful. Perhaps, Olivia has had previous experiences with this student, which make her take them as negative. As Ratcliff et al. (2010) mention, "teachers are less apt to have positive interactions with behaviorally challenging students and even avoid con tact with these students as stress levels increase" (p. 307). It is possible then that Olivia has fewer positive interactions with this student. At the same time, interpreting a student's body language is perhaps different for every teacher. Some teachers think that a student yawns because they are tired, avoiding considering it as a lack of respect towards them. Then, it will depend on the teacher beliefs and professional experience to differentiate the students' body language, attitudes and possible misbehavior.

As a summary, the types of misbehavior identified by the participants are disrespect, irresponsibility, arrogance, unconsciousness, pride, impoliteness, need of attention, among others. In addition, the participants mentioned their opinion on how misbehaved adults act in class, and how it affects the classroom environment.

4.4 Adult behavior that resembles the behavior of a child

As previously seen, there are certain ways in which students misbehave in the classroom. In addition, some of the participants mentioned that the students' behavior was similar to children's behavior. For example, Sandra made a comment referring to this in the following quote.

> *I have seen their misbehavior is pretty similar to children's. (SandraCB1)*

This participant finds similar patterns in her students' behavior that make her think of children. At the same time, the participant does not differentiate if she refers to a childish behavior or children behavior per se. Bettmann and Jasperson (2007) recall what is known as the attachment theory, which claims that the experiences at an early age build one's understanding of important relationships. In this theory, Bettmann and Jasperson (2007) claim that "these individuals will often resort to "strategies of desperation" including "dependent or childlike behavior...rages and aggression...or frozen withdrawal" (p. 53). Taking this into consideration, it might be possible that the adults who had difficult times in their childhood, had difficulty to build personal relationships. This could lead them to confront with difficulty different situations in their lives or have difficult relationships with people that are around them. Unfortunately, people and instructors who are not aware of this may find it difficult to understand and tolerate this type of situations. Furthermore, Samuel mentioned something similar in his answer.

> *They tend to misbehave in the same way they did when they were kids. (SamuelCB2)*

This participant, on the other hand, assumes that misbehaved adults behave the same way that they did when they were children. It is possible that they adopted this behavior due to a "significant trauma or disruption, such as loss of a parent through suicide or illness, divorce of parents, survival of sexual assault, adoption in infancy, school and vocational problems, or legal troubles" (Bettmann & Jasperson, 2007, p. 53). As previously seen in this chapter, this could also be a cause for reticence and isolation that could be connected to the students' emotions. Olivia also mentioned something similar to Samuel's comment.

> *I think that sometimes these "reactions" are as in childhood. (OliviaCB3)*

This participant also considers that the reactions of her students are similar to the ones that the students had when they were children. It is a possible concern for the instructors being able to understand that students behave in such way. On the other hand, Gerardo mentions that this is a result of the students' background.

> *Misbehavior comes from home! If they live in an environment of violence, they will reflect it inside of the classroom. On the other hand, they are not used to follow rules, so they want to do the same in everywhere. (GerardoCB4)*

This participant mentioned that their behavior is a product of the students' environment, which perhaps is violent. Bettmann and Jasperson (2007) mention that this type of people "are clingy, particularly with staff, and mirror others' behaviors in an attempt to fit in" (p. 53). This could suggest that adults who have a problematic behavior are violent with people around them. It would be interesting to analyze if these misbehaved students are mirroring someone else's behavior, especially in mixed classrooms, where these adults have the opportunity to interact with teenagers and young adults. It is probable that they are mirroring some of their classmates' or a previous classmate's behavior. Moreover, Dobmeier and Moran (2008) mention that these circumstances are "likely to stem from developmental and/or environmental factors adults and youths who exhibit antisocial behaviors may have a history of school performance problems, poor relationships with adults and peers [and] abusive care by their families" (p. 33). Therefore, the adults' behavior could be a reflection of their environment or represent the difficulties they have gone through over time. Even though it is an important factor to consider, the instructors should not generalize. At the same time, the teacher's behavior could also be a factor for misbehaved adults.

4.5 Teacher behavior and its impact on the students

Currently, there is a small number of young English teacher around the world. The *International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030* (2020) states that there is only a 25% of young teachers in all the educational levels and that the profession is not attractive for the majority of the young people. Regarding student teachers, the alliance mentions that one of the concerns that they have about their initial encounters are personal and institutional adjustments. (International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, 2020). If young teachers have difficult situations with their personal adjustments to the class or the students, the possible problem could emerge when a young teacher has older students in a mixed

classroom and they cannot work together well. Definitely, it could become a problem as Bianca mentions in her comment.

> *Some of these same students have implied that I am not professional or serious enough about my job, since I tend to joke around a lot with my students, and I try to create a relaxed environment. (BiancaTB1)*

In Bianca's situation, her teaching style is possibly not appropriate for an adult student. According to Finn (2011), "regardless of classroom setting or program orientation, it is essential that instruction is approached and designed from an adult perspective." (p. 36). Then, even if Bianca's teaching style is a little relaxed, she should consider some adaptations that are focused on her adult learners. Some older students, because of their experiences, have a different idea of education that refers to the traditional model of teaching as they "draw from life experiences" (Finn, 2011, p. 37). Probably, Bianca's teaching style was not accepted by her older students because of this. In the past, teachers used to be older than their students, so it could be part of the adult learners' context and beliefs. Sariçoban (2005) mentions that "teachers themselves can also give rise to a number of management problems if they do not act properly" (p. 5). Therefore, considering adult learners' beliefs and background, this should be taken into consideration. Here, Olivia mentions something similar in the next comment.

> *Probably because of my age, they usually think that I don´t have any experience or not enough. (OliviaTB2)*

As previously mentioned, the fact that the teacher was older than the students is part of what education was in the past traditionally. It is interesting to notice that it is common to see that adult learners think that young teachers are unexperienced. Bianca, at the same time, mentioned that what she thinks about this misconception.

> *I think I will continue facing these kinds of situations until I get "old enough". And the fact of being seen differently for being a young teacher will not change my teaching, not for bad. (BiancaTB3)*

Fortunately, the participant accepts that dealing with misbehavior is difficult, but it is not something that deserves her attention anymore. It can be perceived that Bianca learned how to control her emotions towards the negative thoughts of adult learners against young teachers. This misconception is difficult to avoid for some adults who are exposed to a new learning environment based on the education they had in the past. In addition, this might also be related to how young teachers react to adults' misbehavior. Bingham et al. (2009) state that "the manner in which instructors intervene in student misbehaviors appears to play a role in the development of a positive classroom climate" (p. 35). Perhaps, young teachers are not patient or tolerant enough due to their possible lack of experience in teaching adults. As a consequence, adults often feel offended or threatened, which could have as a result a negative classroom environment.

4.6 Teacher emotional response to misbehavior

Previously, this chapter introduced the different attitudes and types of misbehavior of adult learners. With this in mind, I will introduce the emotional consequences of misbehavior for the participants of this project. As it was presented earlier, one of the forms of misbehavior of adults is being disrespectful with the teacher. Carla mentions how these comments made her feel in that moment.

> *I have felt insecure about my own job because some comments that adults have made to me make me doubt myself (just hardly ever). (CarlaTERTM1)*

Carla, as a young teacher, is vulnerable to receive any type of comments from her adult students. This could be interpreted as a negative experience for the participant since it made her feel insecure and doubtful. Nguyen (2018) found that "preservice teachers feel negatively as they are immersed with the ESL teaching context and realize the differences between what they expect and the realities" (p. 246). Of course, novice teachers are not prepared for this type of situations such as "noisiness, uncooperative attitude [and] impoliteness" (Nguyen, 2018, p. 248). In addition, the author also states that this negative behavior causes "emotional crises among the preservice teachers to the point that they considered the practicum a failure" (Nguyen, 2018, p. 248). At that time, Carla may have felt

that she was not capable of teaching, which might have had several emotional consequences for her teacher identity. Sandra also had negative consequences from her misbehaved adults as she mentions in the following comment.

They've made me be more distant and less available or flexible; more serious and somehow insecure about what to say or not. (SandraTERTM2)

Equally important, Sandra changed her teaching style due to the situations that she encountered with misbehaved adults. Pillen et al. (2012) describe that "these tensions in general are associated with negative feelings, like feelings of insecurity or feelings of helplessness" (p. 256). In addition to the discipline problems that young teachers face with adult learners, they identify challenges in the classroom, such as "not being taken seriously by colleagues or students" (Pillen et al., 2013, p. 668). Possibly, it is difficult for a young, novice teacher to confront adult students while they are disrespecting their authority and teaching style or experience. It is still important to analyze how these incidents changed these participants' perspectives about teaching over time. Bianca mentions some of the frustrations that she faced while being a young, novice teacher.

At first, it did hit me, because I thought it to be true that the older a person is, the wiser they are. It made me feel that I could not portray an authority, or I would never be respected. (BiancaTERTM3)

For Bianca, it was difficult to ignore the fact that her age would make a difference on her teaching or her role of authority inside the classroom. Because of her background and previous experiences with adults, she made assumptions about older people regarding their experience and how they had been educated in the past. These preconceptions about older people perhaps made Bianca sensitive to their comments and opinions about her class. We can see the emotions she feels with this revelation. However, teachers all over the world are expected to maintain their emotions out of the classroom. Gerardo, for instance, mentioned how he reacted to his first challenges in teaching.

At the beginning, l was in shock, but l could control myself and the situation as well. (GerardoTERTM4)

At first, Gerardo was overwhelmed because of the situations that he faced in the classroom. Eventually, he managed to control his emotions and the situation that he faced. This is a clear example of the invisible rules that teachers have to follow in their classrooms. Song (2016) states that "school culture constructs emotional rules that socialize teachers to control their "bad" emotions such as anger, anxiety, and vulnerability, and express their "legitimate" emotions such as empathy, calmness, and kindness" (p. 633). These emotional rules established in the teaching profession somehow diminish the teacher's emotions. This leads to a situation where "teachers often experience emotional vulnerability" (Song, 2016, p. 633). Sandra also mentions how she left those emotions behind over time.

> *In the past, I must confess, it made me feel insecure but now I try to ignore those kinds of 'events'. (SandraTERTM5)*

The participant mentions, similarly, that she felt negative emotions at the beginning. However, after a while, she decided to ignore the challenges that involved her emotions. Over time, teachers felt the necessity to develop strategies to deal with their misbehaved students. Bianca recognizes that she had a strategy to deal with her older student.

> *My strategy with her was, since it started escalating, to ignore her as much as possible when trying to get attention, and to avoid any further conflict by saying "yes" to everything, or as we say in Spanish "darle el avión". (BiancaTERTM6)*

The participant mentions that she decided to ignore her student. Although it may sound as a hostile strategy, some teachers prefer to ignore the students in the hope that, by not acknowledging the negative behavior, it would disappear or at least decrease. Undoubtedly, Bianca learned from those situations in the past, and now she accepts them as part of her experience in teaching as it is seen in the following comment.

> *These have made me feel more confident in my authority, and more able to deal with conflicts. (BiancaTERTM7)*

The participant recognized that these difficult situations made her feel confident and able to deal with challenges in her teaching practice. Song (2016) mentions that "the

perception of certain emotions and experiences…depends on how teachers emotionally engage in the classroom and how they identify those emotional experiences" (p. 633). Perhaps, Bianca learned how to take advantage of the challenges that she faced. At the same time, she converted her emotions into advantages for her teaching practice.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the concepts of negative attitudes and specifically the students' reticent behavior that affects the class dynamics. In addition, I explored the students' isolation and how it takes place in the classroom. I also examined teacher labelling, how students give names to their teachers and how the students' perceptions change the teacher behavior in class.

Likewise, I pointed out the types of misbehavior identified by the participants such as disrespectful behavior and problems to control their emotions. Moreover, I state how adult learners probably feel out of place in mixed classrooms and how these experiences with misbehavior changed teachers' perspectives. Besides this, I explained the adult behavior that resembles the behavior of a child and how teachers find it similar to children's behavior. Furthermore, I explained the attachment theory which explains how previous experiences in early childhood can model adults' behavior.

In addition, I reported how inappropriate teacher behavior and teaching style not appropriate for adult learners affects the classroom environment. Finally, I presented the teacher emotional response to misbehavior and how it makes them feel vulnerable and go through emotional crises and changes in teaching. Similarly, I identified how assumptions from adult students towards young teachers affects the teachers' emotions and how teachers have the necessity to hide their emotional side in front of their learners. In the following chapter, I will state my conclusions for this thesis.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I provide the conclusions regarding my thesis project. First, I present a summary of the findings. Next, I point out the implications for teaching. Later, I reveal the limitations that I found while carrying out this project. Finally, I recommend a number of topics for future research that emerged during this research and state the conclusions.

5.2 Restating the research questions

Misbehaved adults and finding ways to deal with them are a common challenge for beginning teachers. Still, there is not enough information for instructors about how to deal with these situations. Although it is not a commonly addressed issue, these incidents in class could have several consequences for beginning teachers and their professional development. This research sought to learn how teachers perceive these situations and how they affected their identity as teachers.

The questions that I pursued to answer in this study were the following ones:

1) What are the perceptions of EFL teachers regarding misbehaved adults?
2) Did any of these situations affect their teacher identity? If so, how?
3) How do teachers perceive problematic situations with misbehaving adult learners?

In order to answer these questions, the data collected was categorized in five different topics: Attitude, types of misbehavior, childlike behavior, teacher behavior and teacher emotional response to misbehavior. Once that the research has finished, I found important information to answer these questions.

In the first question, I found that the teachers mentioned negative attitudes and types of misbehavior that they identified from their past experiences. Certain attitudes that they mentioned are identified as reticence which affects the class' environment and their

relationship with their classmates and the teacher. One of the outcomes of this reticent behavior is the isolation, in which students avoid interaction with misbehaved adults in order to avoid conflicts. In addition, according to the teachers, adult learners have problems controlling their emotions. Moreover, adults struggle with the type of interaction that they have in mixed classrooms with younger students. Perhaps, it is something that not all the adult learners can handle due to different factors, for example, beliefs. In addition, the participants mentioned that adult students tend to act as they used to behave when they were children. These adult students probably rely on their past experiences, which can lead to difficulty to socialize or create appropriate relationships with others.

In the second question that was addressed in this project, I found that misbehaved adults tend to label their teachers, such as calling them "*niña*" or "*niño*" in a derogative way. Therefore, there are consequences on the affective domain of the teachers. One of the participants mentioned how labelling affected her professional development as a beginning teacher, making her feel vulnerable towards her older students. Moreover, the participants explained that facing this type of situations affected their teacher identity and confidence in the classroom. The teachers mentioned that they felt insecure because they did not know how to handle with it. After these experiences, some teachers questioned themselves about continuing with the job or not. Then, this may provoke teachers to quit their jobs because they do not feel capable of dealing with misbehaved adults. Fortunately, after a few years of experience, the participants of this study learned from their experiences and left these situations in the past.

In the third question, I found that the participants found the response from misbehaved adults towards their teachers as a probable consequence of their perceptions about younger, novice teachers. Traditionally, teachers used to be older than the students. Then, it is possible that the difference between the students' past educational experiences and their new experiences with beginning teachers could be a problem for them. The participants also mentioned that, even though these experiences affected them at the beginning of their teaching practice, they learned to leave these bad experiences behind. Now that these teachers learned strategies to deal with misbehavior of adults and they do not often consider these challenging situations as a problem anymore.

5.3 Implications for teaching

This study is important for foreign language teachers who work constantly with adult learners because they need to be aware of the type of attitudes or behaviors they might face in their classrooms. At the same time, this research shows the affective domain of teachers, mostly beginning teachers, who work with misbehaved adults and its consequences for them.

The study allows beginning teachers to know some of the attitudes that adult learners probably have responding to mixed classrooms, and how they could misbehave in different situations. At the same time, this research gives teachers the opportunity to recognize some of the causes of misbehavior. It is also important to recognize the emotional side of teachers who overcome these challenges in their early years of teaching practice. It could also give teacher trainees the opportunity to know the challenges they might face in the future. Besides, they will find some of the causes that may lead to the types of misbehavior presented in this research.

It is pertinent to address the types of attitudes that adult learners have in their language classrooms. For teachers, it is crucial to understand that those emotions are a product of the learners' background and experiences, and sometimes, there is nothing that educators can do about it. Some known strategies for dealing with these situations in class are talking with the learner about the problem, establishing rules in the classroom, do not give the misbehaved learners all the attention, or simply ignore them and continue with the class. Then, if learners realize they will not receive any attention for it, they could stop behaving in that way. Still, it may be something difficult for beginning teachers as they, most of the time, are not confident enough in the classroom. Moreover, as they gain experience in the field, it gets easier to solve problems in a classroom. The perceptions and experiences demonstrated in this research, and their possible causes will be useful for beginning teachers who plan to teach adults to know what they could possibly face in the real classroom. In addition, it gives an opportunity for teachers to reflect on their practice and beliefs, which could be part of the causes of misbehavior.

This thesis is also important for teachers who deal with negative emotions in the classroom. Teacher' emotions are often left aside because they need to have a good attitude in front of learners. Still, it is important to give recognition to the emotional side that,

sometimes, defines if teachers decide to continue teaching or not. This study presents interesting opinions from English teachers who reveal their fears and emotions regarding their early experiences with misbehaved adults in mixed classrooms. Although there is not a specific form to handle negative emotions, teachers need to recognize that there may be a problem that needs a solution. Most importantly, any teacher who reads this thesis will understand the necessity to find emotional support to be able to overcome this type of challenges.

5.4 Limitations

In this project, one of the limitations that I found was to find teachers who had negative experiences with misbehaved adults. Although the research place was a language center, most of the teachers had not had any bad experience related to adults. Instead, they used to refer to their experiences with teenagers and young adults. Then, it could be a limitation for researchers who are interested on this field of knowledge and are looking for participants.

In addition, another similar limitation that I found was the literature based on adult learners. Most of the literature available that concerns to misbehavior is related to young learners. I consider that, even though there are a few studies that address misbehaved adults, they do not provide much information on the topic. The situation is similar regarding adult English learners. There is just a few information about adults, but not so much about adult English learners. Then, this could be a challenge for future research.

5.5 Future research

For future research, I recommend exploring misbehaved adults in the English language class as there is not enough information about this specific field of knowledge because most of the information available is focused in young learners. In addition, I recommend proposing strategies that language teachers can apply in their classrooms with adults responding misbehavior. Previous studies already show different strategies for

teachers to deal with misbehaved children. Still, it is important to identify how adult learners misbehave and possible strategies to overcome those challenges. As there are different types of misbehavior for children and for adults, strategies should also be different. These strategies, of course, will help beginning teachers to deal with these conflicts in the most appropriate way.

Another topic that is suggested for future research is teacher behavior in the classroom and how it influences the misbehavior of the students. In other words, how the teacher behavior in class affects or influences how teachers behave in class. For instance, some teachers who could be rude to their students can affect how the students act in class. In addition. research often focuses on misbehavior from children, but it does not seem to contemplate how teacher behavior and practice influences it. It would be interesting to see how teachers' beliefs change the classroom atmosphere and, possibly, the attitudes that learners have in class.

In addition, I suggest more research is conducted to understand the reasons that cause teachers to feel frustrated or insecure regarding the opinion and attitudes of their adult learners. According to the participants' context, the expectations of adult learners are high as they expect a lot from their teachers in several aspects such as behavior, knowledge, teaching style, among others. This caused instructors to have negative feelings. For this reason, it is important to investigate why they felt like that. Moreover, it is important to research about perceptions of adult learners regarding the age of their language teacher. Teachers used to be older than the students. This could be a shock for some adult learners who expect to have an experienced, older teacher. Therefore, their perceptions about young teachers is an important topic that needs further research.

5.6 Summary

Misbehavior from adults is an important area of research that needs attention. As it includes negative attitudes which lead to isolation, teachers need to identify the type of attitudes that learners have and how to deal with them. It is also important to pay attention to the students' attitudes and that teachers support them. In fact, people do not know what

students have gone through, so it important to understand and tolerate them. In addition, teachers should avoid generalization and be able to recognize the reasons of misbehaved students.

There are several outcomes for beginning teachers who do not know how to overcome and deal with these situations. The main aspect that is affected is the emotional side, in which beginning teachers feel vulnerable and not confident enough after a negative experience with a misbehaved adult. After finishing this research project, I learned that it is common to feel overwhelmed with the situations that beginning teachers do not know how to handle. In addition, I also learned that it is important to pay attention to the emotional side of teachers because it may be a cause to leave the teaching profession.

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Appendix 1: E-mail questionnaire

Teachers' experiences with adults' misbehavior

Name:

First of all, thank you for answering this questionnaire. My name is Daniela Cisneros and I am a student of the University of Guanajuato. As part of a research project I am carrying out, I would like to ask you to answer this questionnaire related to adults' misbehavior in the English classroom. Thank you in advance.

1. Have you worked with adults? What's the range of ages that you have work with?

2. What do you know about the ways of misbehavior of an adult?

3. Have you experienced misbehavior from adults? How?

4. How did misbehavior affect the group environment?

Appendix 2: Online questionnaire

Teachers' experiences with adults' misbehavior

Thank you for answering this questionnaire. The purpose of this questionnaire is to know about your experiences with misbehaved adults and how these situations affected your own perception as teacher.

1. What's your name?

2. Think about situations that you have gone through, and write some key words to describe adults' misbehavior.

3. Have these experiences helped you to deal with misbehavior in latter situations?

4. What type of consequences had these experiences for you as a teacher (if any)?

5. Have you ever felt discriminated by an adult learner? (For example, if the learner called you with a derogative word)

6. What was the impact on your confidence as teacher?

7. Would you consider any of these situations with misbehaved adults as a critical incident in your teaching experience? (a critical incident is an episode in the classroom that made you change your perspective towards something regarding your teaching)

Appendix 3: Consent letter

Carta de consentimiento informado para participantes en el proyecto de investigación (Tesis)

El propósito de esta carta de consentimiento es informar a los participantes en esta investigación con una clara explicación de la naturaleza de la misma, así como de su rol en ella como participantes.

La presente investigación es conducida por la alumna Daniela Cisneros Mendoza de séptimo semestre de la Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés, de la Universidad de Guanajuato. La meta de este estudio es investigar sobre las perspectivas de maestros acerca de la mala conducta de estudiantes adultos.

Si usted accede a participar en este estudio, se le pedirá responder un pequeño cuestionario, que se le enviará vía correo electrónico. Posteriormente, se le enviará una invitación electrónica a responder un cuestionario electrónico que le tomará aproximadamente 8 minutos responder.

La participación en este estudio es estrictamente voluntaria. La información que se recoja será confidencial y no se usará para ningún otro propósito fuera de los establecidos en esta investigación (y para publicaciones de los resultados en conferencias o publicaciones escritas). Sus respuestas al cuestionario y a la entrevista serán codificadas usando un número de identificación, por lo tanto, serán confidenciales.

Si tiene alguna duda sobre este proyecto, puede hacer preguntas en cualquier momento durante su participación en él. Igualmente, puede retirarse del proyecto en cualquier momento sin que eso lo perjudique en ninguna forma. Si alguna de las preguntas durante la entrevista le parece incómoda, tiene usted el derecho de hacérselo saber al investigador o a no responderlas.

De antemano le agradecemos su participación.

Acepto participar voluntariamente en esta investigación, conducida por Daniela Cisneros Mendoza. He sido informado (a) de que la meta de este estudio es identificar el rol de la reflexión dentro de la práctica docente.

Me han indicado también que tendré que responder un cuestionario escrito (vía correo electrónico) y un segundo cuestionario electrónico.

Se me ha explicado que la información que yo proporcione en el curso de esta investigación es estrictamente confidencial y no será usada para ningún otro propósito fuera de los de este estudio incluyendo la divulgación en congresos o publicaciones académicas. He sido informado de que puedo hacer preguntas sobre el proyecto en cualquier momento y que puedo retirarme del mismo cuando así lo decida, sin que esto me perjudique. Si necesito más información sobre mi participación en este estudio, puedo contactar a Daniela Cisneros

Mendoza al correo electrónico danicisnerosm@gmail.com o a su directora de tesis, la Dra. M. Martha Lengeling al correo electrónico lengeling@hotmail.com

Entiendo que una copia de esta carta de consentimiento me será entregada, y que puedo pedir información sobre los resultados de este estudio cuando éste haya concluido. Para esto, puedo contactar a Daniela Cisneros Mendoza al correo anteriormente mencionado.

_____

Nombre del Participante   Firma del Participante   Fecha