

Queering Teaching Education Programs at UIS: Perceptions of Pre-Service EFL Teachers  
towards Queer Pedagogy in a Colombian Public University

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### **Dedicatory**

To our families and close friends who supported us and have given us a voice of encouragement. Likewise, in a very special and symbolic way, to all members of the LGBTQIA+ community in Colombia and around the world, who fight tirelessly for better treatment and recognition in society and to eradicate homophobia, violence, and genocide against them and their fellow LGBTQIA+ members.

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### Abstract

**Title:** Queering Teaching Education Programs at UIS: Perceptions of Pre-Service EFL Teachers towards Queer Pedagogy in a Colombian Public University\*

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**Key Words:** LGBTQIA+ community, Queer, Inclusion, Perceptions, Queer Pedagogy, Queer Theory.

#### Description:

Fostering safe environments regarding gender diversity and sexual orientation is essential for educators to promote a classroom free of discrimination, homophobia, and hatred towards LGBTQIA+ students. Presenting queer pedagogy to pre-service teachers allows them to have knowledge and materials for an inclusive learning space in the ELT context. The current research project aimed at determining to what extent the implementation of queer pedagogy in the EFL classroom impacts the perceptions of pre-service English teachers at the Universidad Industrial de Santander. This study followed a mixed-method approach with an Action Research methodology where the data collection included two questionnaires, a didactic sequence (Queer Sessions), and interviews. Respectively, a pre-questionnaire gathered the initial perceptions of the participants followed by ten queer lessons. To evaluate the impact of these sessions, a final post-questionnaire and interviews were conducted. The findings presented mostly positive thoughts from the pre-service teachers about discussing LGBTQIA+ topics and including the queer pedagogy in their EFL classes. The present research evidenced an impact of the didactic sequence on the participants' willingness to include queer topics in the future. This investigation is considered as a starting point for further research on this topic in Colombia to promote gender awareness and inclusion in EFL education.

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\* Degree Work

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## Resumen

**Título:** Promoviendo Educación Queer en Programas de Enseñanza en la UIS: Percepciones de Futuros Docentes ILE Sobre Pedagogía Queer en una Universidad Pública Colombiana \*

**Autores:** Julian A. Ortiz, Santiago Garcia, y Sylvia P. Solano \*\*

**Palabras Clave:** Comunidad LGBTQIA+, Queer, Inclusión, Percepciones, Pedagogía Queer, Teoría Queer

### Descripción:

Fomentar entornos seguros en relación con la diversidad de género y la orientación sexual es esencial para que los educadores promuevan un aula libre de discriminación, homofobia y odio hacia los estudiantes LGBTQIA+. Presentar la pedagogía queer a los profesores en formación les permite tener conocimientos y materiales para un espacio de aprendizaje inclusivo en el contexto de ILE. El presente proyecto de investigación tuvo como objetivo determinar en qué medida la implementación de la pedagogía queer en el aula de ILE impacta las percepciones de los profesores de inglés en formación de la Universidad Industrial de Santander. Este estudio siguió un enfoque de método mixto con una metodología de Investigación-Acción donde la recolección de datos incluyó dos cuestionarios, una secuencia didáctica (Sesiones Queer) y entrevistas. Respectivamente, un pre-cuestionario recogió las percepciones iniciales de los participantes, seguido de diez lecciones Queer. Para evaluar el impacto de estas, se realizó un cuestionario final y entrevistas. Los resultados mostraron una opinión mayoritariamente positiva por parte de los profesores en formación sobre la discusión de temas LGBTQIA+ y la inclusión de la pedagogía queer en sus clases de ILE. La presente investigación evidenció un impacto de la secuencia didáctica en la disposición de los participantes a incluir temas queer en el futuro. Este estudio se considera un punto de partida para futuras investigaciones sobre este tema en Colombia para promover la conciencia de género y la inclusión en la educación ILE.

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## Introduction

*“We need to use education to foster tolerance towards other people, to be aware of the existence of the Other, and to recognize the Other in ourselves as the result of a complex psychological and cultural process of internalization of differences in a multicultural world” -*

(Guijarro-Ojeda, Ruiz-Cecilia, 2013, p.195)

### Problem Context

In modern society, educators perform an essential role in the development and shaping of the student’s identities as teachers impart knowledge, culture, traditions, and challenges within the class (“The Role of Teachers in Student Personality Development”, 2019) and this includes the instruction of students with diverse sexuality (Cevallos, 2017). Since learners have unique necessities, empirical experiences, interests, and socio-cultural backgrounds, the shaping of their personality will affect their learning process and life overall (Fehr & Agnello, 2012). Addressing topics related to race, gender, nationality, sexual identity, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion, and mental health in the classroom has become a tool for educators to foster safe environments where students can share their life experiences and the diverse context, they lived in. Furthermore, understanding students’ realities and needs has become a great challenge for teachers who want to provide high-quality educational instruction avoiding potential oppression. Therefore, hand-in-hand with globalization and mass media culture, the current massive visualization of the Lesbian, Gay, Trans, Bisexual, Queer, Intersexual, Asexual and more (LGBTQIA+) movements allow classrooms to address topics that raise awareness and equity within educational institutions (Kearns et al., 2014).

Hence, the topics that are discursively constructed in the classroom, such as sexual identities, are highly relevant inside English Language Teaching (ELT) and critical applied linguistics because of the identity construction and transformation each student goes through in the key stages of Foreign Language Acquisition (FLA) (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). As FLA is deeply connected to students' identity development (Morgan, 2011), learners might feel silenced and mistreated every time lessons contain oppressive materials related to homophobia, sexism, and this causes a huge impact on students' integrity (Darvin & Norton, 2014).

According to Güney (2018), the orthodoxy heteronormative ideas embedded in modern culture trespass each generation oppressing students with different sexual identities. Consequently, the educators' and knowledgeable instructors' duties are to address sexual issues allowing students to discover their own identities. Also, teachers are meant to promote inclusive and safe environments in the classroom. Thence, to support inclusive English language classrooms project sexual diversity in students' identity, educators ought to find new sources for the curriculum of the teaching program and train future English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ related topics in their classes. On that account, it is fundamental, for both teachers and learners, to discuss and normalize the concepts and realities that are embedded in giving more exposure to oppressed minorities in Colombian education.

The free development of the personality of Colombian citizens and the freedom of expressing own opinions avoiding censorship, as it is presented in the Colombian Political Constitution (República de Colombia, Articles 16 & 20, 1991), demand teachers to guarantee the right of equity and dignity in the classroom. As a result, teachers address LGBTQIA+ topics as the students have the right to know about them without any prejudice or discrimination. With the application of queer theory, pedagogy, and appropriate inclusive materials, teachers and

educational institutions in Colombia can promote a friendly environment for the sexual-diverse students, intending to avoid bullying, depression, and suicide. Similarly, including and discussing LGBTQIA+ related topics represent an opportunity to foster awareness among teachers about the importance of applying new pedagogical models to create safe and inclusive learning environments for students within their classes.

### **Research Question**

What is the impact on the perceptions of pre-service English teachers at Universidad Industrial de Santander (UIS) towards implementing queer pedagogy in the EFL classroom?

### **Justification of the study**

Queer theory and queer pedagogy have gained a lot of attention in the ELT field during the current era (Paiz, 2018), but in Colombia, representative investigations related to LGBTQIA+ topics are not prominent in the educational field. Thus, this project fulfills the necessity of developing data and research that inspires and opens a path for future investigations and implementations of queer pedagogy in the country. For this reason, the present project seeks to collect pre-service teachers' perceptions towards LGBTQIA+ matters and to try to encourage them to promote sexual and gender equity in the English classroom.

Besides, the current investigation aims to understand the compelling necessity of decreasing the percentages of bullying, discrimination, and suicide based on sexual identities in academic environments presented by Colombia Diversa, and Sentiido (2016). These are non-profit Colombian organizations that promote education and knowledge about the social situation, rights, and needs of the LGBTQIA+ population in the national panorama and contribute to the reduction of prejudice and discrimination rates towards this community.

The lack of inclusion in education has affected many members of the LGBTQIA+ community in the country. As Colombia Diversa et al. (2016) published, homophobia, discrimination, physical and mental bullying has been present in the educational journey of queer students by almost 70%. To exemplify these homophobic acts in the classroom, there are two main examples. First, Sergio Urrego's case, whose life ended at the age of 16 due to aggression and bigotry about his sexual orientation at school in 2015 (Fundación Sergio Urrego, n.d). Similarly, there is the case of Luis Álvarez, a 17-year-old homosexual student who suffered arm mutilation, perpetuated by a neighbor of the same age, due to the fact of being homosexual (Semana, 2020). In this sense, discriminatory and violent behaviors against LGBTQIA+ students by their classmates and people from their local community are prominent nowadays in Colombia. For this reason, it is necessary to recognize the LGBTQIA+ community in the country and in the educational panorama to avoid scenarios such as the ones mentioned above.

To sum up, it is pertinent to foster the discussion of LGBTQIA+ topics at school to prevent discrimination and hatred towards members of the gender non-conforming community, where future teachers and educators play the main role. Therefore, the more pre-service teachers are educated and exposed to problems around the sexual minority community, the more tolerance and acceptance will be generated among their students and colleagues. As a result, high rates of bullying and harassment based on sexual identity will be lowered in the educational landscape (Nelson, 2009).

### **Limitations**

The first limitation of the current research is the lack of studies related to queer theory implementation within the Colombian context. This scarcity of studies makes it challenging to predict the veracity and reliability of the data collection instruments; and consequently, the

results and conclusions obtained. Similarly, the number of the sample for this study is not very large, being only 21 students, limiting the fact that the results and conclusions obtained can be taken as general and truthful. Further, due to the current COVID-19 situation and restrictions in Colombia, the didactic sequence for this study was adapted to be carried out in a hybrid modality (face-to-face classes and synchronous meetings in Zoom). As a result, some students could not physically attend all the sessions and three classes were carried out asynchronously using the Seesaw platform. These changes in the modality of the lessons meant a reduction in the collection and analysis of qualitative information provided by the students in the Queer Sessions, which would have been useful for a better and broader interpretation and analysis of the data obtained.

## **Objectives**

The general objective of this study is to determine to what extent the implementation of queer pedagogy in the EFL classroom impacts the perceptions of pre-service English teachers at UIS.

To accomplish this purpose, the following three specific objectives are proposed:

- To analyze pre-service teachers' initial perceptions of queer pedagogy and the implementation of LGBTQIA+ topics in an EFL classroom.
- To implement a didactic sequence that have queer pedagogy and LGBTQIA+ topics in a group of pre-service teachers.
- To evaluate the impact of the didactic sequence on the pre-service teachers' perceptions of queer pedagogy and LGBTQIA+ topics.

## **Organization of the paper**

The following paper consists of four chapters: literature review, methodological design results, and conclusions. Firstly, the literature review presents the background, theoretical bases, and legal references in Colombia. Secondly, the methodological design informs the hypothesis, sample and sampling, consent form, data collection instruments, and the didactic sequence. Thirdly, the results present the data analysis and outcome found after applying the instruments. Finally, there is the conclusion of the investigation in which the answer to the research question is presented.

### **1. Literature Review**

## 1.1 Background

Over the past few years, gender inclusion in education has been the result of the necessity to reach gender equality, and encourage students to respect gender differences (UNESCO, 2015). As Toraman and Özen (2019) discussed, the importance of making research and studying gender differences results in how teachers have to face gender discrimination and raise the consciousness of sexual diversity issues and topics in the classroom. Therefore, some eminent authors, such as Nelson (2009), Paiz (2019), and Güney (2018), addressed gender equity in their investigations to foster awareness among in-service and pre-service teachers.

Nowadays, approaching gender issues in the EFL context is gaining relevance due to its essential value for promoting and raising LGBTQIA+ recognition in the educational field (Nelson, 2009). For instance, it is important to mention that one of the subjects that are not exempt from advocating inclusion in the classroom is English. Further, Castañeda-Peña and Mojica (2017), mentioned the premise about how English teachers are responsible to promote gender equity in their classes, instilling the eradication of discrimination, the awareness concerning the LGBTQIA+ situation, their needs as members of today's society, and the acceptance of the diverse multiculturalism the world faces today. For example, in first-world countries such as Australia, Canada, and the United States, strategies and educational policies related to gender inclusion in the classroom have been implemented, specifically in the English classes, as a way of addressing gender and LGBTQIA+ issues in education (Curran, G, 2013; Drazenovich, 2015; Zacko-Smith & Smith, 2010). This new incorporation demonstrated favorable changes in students' and teachers' mindsets about gender and the LGBTQIA+ movement in the classroom, increasing the students' desire to learn about these topics. Likewise,

these policy changes have encouraged teachers to understand the importance of including, in the existing curriculum, a queer perspective that recognizes the needs of LGBTQIA+ students. This seeks to promote and maintain an inclusive environment where teachers can eradicate heteronormative and cis-normative discourses and ideologies in educational institutions (Kitchen & Bellini., 2012; Pearce & Cumming-Potvin, 2017).

Regarding the Colombian context, there are some relevant investigations related to gender inclusion in education (Bello, 2018; Acevedo, 2020, Vargas and Pinzon, 2018), which provide insight into multiple perceptions from educators and students towards the discussion of queer topics, homosexual pedagogical practices, and gender diversity in the curricula of national public schools and universities. Notwithstanding, these research projects are not focused on the implementation of the aforementioned topics, queer theory and pedagogy inside the EFL classroom, but they mostly address gender inclusion from a general educational perspective. Consequently, there is a large gap in the national landscape in terms of information related to the perceptions and methods that address the gender non-conforming communities within the English classroom.

Finally, as presented by Colombia Diversa (2016), homophobia and discrimination are still part of the education system in the country. Thus, it is essential to do research on gender inclusion in education and address the importance of queer pedagogy in the English curriculum to widespread knowledge about gender and LGBTQIA+ issues that are part of education and daily life (Trujillo, 2015).

## 1.2 Theoretical Bases

### 1.2.1 *Queer Theory*

The concept of "queer theory" emerged during the '80s and '90s, adopting the term as a radical theory due to the constant struggle of same-sex loving communities to obtain greater visualization in the society and seek the eradication of homophobic discourses that proclaim homosexuality as unnatural and subnormal (Nelson, 2009; Bello, 2018). For Watson (2005), queer theory is not a theory with a unified epistemology, since it was based on different liberal philosophies, feminist theories, post-structuralist and applied linguistic studies related to the construction of identity, ideology, discourse, and power relations among educational fields (Butler and Husanovic, 2005; Callis, 2009; Norton, 2000). Besides, queer theory is categorized inside the post-structuralist framework by Michael Foucault who motivated activists and theorists to focus on gender and sexuality (Plummer, 2005).

Acknowledging Foucault's constructivist ideas, the aforementioned theory defends the fact that sexual orientation and identity do not occur in individuals purely because of biological issues, but they are constructed through interaction within the society and repeated discursive acts (1978). In addition, queer theory aims at understanding diverse sexual and gender identities along with transsexual and transgender identification and representation in the educational field.

The queer theory rejects any type of gender classification, whether it is male-female, hetero-homo, or gay-lesbian (Curran 2006; Gray, 2013; Nelson 2015), being described in the educational field as "an attempt to move beyond this heteronormative orthodoxy in language classrooms" (Güney, 2018, p.21). Therefore, queer theory seeks to look for a more LGBTQIA+ inclusive curriculum, sources, materials, and teaching approaches based on changing the

heteronormative status quo education has been exposed to all these years. Furthermore, queer theory highlights the prerequisite of creating spaces free from homophobia and bullying where queer, non-queer students and teachers can freely express their needs, sexual identities, and their perspectives on queer topics. Moreover, creating and promoting inclusion might be helpful for educators because students engage critical thinking and practice processes more easily around various human issues (Nelson, 2002).

### *1.2.1 Queer Pedagogy*

Authors such as Dumas (2010), questioned the existing pedagogical practices to ensure and perpetuate an adequate and efficient implementation of queer concepts in the classroom. As a result, the concept of queer pedagogy arises and focuses on helping students and teachers avoid heteronormativity and the eradication of sexual minority communities in the classroom. In addition, Ordem and Ulum (2020) discussed the way queer pedagogy provides the producers to assist educators to think critically and objectively about possible solutions to address LGBTQIA+ issues in society efficiently. Alongside, queer pedagogy implements the term "queer of inquiry" within school practices, which, according to Paiz (2019), means the motivation teachers give students to ask and answer questions by themselves that "trouble the status quo, that interrogate social givens" (p.7). This enables learners to critically think about avoiding the subordination of underserved sexual communities in their school environments. However, most of the reported studies converge on the landscape of the ESL context, not the EFL context, which is where our study takes place (Nelson, 2009; Dumas 2008).

To adapt our research study in an EFL context, it was necessary to get the influence of some authors such as Moore (2016), who conducted a Japanese case study using semi-structured

interviews (queer narratives) of six students in a conversational English class. The main objective of this research investigation was to determine students' issues and needs inside the classroom to give some insight regarding how educators can attempt to solve them. In the conclusions, the author highlighted the need for creating and promoting safer spaces for queer students where self-expression could be exposed, and suggested Japanese teachers investigate new and engaging pedagogical strategies to involve students in the selection and discussion of the queer topics in the classroom, promoting pedagogy of inquiry.

To conclude, it is paramount to highlight the importance of implementing the queer theory and pedagogy in the English classroom to raise awareness of the marginalized minorities in the current society. As Foucault (1978) stated, to develop a more inclusive environment for education in the future, researchers and educators ought to analyze the students' needs and issues to start promoting inclusion through the queer theory and pedagogy. Furthermore, the aforementioned methods will encourage learners to respect and acknowledge sexual and gender diversity.

### **1.3 Legal Reference in Colombia**

#### ***1.3.1 National Education***

Two aspects reflected on the General Education Law in Colombia are the key components of the present study: the assurance of plain development of the student's personality and identity without limitations, and the knowledge formation about respecting life, other's human rights, peace, democracy, coexistence, justice, solidarity, and equity (Law No. 115, 1994). As a result, the Ministry of Education started promoting mandatory sexual education topics in any of the subjects and curriculums inside all public and private institutions (Law No.

115, 1994) allowing students to know, normalize, live without guilt, and freely develop their sexual identity at school (MEN, 2013). Likewise, Colombian citizens have the right to be diverse in a pluralist country, and the right to be treated equally regardless of personal preference. Also, Colombian students have the free development right without limitations in all contexts of life and the guarantee of receiving impartial information with social responsibility, and more importantly, the right of education with peace, democracy, cultural values, and human rights (República de Colombia, 1991).

That is the reason why, the MEN (2013), UNICEF (2014), and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) (2009) clearly state that through pedagogy, teachers and institutions are responsible for eradicating hatred, bullying, aggression, homophobia, and gender violence that transgress the student's human rights. Hence, letting pre-service teachers understand the importance of recognizing and respecting these rights, fosters personal growth in their classes, and improves students' academic performance and lives positively.

### ***1.3.2 LGBTQIA+ Policies at UIS***

In line with the national guidelines, policies at UIS seek to guarantee the corresponding enforcement of the rights of the LGBTQIA+ communities in the educational programs. The above is carried out through institutional mechanisms that promote equality and avoid actions of discrimination inside the institution (Acuerdo 22, 2018). Alongside, the university states the continuous processes of communication and sensibilization of queer topics, sex, gender, and sexual orientation with the university community and the educational programs. Furthermore, it

works on eradicating discriminatory stereotypes in its educational materials, books, publications, and documentation (Acuerdo 22, 2018).

Nevertheless, there are no clear statutes at the Languages School and the teaching program called Foreign Languages with an Emphasis in English regarding gender inclusion in the classes. There is only one subject in the program, which is Critical Pedagogy and Post-structuralism (Code 28558), that includes in its syllabus topics where students can acquire insight and reflect on the importance of having a more inclusive education in our current society (PEP LLEI, 2016). Therefore, the contents of the subject are insufficient to promote an optimal degree of awareness of pre-service teachers about the importance of inclusion and implementation of LGBTQIA+ and gender diversity issues within the ELF classroom.

## **2. Methodological Design**

This research project is a practical adaptation of Güney's (2018) investigation made in Turkey. Güney's work explored pre-service teachers' perceptions towards queer issues in education. That study implemented questionnaires and a pedagogical intervention to shift future teachers' discourses with non-heteronormative classes and queer curricula. Thus, it was considered necessary to adjust Güney's research to the Colombian context.

The current academic paper followed an experimental mixed-method approach since it was useful to integrate both quantitative and qualitative results by using the triangulation method in the research (Creswell et al, 2011). The methodology process chosen was Action Research (AR) as it was suitable to investigate specifically in the English language classrooms. This research procedure involved self and critical reflection to enhance investigators' ideas,

knowledge, and perceptions of the classroom implicated (Burns, 2011). Therefore, AR measured the sample's impact with the content shown in the pedagogical intervention.

## **2.1 Hypothesis**

It was hypothesized that pre-service EFL teachers who participated in the didactic sequence containing LGBTQIA+ topics, had a positive impact regarding the need of including queer pedagogy in their future EFL class. On the other hand, a null hypothesis was the pre-service EFL teachers at UIS who are exposed to the didactic sequence containing queer pedagogy, had a negative impact regarding the implementation of queer topics in their future EFL classroom.

## **2.2 Sample and Sampling**

The technique used to choose the participants was purposive sampling, which is a type of non-probability sampling based on a subjective judgment rather than random selection (Cohen et al., 2018). The selection criteria were the following: 1). English proficiency (between B1 and B2): it gave them a faster and better understanding of all the information and didactic material used in the Queer Sessions (videos, slides, reading exercises, etc.), and gave them assistance to carry out the activities and projects proposed in each session properly. 2). Participants that are familiar with some insight into the importance of inclusivity in the classroom and the importance of alternative teaching methodologies, pedagogies, and critical thinking topics. 3). Authorization and availability of the teacher in charge of the course who allowed researchers to conduct the queer sessions and apply the different instruments to collect information during the course schedule. Fulfilling the criteria mentioned above, the students of Advanced English I subject of the Foreign Languages with Emphasis in English program at Universidad Industrial de Santander (UIS) were selected as the most appropriate sample to implement this research.

**Table 1.**

*Characteristics of the Sample.*

Characteristics	Variable	Percentage
Age	18 years old	36,90%
	19 years old	26,30%
	20 years old	15,80%
	21 to 24 years old	15,90%
Place of residence	Metropolitan area of Bucaramanga	89,40%
	Neiva	5,30%
	Medellin	5,30%
Religion	Do not practise a religion	73,70%
	Deist	5,26%
	Christian	5,26%
	Catholic	15,78%
Parents' educational level	University Degree	15,80%
	Technological	10,50%
	Technical	31,60%
	Secondary	30,80%
	Post-degree	5,80%
Sexual orientation	Heterosexual	52,60%
	Bisexual	26,30%
	Gay	5,30%
	Lesbian	10,50%
	Non-binary	5,30%
Students who have friends from the LGBTQIA+ community	Yes	94,70%
	No	5,30%

In total, nineteen students participated in this research study and their ages were between 18 and 24 years old. The majority of participants were born and lived in the Metropolitan area of Bucaramanga. Also, even though most students taking this subject recognized themselves as heterosexual, a significant number of LGBTQIA+ members were present in this class.

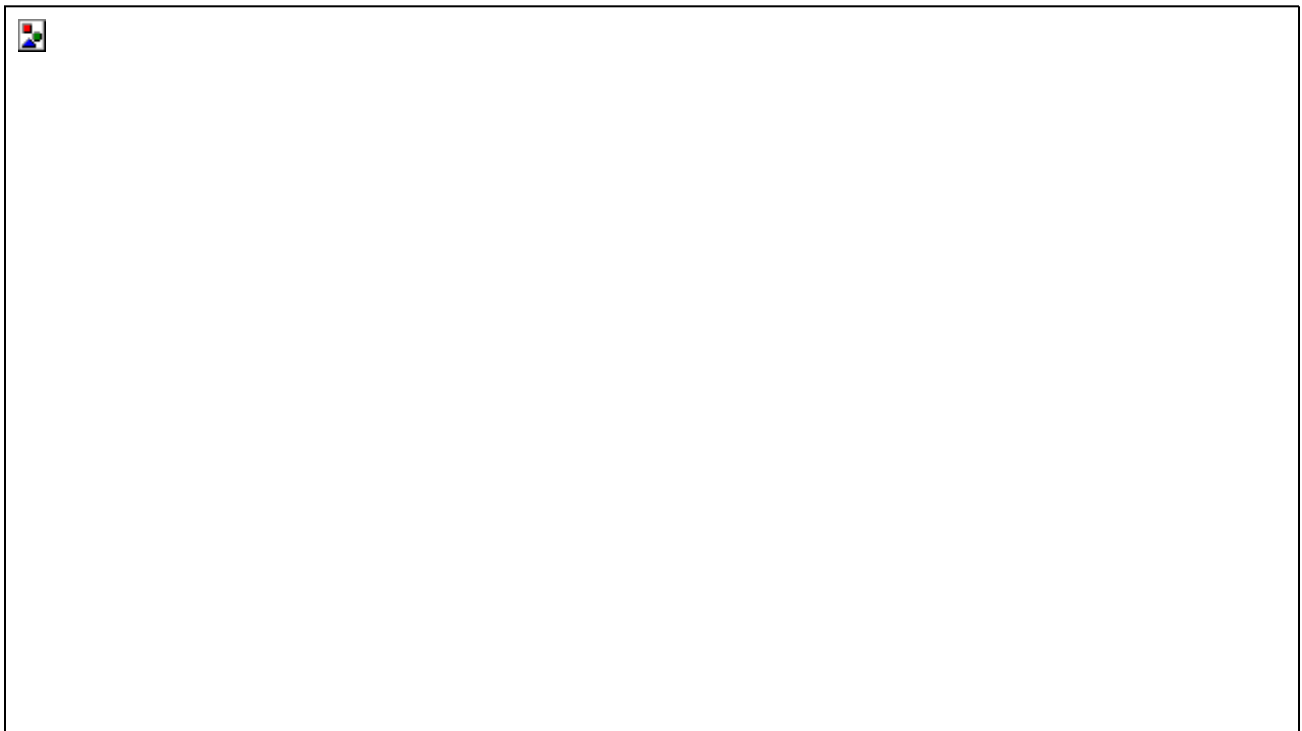
Furthermore, 94,70% of the participants were aware of the LGBTQIA+ community due to the fact that they interact with or know people who are part of this population, such as a friend or family member.

### **2.3 Procedure**

Taking into consideration the above-mentioned premises, the procedure followed to collect and analyze data was organized as shown in Graphic 1.

#### **Figure 1.**

*Data Collection and Data Analysis stages*



### **2.4 Consent Form**

A consent form was sent to the participants (see Annex 1) in order to inform them of the purpose of the study, their participation, and the ethical and legal agreements established in this

research. The nineteen students agreed on the information given and once again they were guaranteed anonymity of their data that was used for purely academic purposes.

## **2.5 Data Collection**

Four instruments were designed in order to achieve the first objective of this study, which is to analyze Advanced English 1 pre-service teachers' initial perceptions of queer pedagogy and the use of LGBTQIA+ topics in an EFL classroom. They were a pre- questionnaire, post-questionnaire, a journal of the Queer Sessions, and a semi-structured interview.

### **2.5.1 Instruments**

#### **2.5.1.1 Questionnaires**

**2.5.1.1.1 Pre-questionnaire.** The pre-questionnaire (see Appendix 2) was based on Güneý's (2018) and Guajiro and Ruiz's (2013) design and it was adapted specifically to achieve the first specific objective of analyzing pre-service teachers' initial perceptions of queer pedagogy. There was a total of twenty (20) questions with Likert Scale (covering from strongly disagree to strongly agree) and open and multiple-choice questions. They were organized into four categories: Sociodemographic information, LGBTQIA+ issues, LGBTQIA+ topics, and the LGBTQIA+ community and EFL classes.

**2.5.1.1.2 Post-questionnaire.** The post-questionnaire (see Appendix 3) was used to determine and analyze the possible changes in the participants' perceptions regarding the implementation of queer theory in EFL classes after completing their participation in all Queer Sessions. It was adapted from Gurney's (2018) and Guajiro and Ruiz's (2013) questionnaires as well and consisted of eleven (11) closed multiple-choice questions and two (2) open questions; all of them organized into a category called "LGBTQIA+ materials and topics in EFL classes". To determine to what extent the mindset of the population shifted, the questionnaire was applied

only during and after the last Queer Session. Thus, the data obtained in the post-questionnaire was compared with the information obtained at the beginning of the sessions (pre-questionnaire) to analyze their impact on the population.

**2.5.1.2 Queer Sessions.** This didactic sequence was designed to fulfill the second objective of the study, which was to implement a didactic sequence that contains queer pedagogy and LGBTQIA+ topics in a group of students taking Advanced English I classes at UIS. It contained ten Queer Sessions, each of them with its own objective and approach (see Table 2). These sessions (see Appendix 4) sought to increase students’ awareness of sexual orientation, LGBTQIA+ inclusive materials, and LGBTQIA+ issues in the Colombian context and worldwide.

**Table 2.**

*Description of the Queer Sessions Implemented*

Week	Type of Class	Classes	Objectives		Description of the main activity	PBL Final Project Stages
			Queer	Linguistic		
1	Face-to-face	Queer session #1 Welcome to the LGBTQIA+ World (See Appendix 7 to 10)	To learn and understand LGBTQIA+ basic concepts and learn about sexual and gender differences.	To review continuous verb forms (present continuous, past continuous, future continuous) within a sociocultural content (globalization).	Genderbread Worksheet: Fill in the blanks and complete their genderbread person based on their sexual preferences and gender.	First stage: Exposure to queer content to be used in the final project.
2	Face-to-face	Queer session #2 What is pride? (See Appendix 11 to 12)	To learn about LGBTQIA+ history.		Writing activity: Write a reflective entry about the influence of the LGBTQIA+ community in the current globalization using continuous verb forms.	

3	Face-to-face	Queer session #3 English Inclusive Vocabulary. (See Appendix 13 to 14)	To critically understand the importance of inclusion in terms of sexual orientation, diverse family, and identity.	To practice cleft sentences using Inclusive vocabulary, and LGBTQIA+ slang.	Debate: Discuss and defend your arguments in a class debate about the usage of inclusive vocabulary in the English Language.	
4	Face-to-face	Queer session #4 Yasss Queen, slay that! (See Appendix 15 to 17)	To understand LGBTQIA+ slang and its meaning with its cultural implication.	To debate and give arguments using cleft sentences. To create a short conversation using Drag vocabulary.	Queer Slang Worksheet: Complete the sentences using the slang and expressions seen in class. Then, match the meaning with the words. Finally, they will choose a situation and create a short-written conversation between two Drag Queens.	
5	Asynchronous	Queer session #5 Trans Marsha P. Johnson. (See Appendix 18 to 19)	To understand the importance of LGBTQIA+ public figures and movements in our current society.		To Marsha and Sylvia Worksheet: Critically think about the influence of Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera in the LGBTQIA+ movement and record a voice message answering some problem-posing questions.	
6	Face-to-face	Queer session #6 More Love, Less Hate. (See Appendix 20 to 21)	To learn about LGBTQIA+ stereotypes and understand the importance of breaking those stereotypes as future teachers. To understand and raise awareness on discrimination based on sexual orientation and identity (Homophobia).	To review perfect tenses (Present, Past, and Future Perfect) to write a letter. To practice tense sequence inversion with negative adverbials.	Myth or reality Game: Learn about stereotypes, their backgrounds, their consequences, and how to break them in the classroom. Red or Green Flags: To identify actions in the classroom that can be considered homophobic or pro-LGBTQIA+.	Second Stage: Critical Analysis of the LGBTQIA+ topic influence in EFL classes.
7	Asynchronous	Queer session #7 Colombia and the LGBTQIA+ movement (See Appendix 22 to 23)	To learn about the LGBTQIA+ Colombian movement and critically reflect on their position in the country.		Kahoot Game: Review the LGBTQIA+ movement in Colombia and how this movement influences the EFL students.	
8	Asynchronous	Queer session #8: Queer Final Project Development. (See Appendix 24)	To organize the queer Instagram account in groups and send the draft	To practice compound adjectives	Create the final Queer Instagram Account and organize the content to be published in it.	Third Stage: Explanation and creation of the final

9	Face-to-face	Queer session #9 Teaching queer? Queer Pedagogy. (See Appendix 25 to 26)	To understand and reflect the importance of queer theory and pedagogy in the classroom.	Reflection time: Plan an English Class with a queer focus using specific characteristics.	project (Queer Instagram Account)	
10	Face-to-face	Queer session #10 Queer Instagram Education. (See Appendix 27 to 28)	To present the final project related to LGBTQIA+ topics, queer pedagogy, and queer theory.	To express their views and critically give feedback towards other people's projects and ideas.	Final project presentation: Presentation of the Instagram profile where each group created and shared content about how to queer English classes. (See Appendix 29)	Fourth Stage: Final presentation of the Instagram accounts and their insight.

For this study, the Queer Sessions were articulated with an EFL linguistic focus and LGBTQIA+ topics (see Table 2). Due to the pandemic situation, the sessions had to be adapted to the hybrid educational model. For this reason, a total of seven Queer Sessions were implemented in the face-to-face modality at the university campus, and three of them were carried out asynchronously, throughout the use of an educational virtual platform called *Seesaw* (see Appendix 5). These Queer Sessions were based on Güney’s design (2018) and adapted to the content of Advanced English I at UIS (PEP LLEI, 2016). Each lesson took place every Friday for ten weeks and they lasted two hours respectively. Additionally, researchers used a queer journal (see Appendix 6) with the aim of reporting any qualitative information given by the participants. These journals included written notes by the investigators with pre-service teachers’ opinions towards the class, the topics discussed, their responses during conversations, and debates, their behavior, their interest in the class, among others. All journals managed the information to have a broader and better understanding of the data analysis obtained from the questionnaires and interviews.

The pedagogical methodology of the Queer Sessions was Project-Based Learning (PBL), where the students had to go through four phases (see Table 2) based on Fragoulis' project-work stages (2009). They were: Exposure, Analysis, Creation of the final project, and presentation (evaluation). The final project outcome was to create a queer Instagram account to show what they had learned in the lessons. This Instagram Account was a teamwork project where students choose their favorite topics of the Queer Sessions and created a minimum of 3 posts in any format (video, posts, IGTV, stories) and publish them online. On the other hand, as the main approach, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) was taken into account to create the lesson plans for the Queer Sessions. The purpose of the CLIL lesson was to promote awareness of the main topic, while the learners can reinforce their English language skills (Dalton-Puffer & Nikula, 2014). It is worth mentioning that the grammatical focus, presented in the curriculum (PEP LLEI, 2016) for Advanced English I, was not explained during the classes, but it was implicit in the activities carried out in each session.

**2.5.1.3 Interviews.** As stated by Creswell and Plano Clark (2013), the fact of adding qualitative information after the intervention provides helpful information not only to see how participants evaluate the results of the study but also to explain the quantitative findings in a deep way. Therefore, the main purpose of the individual interviews was to collect qualitative information about the perceptions of the students regarding the Queer Sessions they attended and to see their different points of view about the topics presented (see Appendix 30). There was a total of ten voluntary interviews in which four of them took place in the Zoom platform, and six were face-to-face after the tenth session. As it was stated in the consent form, these interviews were recorded and used to complement the quantitative data collected in the questionnaires, and the qualitative data obtained in the Queer Session's journal.

As for the structure of the interviews, they included ten (10) semi-structured questions to elicit information (Longhurst, 2003). This interview aimed at knowing their thoughts on the Queer Sessions and included open questions that allowed the pre-service teachers to talk about their experience of the classes. They followed an interview protocol based on the five steps suggested by Castillo (2016) and each one lasted from twenty to forty minutes.

## **2.6 Data Analysis**

To achieve the objectives of this research, the information collected through the aforementioned instruments is organized by quantitative and qualitative data in different categories.

### **2.6.1 Quantitative Data**

The quantitative data was obtained from the closed and multiple-choice questions of the pre- and post-questionnaires through the use of the software programs Microsoft Office. The 365 version of the Excel tool helped the elaboration of the statistical analysis to compare the data

collected between instruments. In addition to that, Excel was used to create graphics, diagrams, and tables for the illustration of the results of the study.

### ***2.6.2 Qualitative Data***

Qualitative data was obtained from the Queer Sessions, the open questions from the questionnaires, and the interviews. This information was analyzed through the usage of the latent-content analysis method (Kleinheksel et al., 2020), which allowed the researchers to follow a procedure of analysis and interpretation. This process was divided into four steps: first, information was transcribed and carefully read; second, color coding and categorization took place to specify the possible similar answers and information using the coding to create different categories. After that, researchers compared and organized the categorized information in classification tables to ease the analysis of the data. Finally, a synthesis of the main points of analyzed information was presented in tables using Microsoft Excel.

## **3. Results**

### **3.1 Pre-questionnaires**

To achieve the first specific objective of the research that is to analyze pre-service teachers' initial perceptions of queer pedagogy and the incorporation of LGBTQIA+ topics in an EFL classroom, the results were categorized and arranged in Table 3. The three main categories were: background influence on LGBTQIA+ issues, queer pedagogy and EFL classes, and Queer Sessions impact.

#### **Table 3**

*Categories, Sections, Questions, Qualitative and Quantitative data from the Pre-questionnaire*

Categories	Sections	Question	Quantitative Data	Qualitative Data	
Background influence on LGBTQIA+ issues	Parents Influence	What are your parents' perceptions towards the LGBTQIA+ community?	15,8% Don't Know	"They are very conservative, so they think that (LGBTQIA+ community) are incorrect (wrong), so I'm very careful when I'm talking about it. Also, I can't tell them "omg I'm bisexual" because probably they don't get it and maybe (they) start to judge me."	
			15,8% Not Interested		
			36,8% Negative		
			26.3% Positive		
Queer pedagogy and EFL classes	Queer Materials for ELT	I am willing to provide and include LGBTQIA+ inclusive materials in my future English classes	47% Strongly Agree		
			36,8% Agree,		
			15,8% Neutral		
			0% Disagree		
			0% Strongly Disagree		
	Teaching English Classes	I am willing to talk about LGBTQIA+ issues as a main topic in my future English classes	42,1% Strongly Agree		
			42,1% Agree		
			15,8% Neutral		
			0% Disagree		
					0% Strongly Disagree
Which type of LGBTQIA+ issues would be part of your future English classes?			21,5% Homophobia and Transphobia	"I haven't thought on (about) that."	
	26,3% Respect, tolerance and acceptance	"Maybe the importance of inclusion and respect, I'm not so sure right now."			
	10,5% Don't know,	"I'm not sure yet."			
	26,3% Didn't answer	"I'm not sure."			
	15,4% History and Diversity				
Teaching English Classes	I consider that LGBTQIA+ topics in English classes should be part of teaching education programs	42,1% Strongly Agree			
		31,6% Agree,			
		26,3% Neutral			
		0% Disagree			
		0% Strongly Disagree			

		As a future educator, what would you do if a student that is part of the LGBTQIA+ community is being attacked or bullied for their sexual preferences by other students?	31.6% Educate the students about the topic	"Try to educate the other students."
			21.1% Punishment	"I would try to intervene."
			31.6% Support the Victim	"I would try to stop the situation right away."
			15.7% Talk to the bully	"Report it to my supervisor."
Queer Sessions Impact	Feeling comfortable to talk about LGBTQIA+ topics in my EFL class	In my English classes, if the teacher discusses LGBTQIA+ topics, and suddenly, an act of homophobia comes up, I would rather...	89,5% Express my opinion about the situation	"In my school, some students leave the classes (or) the town because they felt discriminated against."
			5,3% Try to do something for the person who might be affected	
			5,3% Ignore the situation	
		If your previous answer was "YES", What should students do to help incorporate LGBTQIA+ topics into the classroom?	10,53% To know about the community,	"They should be open-minded, tolerant and respect the different opinions."
			31,6% Do activities related to the LGBTQIA+ community	
			5,2% Not sure	
	15,8% Being allies of the community			

### 3.1.1 Parents' Influence

The first category of the pre-questionnaire was related to the participant's background influence on the LGBTQIA+ community. As shown in the section *Parents Influence* in Table 3, since the beginning of the investigation the participants were conscious of the negative perspective parents had on LGBTQIA+ people (36,8% "Negative"). On the other hand, 26% of the students' relatives had a positive perspective on the LGBTQIA+ community and they were taught about "Respect, and tolerance for the community" (26,3%). The open question of this section, "what are your parents' perceptions towards the LGBTQIA+ community?", showed that the participants were concerned about their parents' perceptions, and they could not find solutions for that ("I am very careful, "I can't tell"). Considering this information, there is a clear

division of the participants' family's perceptions about queer people. Consequently, the vast majority of the students stated that their socio-cultural background affected their perceptions of the LGBTQIA+ community. Likewise, there is a slightly higher percentage of negative perceptions demonstrating that students are aware of different paradigms, not only in their household but in their society, regarding queer issues and gender and sex diverse people.

### ***3.1.2 Queer Materials and Teaching English Classes***

The second category in this instrument was related to the implementation of queer pedagogy in the EFL classes. As for the application of queer material in their future EFL classes, the students answered that 15,8% of them had a neutral willingness to use the queer materials in class and the rest of the participants just agreed. This showed that at the beginning of the pre-questionnaire, they had already a positive concept of queer materials. Similarly, almost half of the participants agreed on queering their English lessons and were disposed towards including queer materials in their classes (47,7%). Henceforth, in the next statement "I am willing to talk about LGBTQIA+ issues as the main topic in my future English classes", 15.8% of them reported neutral considerations of LGBTQIA+ manifesting a lack of interest to cover queer topics as the general content in the EFL classroom. Despite that, 42,1% of the sample strongly agreed on the same statement and another 42.1% only agreed.

Correspondingly, the next question about types of LGBTQIA+ content to be part of the EFL classes revealed that students did not know about queer topics to implement in the class (10,5% Don't Know). For instance, responses such as: "I'm not sure yet", "I haven't thought of that", and statements using modals of possibilities such as "They should..." showed uncertainty in the answers. Also, 26,3% of the participants did not answer the above-mentioned question revealing a lack of knowledge in the topic. However, 21.5% of the sample affirmed that they

would include homophobia in the contents of their future English classes. Equally important, as indicated in the next statement about LGBTQIA+ topics being part of teaching education programs, 20.6% considered this statement as neutral revealing indifference to the situation related to the LGBTQIA+ community in the educational field. Whereas 42,1% strongly agreed on the importance and relevance of this topic in class. Finally, one question was about the reaction of the participants against diverse sexual discrimination in the classroom. This question revealed that, at the beginning of the research, the students had some ideas about how to act but they used the words ``Try” and “Would” in their answers indicating indecision and uncertain commitment to the action. Additionally, in this question, it could be observed that students preferred to leave the responsibility to a third party, as in “Report it to my supervisor”.

### ***3.1.3 Feeling comfortable talking about LGBTQIA+ topics in my EFL class***

The last category, Queer Sessions impact, showed the previous feelings of the students about covering LGBTQIA+ topics in the EFL class. In the question, “if the teacher discusses LGBTQIA+ topics, and suddenly, an act of homophobia comes up, I would rather...”, the answers demonstrated that before the implementation, the participants were not eager to act in homophobic scenarios. As a matter of fact, a minimum sample would just abandon the classroom (“Leave the classes”), and 5.3% would only ignore the situation. On the other hand, 89, 5% of the participants revealed that they would express their opinion if they faced an act of homophobia at school. Thereby, the participants showed their concern about acting against unfair situations related to sexual orientation and identity violence at school. Lastly, in the question, “what should students do in order to incorporate LGBTQIA+ topics into the classroom?”, the participants highlighted the relevance of open-minded students in the classroom and the involvement of the students in the activities related to the LGBTQIA+ topics (31,6%).

### 3.2 Queer Sessions and Class Outcomes

In order to achieve the second objective of implementing a didactic sequence that contains queer pedagogy and LGBTQIA+ topics in a group of pre-service teachers, the following findings are presented in Table 4. The data was classified into categories, sub-categories, and groups (see Table 4).

**Table 4**

*Categories, sub-categories, and groups obtained from the Queer Sessions.*

Categories	Sub-categories	Groups	Answers' themes
Impact of the Queer Session	Students' comments, outcomes and contributions in the Queer Sessions	Globalization being positive for the LGBTQIA+ community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All the students who did the activity about Globalization and the community agreed that this phenomenon has helped the community to gain visibility and freedom of speech. Most of them mentioned the huge impact of Globalization on the community by being able to communicate and share with the world what the community is all about and to be prouder about. Also, it helped to spread consciousness and inclusion.</li> </ul>
		Globalization being negative for the LGBTQIA+ community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students who mentioned the negative aspects of Globalization in the community said that due to the ease of communication and social networking sites, homophobia and negative comments can reach the community easily. Also, it is easier to express hatred towards the community through social media and groups online.</li> </ul>
		Students said that homosexuality is not dangerous.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All the students agreed on this statement.</li> </ul>
		Students said that homosexuality is dangerous.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None of them agreed on this statement.</li> </ul>
		Students' homework and final project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only the students who attended classes did almost all the activities for homework.</li> <li>Students who seemed not completely connected with the classes they attended did not do all their homework.</li> <li>One of the students shared the story of her hairdresser who is also a transwoman and she mentioned that she is very proud of her.</li> <li>Only 6 groups presented the project on the Instagram account where 14 out of 19 did the final activity.</li> <li>The majority of the students who presented the final project were the ones interested in the Queer Sessions from the first class.</li> </ul>

Students' engagement with the Queer Sessions	Students' attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were 4 queer sessions in which more than 11 students attended, either presential or virtual.</li> <li>• There were 3 queer sessions in which less than 11 students attended, neither presential nor virtual.</li> </ul>
	Students' attention to the class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were 3 classes in which students were more distracted than in previous classes, looking at their phones and not paying much attention to the explanation. This happened mostly in the theoretical part of the class.</li> <li>• The majority of classes and activities kept the students engaged with the class, especially the games.</li> </ul>
	Students' participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were 5 students who always/most of the time wanted to participate in class discussion or to add something in class: These students were part of the community.</li> <li>• The other part of the students only talked when they were asked to do so.</li> </ul>

**3.2.1 Students' comments, outcomes, and contributions in the Queer Session**

There were some aspects necessary to assemble, such as comments, outcomes, and contributions, for answering the research question of this project. For instance, activities, pieces of homework, debates, and class discussions were needed to obtain the data needed. The first relevant discussion was related to globalization and the LGBTQIA+ community, and the second was about the student's thoughts on "Is homosexuality dangerous?". Firstly, all the participants agreed that globalization has positive and negative effects on the sexually diverse community. According to the students' answers, the positive effects are the visibility and freedom of speech that they have gained through the years due to the impact of social networking sites and media. On the one hand, students argued that globalization has a huge impact on the community by making them able to communicate and share with the world what their life is about. As a result of this, queer people gained the opportunity to express themselves and feel valued in society. On the other hand, the negative aspects, mentioned by the participants, were that globalization has also made it easier for homophobic people to damage members of the community. For instance, negative comments and cyberbullying reach queer people and this can affect their mental health

and emotions. Secondly, it is important to mention that in the fifth Queer Session, students were asked if homosexuality was an illness or dangerous for society. As a result, 100% of the ones that attended the lesson agreed that it is not, and this statement led to the conclusion that diverse sexualities should not be taken as sexual disorders, but as normal characteristics that human beings have.

In addition to those classroom discussions, the participants had to present various pieces of homework, and a final project for the class. Since the Queer Sessions were open spaces for the participants to contribute and express their thoughts freely, they could share anecdotes, thoughts, and perceptions of the topics presented in the sessions. For example, one student decided to introduce to the class a trans woman whose profession was a hairdresser. She was very proud of her, and the participants were involved with the activity, so they decided to share more personal anecdotes of people they knew. Other pieces of homework were also relevant, such as infographics, texts, and class presentations because they contributed to the overall class reflection on the topics. Finally, they had to present a final project that consisted of creating an Instagram account with an inclusive profile with posts, pictures, videos, and facts of the LGBTQIA+ community including tips related to inclusive education (see Appendix 31). Students at the end of the project presentation shared that they felt good and liked working with inclusive materials, mentioning the importance of promoting these types of topics in the English classroom and sharing the information with the worldwide society.

### ***3.2.2 Students' engagement with the Queer Sessions***

In general, the students who attended most of the classes seemed very interested in and engaged with the Queer Sessions. The participants liked engaging activities such as games, role-plays, and discussions they had during the queer Fridays. Even when there were only five

students that voluntarily participated in all the activities, the rest of the class remained focused on the tasks and their classmates' contributions. Other participants were sometimes on their phones, but they also got involved in class discussions. In spite of attendance was not the expected, more than eleven participants attended either face-to-face or in the virtual modality. In addition, it was found that activities such as games, discussions, and debates kept the students engaged to learn the procedures to implement these contents in their future EFL classes. On the other hand, the theoretical part of the class was not very attractive for the participants, but they still wanted to learn about the topics during the Queer Sessions.

### 3.3 Post-questionnaires

To achieve the third specific objective that is to evaluate the impact of the didactic sequence on the pre-service teachers' perceptions of queer pedagogy and LGBTQIA+ topics, the data obtained from the post-questionnaire were compiled in Table 5. To compare the information collected, the same categories, sections, and questions were used in the pre-and post-questionnaire tables.

**Table 5**

*Categories, Sections, Questions, Qualitative and Quantitative data from the post-questionnaire*

Categories	Sections	Question	Quantitative Data	Qualitative Data
Background influence on Parents LGBTQIA+ issues	Influence	Do you think that your socio-cultural background affected or influenced your way of thinking regarding the LGBTQIA+ community and issues?	91,7% It affected my way of thinking of the LGBTQIA+ community	"There are a lot of people that are close-minded, and they are all the time telling you that being part of the community is a sin and that is disgusting, so, when I was a kid I had the same perception as them."
			8,3% It did not affect my way of thinking of the LGBTQIA+ community	
		How so?	16.6% Discrimination and Insecurity	
			33.3% Religion	

		25% Respect and Tolerance for the community	
		8,3% Traditional Family	
		16,7% Culture	
		58.3% Strongly Agree	
Queer Materials for ELT	For me it would be okay to use LGBTQIA+ materials in my English classes.	41.7% Agree	
		0% Neutral	
		0% Disagree	
		0% Strongly Disagree	
		50% Strongly Agree	
	For me it would be okay to talk about LGBTQIA+ issues as the main topic in my English classes.	50% Agree	
		0% Neutral	
		0% Disagree	
		0% Strongly Disagree	
Queer pedagogy and EFL classes	Teaching English Classes	16.7% Homophobia	"Teaches (teach) respect and tolerance."
		33.3% Respect, Diversity and Empathy	"Using reading exercises like general information about the Community, their story, their life perception."
			"The topics would be about homophobia, and how to avoid that."
		16.7% Pronouns	"To know more about the diversity."
		33.3% History	"To know more about the community."
		41.7% Strongly Agree	
	English teaching education programs should contain LGBTQIA+ topics.	58.3% Agree	
		0% Neutral	
		0% Disagree	
		0% Strongly Disagree	
	Why do you think English teaching education programs	8.3% Relevant to the society	
		16.7% Helps with inclusion	

		should contain LGBTQIA+ topics?	25% Teach respect and tolerance	
			33.3% Teach awareness of the difference	
			16.7% Helps with visibility	
		How would you react if the teacher discusses LGBTQIA+ topics and an act of homophobia comes up (to you, to your partners, or friends)	50% Educate the students about the community	"Talk to the homophobic person in a way in which he or she doesn't feel attacked. It would be easier to make that person hear another perspective and understand that that behavior was not correct."
			16.7% Punishment	
			33.3% Support the victim	
Queer Sessions Impact	Feeling comfortable to talk about LGBTQIA+ topics in my EFL class	I felt comfortable discussing LGBTQIA+ topics during all the sessions.	66.7% Strongly Agree	
			33.3% Agree	
			0% Neutral	
			0% Disagree	
			0% Strongly Disagree	
		As a future educator, what would you do if a student part of the LGBTQIA+ community is being attacked or bullied for their sexual preferences by other students	33.3% Defend the victim	"I will stop the situation, I will make sure that the victim feels safe in the school and the bullies will receive a punishment."
			8.3% Leave the classroom	"I will try to talk with the students, try to create a safe place to talk and obviously try to look for a way in which I can help with the situation."
58.3% Talk to the bully	"First I'll talk and help the person who is receiving the attack and then talk separately with the bullies so that they understand that this situation should not occur again."			
		Which materials presented in the queer sessions caught your attention or were appealing to your likes?	58.3% Slides	
			66.7% Videos	
			8.3% Readings	
			33.3% Games	

### ***3.3.1 Parents' Influence***

The first question in the post-questionnaire was related to their thoughts on their personal background and the influence that can have on their perceptions of the community. After the Queer Sessions, most students (91,7%) were aware that their socio-cultural background affected their thoughts on the queer community (“It affected my way of thinking of the LGBTQIA+ community”). To explain, participants highlighted “Religion” as the main factor of influence in their households (33,3%) and the influence of “Culture” in their families’ perceptions (16,7%). Moreover, the participants changed their minds after the didactic sequence where they recognized that their parents’ perceptions influenced their ideas on the queer community as a kid. Nevertheless, they admitted they do not have that way of thinking anymore (“I was a kid, I had the same perception as them”)

### ***3.3.2 Queer Materials and Teaching English Classes***

In the next category, participants were asked if it was okay for them to use LGBTQIA+ materials in their future English classes. The answer had an increase of 11,3% in the strongly agree option from the pre-questionnaire, which meant that more students were willing to apply queer materials in their future EFL classes (58.3%). Besides, the rest of the sample agreed on that same statement (41.7%) showing an increase in the desire to start using diverse materials in class.

In the next question, students were asked if it was okay for them to talk about LGBTQIA+ issues as the main topic in their future English classes. It was revealed another increase of 7,9% in the strongly agree and agree on options respectively compared to the pre-questionnaire (50% both). Subsequently, in the following question “What would these topics be?”, most of the participants changed from knowing nothing (10,5%, and 26,3% in the pre-

questionnaire), to having more tools and topics to use in class. This could be seen in their answers “Respect, Diversity, and Empathy” (33.3%), “Homophobia” (16.7%), and some open responses such as “Using reading exercises like general information about the Community, their story, their life perception”. In addition, 41.7% of the students strongly agreed and 58.3% agreed on the statement “English teaching education programs should contain LGBTQIA+ topics”. For that reason, participants showed that they were taking into account the considerations and reflections made on the Queer Sessions related to educational policies.

Another essential point was present when the participants were asked if they thought that English teaching programs should address LGBTQIA+ topics. Some of the answers were: “Teach awareness of the difference (33.3%)”, “Teach respect and tolerance (25%)”, and “Help with visibility (16.7%)”. These factors contributed to the awareness that students should have on the importance of educating people on LGBTQIA+ issues. The last question from this category asked what the participants’ reaction would be if a teacher discusses LGBTQIA+ topics and an act of homophobia appears. Answers revealed that the sample would intervene by educating students about these issues and defending the victims. In comparison to the pre-questionnaire, the data went from 31,6% to 50% in the post-questionnaire (Educate students about the topic), and the other percentage decreased from 21.1% to 16.7% in the post-questionnaire (Punishment).

### ***3.3.3 Feeling comfortable talking about LGBTQIA+ topics in my EFL class***

The last category of the post-questionnaire addressed the impact of the Queer Sessions on the participants. Firstly, all students showed a positive perception when they were asked if they felt comfortable discussing LGBTQIA+ topics during the sessions. Their answers were very positive (strongly agree 66.7% and agree 33,3%). Subsequently, in the next question about their reactions towards a student being bullied for sexual differences by other students, the participants

presented a change in their answers. They replaced the probability modals (should, would) of the pre-questionnaire, with “I will...”, manifesting real engagement and dedication with the situations. Equally important, in the same statement, the students realized the significance of managing the problem from the beginning, rather than only assisting the affected students. To illustrate, participants answered, “Talk to the bully” (58,3%) and “Defend the victim” (33.3%). In other terms, after the Queer Sessions, their answers changed to be part of the solution and take action against homophobic situations (“Try to solve the problem”, and “Talk to the homophobic person”). The last question asked the participants to select the materials presented in the Queer Sessions that they liked the most, and their favorites were: Videos (66,7%), slides (58,3%), and games (33,3%). This section revealed that the participants liked the content and the activities planned for the classes.

**3.4 Interviews**

The qualitative data was gathered from ten semi-structured interviews which were conducted via Zoom and face-to-face at the end of the pedagogical intervention. Table 6 shows the main categories, sub-categories, and themes obtained after the coding process (see Table 6).

**Table 6**

*Categories, sub-categories, and answer themes obtained from the interviews.*

Categories	Sub-categories	Answers themes
Background influence on LGBTQIA+ issues	Possible future challenges or problems for the implementation of Queer topics in the EFL classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close-minded students, parents, and teachers towards the inclusion of queer content in the classes.</li> <li>• Sociocultural background of students.</li> <li>• Suggested national curriculum</li> </ul>
	Restriction and non-restriction of queer identities in the classroom at UIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classes are not discriminatory and inclusive</li> <li>• Homophobic comments by university teachers</li> <li>• Scarcity of queer content and material at university curricula</li> </ul>

Queer pedagogy and EFL classes	Students' and Educational Institutions role to promote awareness at UIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interest in joining an LGBTQIA+ activist group at the university</li> <li>• Usage of queer topics to generate awareness</li> <li>• Promotes awareness through dialogue</li> <li>• Support a Queer student as an ally</li> <li>• Suggestion of the inclusion of queer content in the curricula</li> <li>• Creation of institutional discussion spaces and activities.</li> <li>• Representation of LGBTQIA+ students in the university</li> <li>• To queer more the curriculum at university</li> </ul>
	Importance and benefits for the implementation of queer classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To learn how to be empathic</li> <li>• Eradication of homophobia</li> <li>• Fostering of respect and inclusion in the classroom</li> <li>• Usage of queer topics (pronouns) to promote inclusion</li> <li>• Personal anecdote of a participant's queer friend at school</li> <li>• Judgment-free environment</li> </ul>
Queer Sessions Impact	Opinions about the Queer Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General enjoyment of the Queer Sessions</li> <li>• Overall appreciation for the activities and thematics implemented during the sessions</li> <li>• Relevance of queer topics and materials to have a better insight into modern societies' situation</li> </ul>
	Change of perception towards the LGBTQIA+ community after the Queer Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants raised awareness and had a positive perception during and after class.</li> </ul>

The following section reports the results obtained during the interviews, making use of direct and paraphrased quotes from the participants' responses. To safeguard the personal identity of the interviewees, they are referred to by the use of letters, from A to J.

**3.4.1 Possible future problems for queer topics implementation in the EFL classrooms**

It was found that almost all the interviewed participants recognized the fact that the main problem of implementing queer pedagogy in the EFL class was people who were closed-minded. Among this group of people, most of the responses agreed that parents are the most closed-minded and they are the ones who would reject teaching LGBTQIA+ topics to their kids. As participant C stated:

I think I would face many problems with teaching kids due to their parents and their mindsets. They may think I am turning their kids into trans people, or that I am teaching them how to be gay or lesbian. It would be hard; they would question me: why are you teaching that to my children?

It could be highlighted from the response above that one cause of the parents' closed mindset is related to the fear of changing their children's sexuality and identity rather than just teaching respect and tolerance among differences. Similarly, other participants mentioned the fact that not only did the parents represent a problem for implementing queer topics and materials, but also teachers, school administrators, and even some students influenced that decision. They talked about how they could show their dissatisfaction with the idea of discussing queer issues in the classroom, whether for ethical reasons, taking care of the image of the institution, or having different ideologies. Eventually, a connection was found between the socio-economical background of the students and the bullying against sexual-diverse students according to the interviews. For example, participant G mentioned that students in public schools are often not mature enough to understand the importance of dealing with inclusive topics as they can make fun of these classes and LGBTQIA+ people. Finally, participant J revealed that the suggested ELT curriculum implemented in educational institutions makes it difficult for teachers to adequate inclusion of queer topics since it is already imposed by the National Ministry of Education (MEN).

From the interviewed pre-service teachers, six participants stated that they did not consider there was any form of restriction related to their sexual identities inside the Foreign Languages Teaching Program at UIS. They agreed on the fact that the classes have presented a free-discriminatory atmosphere. To illustrate, student B affirmed the following: "I do not think identities are restricted in our English program in terms of having discrimination and

homophobia. I haven't felt discriminated or seen discrimination from teachers or other students here in our career at least". In addition, another participant stated that they have felt good inside the classes, and even talked about experiences with professors who were kind and not closed-minded regarding sexuality or diverse topics.

Otherwise, the four remaining participants agreed that there is a restriction on queer identities in their academic program and the university in general. This restriction was mainly evidenced by the scarcity of spaces for discussion related to queer topics in the classes, in which participant E mentioned that they have not discussed LGBTQIA+ topics in any subject of the program. Interestingly, one of the pre-service teachers briefly mentioned that she has heard about homophobia cases from other academic programs at UIS. This is evidence of the problem of intolerance and discrimination that queer students experience in other academic programs, which the participant categorized as sexual identity restriction at UIS.

The answers were also linked to the issue of the class content and materials used for language learning inside their academic program and the university, based on topics focused on binary gender classifications, especially the male-female classification. These heteronormativity ideologies were the main cause of the lack of queer-themed classes and materials within the curricula. The above can be evidenced by participant C who said: "During the English classes there are only exercises and materials where the culture is represented in a male-female way, and there is no material that includes more diversity on these topics, as well as only straight roles...".

Finally, some participants answered that teachers were the ones in charge of creating an appropriate classroom environment where students do not feel restricted to share their sexual identities. In the same way, participants believe that teachers are the ones who take part in the

decision of implementing queer content and dealing with discrimination in the classroom. To exemplify, student F claimed: “For me, the professor is the one who makes the restriction and non-restriction in the classroom. Some of them are open-minded, but others have different treatments, or say comments, and don’t care about their students’ sexual identities”.

### ***3.4.2 Students and educational institutions' role to promote awareness at UIS***

Taking into account the participants’ role to spread awareness inside the university campus, participant A discussed the benefits that students would bring if they joined organizations in the university that fight for LGBTQIA+ people. Also, the same participant talked about the desire to conduct a similar investigation with the aim of fostering inclusion and a safe environment for queer students at UIS. This response showed the impact this investigation had on the sample, encouraging them to promote inclusion and interest in learning more about LGBTQIA+ studies. In the same way, participants C and D agreed that they would take advantage of the knowledge they acquired during the Queer Sessions to help other UIS students to know more aspects of the community. Also, this knowledge promotes awareness, sense of respect, even clarifies possible stereotypes and misconceptions they may have towards LGBTQIA+ students. They even expressed their willingness to spread more information on queer issues by publishing it on different social networks.

Equally, three participants showed the initiative of fostering awareness through dialogue, either by speaking directly to the university members or creating institutional spaces to discuss queer topics. Participant C supported these aspects by saying: “I’d try to spread awareness in my classmates by starting to talk to them, giving some speeches about respect and empathy, and telling them the importance of respecting others, that we are equal”. Furthermore, other

participants, answered that they would be interested in helping sexually diverse students as allies, which means that they would become people who support and defend LGBTQIA+ students against discrimination, abuse, and exclusion. In addition, participant E mentioned the importance of taking the initiative to assist the promotion of queer content and materials in the curriculum at UIS, with the aim of making students and teachers more familiar with the topics and aware of the importance of addressing diverse topics in the classroom.

Regarding the educational institution role, participant A pointed out the creation of institutional spaces, where these queer topics can be discussed and presented to university students. The student stated: “they can do a lot of scientific speeches, about sexuality, the history of the LGBTQIA+ community, the rates of homophobic violence in Colombia”. Moreover, participant B discussed the importance of queer representation in educational institutions and university positions. Similarly, participant A expressed how this representation would benefit other LGBTQIA+ students to feel more portrayed at the university. Furthermore, participant C expressed that universities should encourage the inclusion of queer pedagogy, and materials based on queer themes in the different academic programs.

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expressed that universities should encourage the inclusion of queer pedagogy, and materials based on queer themes in the different academic programs.

### ***3.4.3 Importance and benefits of the implementation of queer classes***

From the answers, the most mentioned benefit was how queer classes foster awareness, respect, and inclusion in the classroom for LGBTQIA+ students. Student F talked about this benefit by saying: “when people get used to these diverse topics, people can better understand the society in which we are in and be more polite”. In this response, the participant also mentioned the great impact Queer Sessions have on straight students while influencing them to be tolerant, supportive, and respectful with the LGBTQIA+ members.

In the same way, another benefit identified was the visibility that LGBTQIA+ students acquire when these topics are taught in the English classes. For example, participant F shared a personal anecdote of a transgender teenage girl in her classroom at high school. The participant described how this transgender girl felt discriminated and suffered from bullying. This happened because her classmates and teachers did not call her by her preferred female pronouns. Student F declared that if these queer topics had been mentioned at the participant's school at that time, the panorama of this trans girl would have improved and her identity would have been recognized by her classmates and teachers.

Finally, Participant E stated: “A benefit would be that students feel accepted and safe, avoiding feeling judged. Nowadays, LGBTQIA+ people feel judged and attacked by society, and the school is not the exception for this situation”. This implies that the incorporation of these topics significantly promotes safe environments where people can be themselves without being judged because of their sexual orientation.

#### ***3.4.4 Perceptions of the Queer Session***

For this part, the respondents expressed their impressions of the Queer Sessions where they mentioned how they felt when discussing LGBTQIA+ topics. Mainly, all the pre-service teachers reported overall positive thoughts on the ten Queer Sessions, describing them with words such as: "interesting", "outstanding" and "accurate". In addition, participants felt safe and comfortable to share their thoughts as Student C mentioned: "I had to say I feel very nice and comfortable with you. And I think we had a safe place to talk about these topics that are prominent in society". It could be evident the way these sessions fostered a sense of security and confidence among the future teachers to express their thoughts and beliefs.

With the implementation of the Queer Sessions and the activities done in class, the participants have now a bigger insight into inclusion and how it is relevant to understand better modern societies. To illustrate, student D stated: "I considered that these topics presented in the class are necessary for teachers and the society".

#### ***3.4.5 Perceptions changed after the Queer Sessions***

Out of the ten pre-service teachers interviewed, three of them accepted that they had a positive switch in their perspective about the LGBTQIA+ community and queer topics. Student B mentioned the following: "I think the perspective changed in a positive way, I would say. I know more about the community and understand better the national situation of it". Similarly, student A mentioned that she felt more aware of the importance of learning and teaching queer topics. The participant also stated that after the sessions, she gained more pedagogical topics and tools to plan classes with a queer perspective.

The seven remaining pre-service teachers agreed on the fact that their perspective before the sessions was already positive, and there was a reinforcement of their perceptions after the

implementation. To exemplify, student D stated: “Well, in fact, it didn't change. I already had similar ideas before. But I learned things I didn't know about the movement”.

### **3.5 Discussion**

#### ***3.5.1 Background influence on LGBTQIA+ issues***

The first specific objective of this research was to analyze pre-service teachers' initial thoughts of queer pedagogy and the incorporation of queer topics in an EFL classroom. Considering the results obtained during the analysis of the three different instruments, it was evident that most of the participants (91,7%) agreed that their socio-cultural background affected their perspectives regarding the LGBTQIA+ people. This influence can be both negative and positive, where the determinant factor lies mainly in the people who were part of the students' environment, mostly represented by their parents, relatives, friends, classmates, and teachers. Comprising with the negative notions, the students whose relatives had a closed mindset against queer issues directly affected the participants' thoughts on the queer population and had a big disinterest as well as a lack of knowledge about the queer citizens. For this reason, learners felt insecure about expressing themselves freely in the classroom and in other settings. While the participants who had a queer-inclusive environment based on respect, and tolerance towards diversity, had the opportunity to express their sexuality without prejudice. Equally important, participants who considered themselves as part of the LGBTQIA+ community and people surrounded by them, presented a positive perspective towards the LGBTQIA+ movement and its members, as well as a greater interest in implementing queer topics in their future classes.

#### ***3.5.2 Queer Pedagogy and EFL Classes***

This category also considers the aforementioned specific objective. Due to the continuous process of analysis, it could be identified that the participants at the beginning of the didactic

sequence had mostly a positive perception towards LGBTQIA+ topics (42,1%). However, a vast majority of the sample did not know how to include queer pedagogy in their EFL classes (36,8%). The importance relies on the idea that future teachers have to acquire knowledge about queer pedagogy. To exemplify, one of the students' responses was: "It is necessary for all of society but especially for us as teachers, and it is crucial for inclusion in the classroom".

Also, the participants discussed the relevance of upgrading the educational policies when it comes to queer topics, especially in the ELT field, because it is almost non-existent nowadays. According to the participants, there is a lack of knowledge of this topic not only for university students but professors and administrative staff. For example, the students expressed: "We don't have this kind of content", "The restriction is mainly represented in the lesson plans of the subjects, syllabus, and the materials", or "professors tend to think that heteronormativity is the only thing that exists". In addition, the participants declared the importance of educational institutions to promote awareness by having inclusive spaces and activities related to LGBTQIA+ topics. Other essential points are to count on the representation of the sexual-diverse community in the university and to include queer topics in the curriculum to create safe environments for learners.

### ***3.5.3 Impact of the Queer Sessions***

The following section evaluates the didactic sequence impact on the pre-service teachers' perceptions of queer pedagogy and LGBTQIA+ topics. Firstly, the participants' perceptions towards gender-related issues, homophobia, and gender discrimination in the classroom changed in a positive way. Students admitted that before the Queer Sessions, they would have not been able to deal with homophobia in their English classes. However, after these sessions, the participants had a better insight regarding how to react in situations where the integrity of a

student is violated because of gender and sexual differences. In addition to this, the didactic sequence encouraged them about the importance of discussing queer and inclusive topics in the EFL classroom to challenge gender and sexual discrimination in the educational field. Likewise, the classes encouraged the participants to open about LGBTQIA+ topics as they were able to express their different points of view of these issues and contribute with personal anecdotes about the queer community.

Regarding the impact of the materials used in the didactic sequence, the participants expressed that all the queer activities, resources, and topics represented useful, clear, and reliable information to acquire knowledge and raise awareness regarding the LGBTQIA+ landscape. As the participants stated in the different data collection materials, EFL classes with an inclusive approach foster respect and inclusion not only for students but also for educators. Hence, the Queer Sessions had an important and valuable impact on the pre-service teachers' thoughts of queer pedagogy and LGBTQIA+ topics in the English classroom.

#### **4. Conclusions**

To reach the general objective of this research, to what extent the implementation of queer pedagogy in the EFL classroom impacts the perceptions of pre-service English teachers at UIS, it is relevant to highlight that the Queer Sessions changed the perceptions, ideas, and overall knowledge of the participants when it comes to teaching, applying, or using queer materials and queer pedagogy in the EFL classroom. As a result of this study, there was a positive and meaningful impact for future teachers. Correspondingly, participants affirmed that the content and activities presented changed their paradigms about teaching English with gender-diverse and inclusive topics. Even though some participants were open-minded from the beginning, with the

use of the Queer Sessions, they affirmed they acquired new tools, topics (such as pronouns and queer concepts), and materials to use in the EFL classroom, which they had no previous knowledge before. Thereby, implementing queer-friendly classes will help those pre-service teachers to avoid becoming that “homophobic teacher” they all had once in their lives, as it was declared during the Queer Sessions. Therefore, it is considered essential that a queer didactic sequence is carried out in the university’s curriculum. This will allow students to understand and have the tools and materials to provide safe environments for sexually diverse students.

This favorable change in the perspectives of future English teachers who want to implement queer themes in their future EFL classes was also evidenced in a study carried out by Güney (2018) in Turkey. In Güney’s investigation, more than 80% of the participants were in favor of the inclusion of queer topics in their classes, after participating in a didactic sequence like the one applied in this study. Equivalently, in this current research, 100% of the participants, either agreed or strongly agreed on the implementation of LGBTQIA+ topics in the class. This corroborated the hypothesis proposed for this study which affirmed that the didactic sequence had a positive impact regarding the need of including queer pedagogy in their future EFL classes. Additionally, in the research paper by Guijarro-Ojeda and Ruiz-Cecilia (2013), the authors also discuss how families represented the principal background influence on the perceptions of the LGBTQIA+ community. Comparatively, both studies encouraged a change in the institutional policies to implement queer topics and foster gender awareness in the classroom. In conclusion, it was noticed that the majority of worldwide pre-service EFL teachers exposed to queer content, tend to develop a common sense of eagerness to implement gender-inclusive topics in their future classes. The desire emerged after being exposed to the didactic sequence (Queer Sessions).

### **5. Academic and Research Contribution**

To establish an inclusive environment in education for distinct sexual and gender orientations, educators must contribute by implementing queer topics and LGBTQIA+ related materials. Applying inductive or deductive queer pedagogy in education can make a difference for those students affected by gender and sexual discrimination. Despite the fact that homophobia is still part of education and society, a meaningful and inclusive methodology can assist teachers to face these challenges and create an inclusive environment for all the students. Therefore, the research project was conducted due to the lack of knowledge about gender inclusion in the educational field in Colombia and it serves as a starting point for future investigation. Besides, it was fundamental to explore more the pre-service teachers' perceptions of LGBTQIA+ issues to create a comprehensive atmosphere for every student with a diverse sexual and gender orientation in the EFL classroom. Moreover, future investigators should consider that this project did not count with a large number of participants and the sessions did not exceed 10 classes. For this reason, it is suggested to implement a longer didactic sequence with a bigger representative sample to gain more reliable results.

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