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Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación
Facultad de Historia, Geografía y Letras
Departamento de Inglés

AN EXPLORATION OF INCIDENTAL VOCABULARY ACQUISITION OF ENGLISH
LEXICON THROUGH TIKTOK EXPOSURE IN ENGLISH PEDAGOGY STUDENTS,
AND THE POSSIBLE CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS.

TESIS PARA OPTAR AL TÍTULO DE PROFESOR(A) DE INGLÉS

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SANTIAGO DE CHILE, ENERO DE 2025



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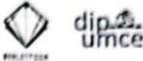

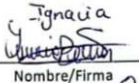

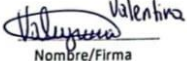
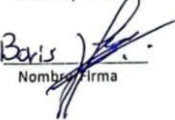
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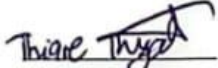

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Dedicatoria

We dedicate this arduous work to Paul Nation, a character that has been forced upon us due to the nature of the research. Snoop dogg, for literal inspiration. To the *talented, brilliant, amazing, awesome, show stopping, spectacular, never the same, totally unique, completely not ever been done before, unafraid to reference or not reference, put it in a blender, , (...), give birth to it* don Luis Daniel Ortiz, for the emotional, academical, and literal support. Jools Lebron (demure girl). And finally but not less important the humongous work that we put on this awfully beautiful research that took our blood, sweat and tears.

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-Snoop dogg, 2021

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Abstract

The acquisition of vocabulary through social media generates multiple questions, such as its effectiveness, and the globalization of American culture. The latter can be seen through the acquisition of slang specifically, since this is a sociolinguistic phenomenon. Questions arise regarding the acquisition of culture, and how this could affect the learning of a second language through social media, more specifically TikTok. In order to gather information, there is the need to create a corpus of the acquired slang inside the selected sample; as well as to understand how this lexicon became a part of their day-to-day conversations. The selected sample was chosen by their demographic, English level; whereas the information was gathered through a survey. The results show an important quantity of learned slang obtained not only from TikTok, but also from different social media, where the participants were able to remember and use these words in a sentence. From these results, we can analyse the relevance of social media, as well as the incidental learning that this can generate. For future research, there is the need to use a narrowed demographic sample, and be aware of their personal niche interests and surroundings, since these elements can directly affect the results of their acquired slang.

Key words: Slang, TikTok, Incidental Language Acquisition, Culture.

Resumen

La adquisición de vocabulario a través de redes sociales produce variados cuestionamientos, tales como la efectividad que posee y la globalización de la cultura americana. Lo mencionado

anteriormente puede verse reflejado en la adquisición de jergas específicamente, considerando que se produce como un fenómeno sociolingüístico. Esto genera una problemática respecto a la adquisición de cultura, y cómo puede afectar el aprendizaje de un nuevo lenguaje a través de redes sociales, específicamente TikTok. En orden a reunir información, está la necesidad de crear un corpus de la jerga adquirida dentro de la muestra seleccionada; así como entender la forma en que este léxico se transformó en parte de conversaciones diarias. La muestra seleccionada fue elegida mediante su demografía, el nivel de inglés; mientras que la información fue reunida por medio de una encuesta. Los resultados muestran una cantidad importante de jergas aprendidas, las cuales fueron obtenidas no sólo mediante TikTok sino de diferentes redes sociales donde los participantes pudieron recordar y usar estas palabras en una oración. A través de estos resultados podemos analizar la relevancia de las redes sociales, además del aprendizaje incidental del lenguaje que estas pueden generar. Para futuras investigaciones es necesario usar una muestra demográfica más estrecha, y estar consciente de sus intereses personales y sus alrededores, debido a que estas variantes pueden afectar directamente los resultados de las jergas adquiridas.

Palabras clave: Jerga, TikTok, Adquisición del Lenguaje, Cultura.

Introduction

The field of language acquisition has been tackled by a plethora of authors throughout years of findings and developments. Within this field, the concept of incidental vocabulary acquisition necessarily emerges. Where authors such as Paul Nation (2008) and Wesche and Sima (1994) come up with their own theory of levels of acquisition, finding common fields and differences.

The eruption of social media has arguably enriched the complexity of the field (Brienne et al., 2012), giving researchers the opportunity to deepen their knowledge. Previous research has focused on vocabulary acquisition through different cultural sources, such as music (Schwarz, 2013). However, social media remains a fairly new source of culture, ever-evolving and nuanced. Furthermore, one of the social media apps that has arguably had an impact on language acquisition is TikTok. This notion is supported by Yang (2020) who states that TikTok can be used as complementary aid for English teaching. Yet, there have not been recent findings on the impact of the app regarding language acquisition. Moreover, there are little to no findings on the cultural influence through the incidental acquisition of American words and idioms. Specifically in the Chilean context of English language learning, the literature has yet not fully addressed the considerable impact of social media applications such as TikTok on learners of the target language. This gap in the literature grants this investigation the opportunity to explore a set of branches such as the acquisition of slang, along with the possibility of cultural acquisition through the latter, and viable ways in which this erupting source of vocabulary could be used in the context of English teaching.

The present research will firstly attempt to gather a corpus of words and idioms that were acquired through TikTok, as well as the perception of the participants regarding the amount of time and English content they consume daily. Secondly, this information will be organized regarding their understanding of the lexicon they mention. And finally, the data will be analyzed considering the cultural implications of the acquisition, the pedagogical implications of this type of incidental learning, and its relation with globalization, drill learning, and the participants' niche interests. Furthermore, the limitations of this study will be mentioned, as well as the research that could be done in the future.

Objectives

2.1 Main Objective:

- To explore the incidental vocabulary acquisition of English words and idioms through TikTok exposure in English pedagogy students, and the possible cultural implications.

2.2 Specific Objectives:

- Gather a corpus of words and idioms, based on the incidental learning through TikTok of English pedagogy students at UMCE.
- Theorize around the incidental acquisition of American culture through the incidental acquisition of words and idioms.
- Identify plausible pedagogical uses of the incidental acquisition of English through social media.

Literature Review

3.1 Vocabulary acquisition

There has been a debate throughout the decades regarding language acquisition; authors such as Brown in 1980 and Chomsky in 1998 have brought different perspectives. For instance, Brown directly connects the learners' context and the target language's culture in order to acquire a language (Brown, 1980) taking into consideration the advantages and disadvantages of both contexts, which seems to be realistic when it comes to learning a language. Chomsky proposed an innate genetic skill that would allow the ability of learning a language in children (Chomsky, 1998), which even though is farther from second language acquisition, it can be used to explain the nature of acquiring new vocabulary easily.

On the other hand, Paul Nation proposes a series of methodologies that should be used in order to learn a language, such as meaning-focused input and meaning-focused output, which in summary refers to focusing on the conveyed message when reading and listening as well as in speaking and writing (Nation, 2008). Plus, the author also focuses on deliberate attention to pronunciation and spelling, including grammar exercises and explanation (Nation, 1996). This theory is centered on acquiring English as a second language, whereas other authors focus on language acquisition in general.

Finally, Wesche and Sima (1994) propose different categories to acquire a language, specifically, vocabulary. Nevertheless, they are not the first to propose categorization of vocabulary and vocabulary exercises; consequently, they use the previous literature to create their theory. In their investigation, they give levels of acquisition related to the use a learner can give to those words. Those levels are known as the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS). This scale recognizes five different levels, being 1) Selective attention, in which they only need to notice the word; 2) Recognition, meaning the knowledge of the meaning of the word or associating it with a synonym; 3) Manipulation, which is being able to use the target words in a sentence; 4) Interpretation, related to a more semantic level, meaning the relation of the target words with others; and 5) Production, which relates to re-encountering the word to use it in multiple contexts, understanding its meaning and use. Each of these levels is connected with an exercise, in which the learner would use the target vocabulary. Consequently, by achieving

the activity related to the level, the category is considered complete. This last theory is connected with first language acquisition, but can be used for second language acquisition too. Nevertheless, both first and second language acquisition have multiple theories and approaches, for which these authors give us a broad definition.

3.1.1 Informal and incidental acquisition.

The main concern regarding language acquisition for this research is incidental learning. In the matter of informal and incidental learning, Watkins and Marsick (2001) first mention the difference between formal and informal learning, giving incidental learning a position within informal learning; in contrast with Storz, Maillet, Brienne, Chotel and Dang (2012), who add one category named “non-formal learning”. These authors agree on their definitions of formal learning, being “typically institutionally sponsored” (Marsick and Watkins, 2001, p. 25). Furthermore, we can find a solid foundation for the concept in these authors’ research.

When it comes to informal learning, these authors’ definitions show a few key differences. Marsick and Watkins (2001) define it as “usually intentional but not highly structured” (p. 25), since institutions can create voluntary learning instances; whereas Brienne recognizes it as a learning opportunity that is intrinsically linked to the external sources of learning which are not intentional, where the aim is not education but it might be its result. On the other hand, Marsick and Watkins (2001) highlight incidental learning as something that can occur in multiple scenarios, even while practicing formal learning, but which is not always noticed when it happens. Therefore, what Brienne understands as informal learning is what Marsick and Watkins call “incidental learning”. Summarizing, the main difference between informal and incidental learning is that informal learning can be planned by any institution or person, whereas incidental learning is not planned, but an accident that can go unnoticed (Marsick and Watkins, 2001). Some instances in which this phenomenon can occur is through music and socialization. According to Schwarz’s case study in 2013, “learners acquired new words incidentally while engaging with pop songs” (p.27), meaning that incidental learning can happen by exposing students to music in the target language. Moreover, Pavia, Webb and Faez reached a similar conclusion in 2019, proving in a different case study that listening to music can be used for vocabulary acquisition in a pedagogical area (Pavia, Faez, Webb, 2019).

To follow up the aforementioned case studies and apply the concept of incidental learning in the current investigation, there must be an understanding of incidental vocabulary acquisition. This refers to the phenomenon of learning vocabulary while trying to do something else while exposed to the language. This concept has been used in multiple studies from different authors. For instance, Tang (2020) shows the different situations in which this phenomenon can happen during a few of his studies. Also, the same author mentions that in the past few years, the idea of incidental vocabulary acquisition has been growing and gaining importance in the learning of a second language over the learning of grammar. Tang shows how incidental vocabulary acquisition can happen through reading, listening and other activities. Furthermore, he concludes that over time the activities more connected to multimedia have proven to be more successful in the task. Based on these distinctions, and the aforementioned study, we can categorize learning the language through personal interests as informal learning, and this can occur through a myriad of outlets, such as music, movies or media in general.

3.2 Drill learning

In their work, Kani and S'ad describe drill learning as the frequent repetition of (mostly) physical tasks in which the receptor creates a response to them (2015). The person automates a response that would be given to a command previously learned by the repetition of it. Furthermore, Aini, et al. (2020) state that drilling is used in schools as a tool to enhance the improvement of listening skills. They also mention that people tend to learn something they did not know after looking at a model or a pattern that shows how to do it. In the matter of language acquisition, this methodology can be seen as well. Mendrofa and Wijaya (2022), in their case study, discussed that the benefits of drilling repetition provide learners with intensive practice in hearing and saying word phrases that can nurture memorization and automation of common language patterns. All these studies agree on the fact that repetition plays an important role when it comes to learning something new, even a language. The person automates a response that would be given to a command previously learned by the repetition of it.

In that regard, social media is a good example. Among the different characteristics of social media, we can find the catchiness of its content. This is not only because it shows the content of your interest but also because of how often it is shown to you. Said content can be

repeated so many times that it can reach a point where it is learnt or just memorized. In their work, Aho (2022) researched incidental vocabulary acquisition through TikTok and assumed repetition has an impact in this matter. In their results, it was visible that their sample was able to recognize a specific word due to how many times it was repeated in a small window of time. This reinforces their idea that repeating words in a shorter time frame could positively impact the learning of new vocabulary as the constant exposure to a word in a certain period of time facilitates the acquisition of the word. It can be said that the same happens when people are immersed in social media and start learning expressions, idioms, or just words that are used by the mainstream media.

3.2.1 Comprehension.

Although in the VKS recognition is mentioned at first level, there is a difference between recognizing and retrieving information from the learner's memory without input. This difference can be found in the definition of comprehension. For comprehension to happen, there must be a previous knowledge of the vocabulary used in the input presented to the learner in the target language (Rodgers, 2013). Furthermore, it has also been mentioned that in order to learn the form of a word, repetition is important, while in order to learn the meaning of the words, context is imperative (Webb, 2008). For a second language learner, in *The Cambridge Handbook of Second Language Acquisition* (2013) it is mentioned that "the input has to be decoded and the patterns discovered have to be stored for future use in decoding and in language production" (Herschensohn, Young-Scholten, 2013, p. 116). Simply put, according to different authors in the mentioned work, there are multiple processes differently named by which the learner internalizes the different input, and these processes must happen to be able to express what has been learnt previously. Therefore, for a learner to retrieve vocabulary from their 'memory' or 'knowledge' and use it properly in the target language, comprehension must happen first.

3.3 Media and external influences

Social media has been described multiple times by different authors. For instance, Dewing recognizes social media in The Canadian Library Parliament as a “wide range of internet-based and mobile services that allow users to participate in online exchanges, contribute user-created content, or join online communities” (2012, p. 1). Also, in the journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, Boyd and Ellison (2008) from the School of Information University of California-Berkeley and Department of Telecommunication, Information Studies; and Media Michigan State University respectively define the concept of social network sites similarly, as:

Web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site. (p. 211)

Furthermore, social media has been also briefly defined in the study The Correlation between the Use of Social Media and Academic Writing Mastery of the English Education Students as “an online communication tool which can be used to get and to share information with others” (Hayati, Sari, Suganda, 2019, p. 323). As is, it allows free use and interaction with people, depending on the user’s will. Although different authors focus on different features of social media or social network sites, the intended focus here is the freedom that any person has to post and share anything with other people, on a worldwide level. For example, content creators can upload their content to different social media at once, or videos found in one social media can be downloaded and uploaded to another platform by different users, from TikTok to Instagram for instance and vice versa.

This user freedom phenomenon can be appreciated in most social networks, including the social media in which this work is focused: TikTok. This social network allows interaction between users, and has been explained as an app which allows video authors to create content on any topic, with a length ranging from 15 seconds to five minutes (Yang, 2020). Furthermore, in the same work, some facts are mentioned that are relevant for its popularity: “According to the International market data, TikTokraked seventh for top ten applications by

all-time downloads worldwide from 2010-2019(...) and ranked second for applications downloads worldwide in Apple store and Google play in 2019(...)" (p. 162). Also, authors such as Alghameeti (2022) explain its functioning a little further, stating that "TikTok shows videos based on users' interests, which is determined by their likes and searches" (p. 17). Pitre (2023) attempts to describe the algorithm as narratives that can be followed, which are presented to users based on the videos they consume. Furthermore, these denominated narratives are content with similar ideas, styles, words, etc. Summarized, this social media can fit into the definitions mentioned above: it is a worldwide internet-based application, which allows interaction amongst users, through messages and videos of varying length and content, created by people. Just as TikTok users speak in different languages, these videos may be produced in any language, also featuring optional subtitles, added manually or automatically. Furthermore, as will be described in 3.5, it has been considered as an English learning tool.

3.4 The role of niche interests in language acquisition

When discussing the influence of social media in the acquisition of language, we have to consider how social media has impacted self-expression and identity. One of the topics that is relevant to the discussion is the role of personal or niche interests in the process of receiving the L2. To explore this, the literature presents relevant arguments that link language/vocabulary acquisition with the personal interests of the English language learners (Schwarz, 2013). What we refer to as personal interests is all forms of art and self-expression that people naturally gravitate towards. Furthermore, Min Z. & Yiqun L., (2021) state that:

Personalized services are no longer limited to satisfying the common interests of general users but are increasingly tailored to satisfy the specific interests of long-tail and individual users. Providing users with niche items that meet their needs has become one of the most challenging and vital issues in recent years. (p. 1)

In terms of possible sources of incidental learning, one cultural element that has been already linked to English language learning is music. Music, being a form of entertainment as well as a community experience, is often consumed by the listeners in the language it was produced and cannot be separated from its cultural background. Furthermore, TikTok's appeal as an app is closely linked to music (Min & Yiqun, 2021), making this form of entertainment a relevant point to discuss. Nie K, Fu J, Rehman H and Zaigham GHK (2022) conducted a

study centered around exposure to English-language music in relation to incidental vocabulary learning, focusing on three dimensions: word recognition, meaning association, and grammar identification. The results suggest that, although exposure to music featuring English lyrics would successfully help students acquire a myriad of features of the language, word recognition seems to be an aspect which is not only more improved but also maintained through time (Nie et al., 2022). Interestingly, the study concludes that the more times a song was heard did not necessarily mean that more vocabulary information was obtained, but what words were acquired seemed to be sustained through the weeks (Nie et al., 2022). That being said, the authors conclude that listening to music in the L2 does in fact show beneficial influence in vocabulary knowledge due to the fact that music appeals to learners' interests and may result in subconscious vocabulary acquisition (Nie et al., 2022). Similarly, Marlene Schwarz (2013) states in their research that pop songs are a source of vocabulary learning based on its primary audience: Young people in their formative years (Schwarz, 2013). The author suggests to the reader that using pop music with English lyrics would be a useful tool to support vocabulary learning, encouraging language teachers to take advantage of this opportunity to compel their students to further their knowledge outside of the classroom while enjoying the output (Schwarz, 2013). Furthermore, Schwarz (2013) makes a point out of discussing the opportunity for learning in leisure activities, relating its results to other forms of media:

The value of incidental vocabulary learning from out-of-school English input lies in the fact that it is an enjoyable way for students to expand their vocabulary knowledge by engaging with media such as songs, computer games or television shows that they are genuinely interested in (p. 38).

To bring the discussion back to social media, Storz, Maillet, Brienne, Chotel and Dang (2012) also discuss in their study how the students' level of Language proficiency has a positive correlation to the time spent engaging in English language media and social networks. This point relates back to the notion that leisure time invested in L2 media presents an untapped potential for language educators who want their students to further their vocabulary learning (Schwarz, 2013). Moreover, we have to establish a link between social media and personal interests, such as music, and that presents itself in fandom culture. As already mentioned, music as experienced by L2 learners may be a useful tool to further English vocabulary development, as well as the experience of consuming it in social contexts. Malik, Z., & Haidar, S. (2021) explore in their research the online interactions of the communities around artists and music, specifically K-pop music fandoms in social media. The online communities built

around these shared interests are truly international, and usually include people who use English as a second or foreign language (Malik & Haidar, 2021). The authors conclude that language acquisition in this context is common, and incidental in nature, due to the fact that learning in these communities is peripheral to the actual purpose of said communities, which would be to create a culture around the shared personal interest (Malik & Haidar, 2021). These instances of language acquisition usually arise from the necessity to understand certain figurative expressions used by the international community, internalizing them and using them after engaging with them in context (Malik & Haidar, 2021). This specific connection to fandom culture could be theoretically applied to any community online outside music discourse, regardless of its platform. Language acquisition by engaging with a shared interest does not necessarily have to be linked to musical artists, not even art at all: movie discourse, political discussion, popular culture and many more personal interests that people may have can share their space in online communities, as long as they feature the English language not as its primary focus, but a tool to engage with the international community.

Moreover, to establish our choice of demographic to study, we decided to look for data that would point to a specific group of people that would use social media, especially TikTok, and possibly acquire the L2 while engaging with it. Tarihoran, N., Fachriyah, E., Tressyalina, & Sumirat, I. R. (2022) conducted a study on the impact of social media on code-mixing, based on the fact that specifically Indonesian Gen Z use English in their daily vocabulary along with their native language (2022). The phenomenon of code-mixing is categorized by the authors as a sociolinguistic phenomenon in which grammatical elements from two languages are used by the users within the same sentence or utterance (Tarihoran et al., 2022).

While the study focuses on Indonesian Gen Z, the specific insight that the authors provide on the impact of social media on the youth's daily use of language is relevant across the board. The study concludes that the internet and its international community had a significant impact on Indonesian Gen Z, creating a communal experience around the use of mixed code (Tarihoran et al., 2022). Among the factors that motivated the students that were part of the research to engage in code-mixing, there is making up for lack of words, displaying knowledge of technology and culture, and showing their educated backgrounds (Tarihoran et al., 2022). These conclusions serve as a base understanding of how social media impacts the language use of Generation Z, the primary age group of our participants.

3.5 Social media as a learning tool

Furthermore, although its use in learning is recent, social media has been mentioned as useful for English acquisition. According to Dhanya G., “It helps the students learn faster and in an efficient, interesting and an interactive manner” (2016 p. 106), accompanied by Abdullah, whose study concludes that TikTok is a useful learning tool, considering it effective for English vocabulary learning (2022). Equally, mastering vocabulary would not only help second language speakers in understanding messages better but making meaningful utterances too (Zainal & Rahmat, 2020) and social media is accepted for vocabulary acquisition specifically. This can be understood in Webb’s research: as has been mentioned in the literature review, Webb (2008) highlights the importance of context for the inference of words’ meanings, and the importance of repetition for words’ forms. As for the social media described previously, it contains both features when considering trends, for instance, also supporting the positive correlation between social media and English writing. Moreover, social media keeps students updated about the language and its evolution since it is changing and modernizing all the time, just as Zainal and Rahmat (2020, p. 3) stated “the growth in popularity of social media creates internet slang which are known as jargons used on these sites. To express themselves in a quick manner, they use these jargons”. Lastly, Abbasova, as cited in the last mentioned study, also agrees, stating that “the use of social media also provides positive effects such as pronunciation improvement and vocabulary enlargement” (2016, p. 2)

As the learning of vocabulary is oblique, social media is considered useful for writing skills too. The learning of this has also been studied and approved: To begin with, regarding English writing, Hayati, Sari and Suganda have studied the correlation between this and social media. Its outcomes referred to it as a positive correlation, stating that “students can improve their writing skill through social media (...). They can take so many benefits from social media in order to gain their vocabulary, grammar, and other knowledge” (2019, p. 321). At the same time, one of their bases was the study of Belal in 2014, which was based on a similar research objective. Equally, this last study, conducted in eight different universities, found out “that digital social media has several influences in the writing and speaking of tertiary level students with the positive effects outweighing the negative effects.” (p. 2). Sumarazing, social media can be used to develop and improve English writing skills. On the other hand, concerning English speaking, Brienne et. al. (2012) shows the positive association between the amount

of time a student spends on social media and their English level. They attribute this correlation to informal learning, and suggest that it happens in the consumption of media in English.

Moreover, social media provides contextualized information and authentic interaction. As noted by Dhanya G in 2016, “social media provides the learner with the possibility of participating in actual, real-time, relevant conversations taking place online, and practicing the target language with or without the help of an experienced teacher by his or her side” (p. 106). Moreover, Zainal and Rahmat agree that: “social media provides students with the usage of words in an authentic real-life situation” (2020, p. 2) Finally, a last aspect of the use of social media as a learning tool is the perspective of the students on it. The students of Alghameeti’s investigation have a good perception of using social media as a learning tool, specifically TikTok: “The results of this study indicate a positive attitude towards using this tool to improve Saudi secondary school learners’ vocabulary due to the various features that TikTok provides to facilitate the learning of new vocabulary.” (2022, p. 17)

3.6 Slang definition and its relation to culture

For this specific research, one of the central concepts is slang, more specifically slang acquisition. In literature, there have been a few authors that have given this concept a definition, for instance as Izmaylova et al. (2017) say “slang is one of the most interesting and at the same time difficult phenomena of language” (Izmaylova et al. 2017, p.76). Moreover, when talking about the concept, many authors go back to 1978, to Dumas and Lighter, who said that “annoyance and frustration await anyone who searches the professional literature for a definition or even a conception of slang” (p.5). Therefore, it is not an easy concept to work with; nevertheless, one author found a definition in literature with which she agreed that says that slang is “an ever changing set of colloquial words and phrases that speakers use to establish or reinforce social identity or cohesiveness within a group or with a trend or fashion in society at large” (Matiello, 2005, p.9). Plus, the Oxford and Cambridge dictionaries have given a definition of their own. Oxford’s learner dictionary says “very informal words and expressions that are more common in spoken language, especially used by a particular group of people” (2024, n.d.), whereas Cambridge defines it as a “very informal language that is usually spoken rather than written, used especially by particular groups of

people” (Cambridge dictionary, 2020, n.d.). Even though these do not differ greatly from each other, they coincide in three big statements: 1) Slang is very informal, 2) it is spoken rather than written, and 3) It is used by particular groups of people. Additionally, Drake in 1980 tried to add elements to Dumas and Lighter’s theory; by stating that the previous authors neglected the fact that slang is a sociolinguistic phenomenon, and therefore it is related to social behavior. Mattiello agrees with this point, since she affirms that slang is a process that enlarges the potential of a language (Mattiello, 2005). Besides, she adds that the concept “is a time-restricted ephemeral phenomenon” (Mattiello, 2005, p.5), referring to the constant change of it. Taking all of these contributions into consideration, slang is considered to be an ever-changing phenomenon which is directly connected to human behavior, used in informal scenarios.

One important part of this definition that must be understood is sociolinguistics, since this word can give a great understanding of the creation of slang. Holmes (2001) agrees that sociolinguistics explores the correlation between language and society, meaning it is concerned not only with how it is affected by education and economy, but also with keeping languages in use, the transformation of words, multilingual societies, and even the creation of new languages, such as creole. The concept of slang would fall within the concept of “language shift and death”, which to Holmes (2001) is the evolution of words, and how quite a few of these die within certain periods of time.

3.7 Globalization and imperialism

“(…) You think that you fell out of a coconut tree? You exist in the context of all in which you live and come and what came before you” (Harris, 2024), said the former vice-president of the United States of America, speaking on the importance of cultural influences on the development of young minds. This famous line, complemented by Brown propounds the idea that context is important when regarding language; indeed, it cannot be ignored. (Brown, 1980)

In other words, this research will include characteristics that allow the reader to understand what entails the effects of context. This involves the need to learn a new language, the reasons as to why English, and what is considered the correct variation of dialect to learn,

and why globalization works as a thread to connect all the statements above. In this document, globalization refers to all “available goods and services, or social and cultural influences, gradually become [sic] similar in all parts of the world” (Cambridge, 2024. n/d). This means that everything that builds a society, such as social norms, dialect, economics, politics, etc, is affected by it, becoming then a matter of which society possesses the predominant characteristics over the others. Moreover, McGrew refers to globalization as “a historic process which engenders a significant shift in the spatial reach of networks and systems of social relations to transcontinental or interregional patterns of human organization, activity and the exercise of power” (1998, p.327), referring to globalization as a process that causes changes in the current idiosyncrasy of the world. To complement said definition, Robertson expresses that Globalization is “the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole” (1992, p.8). Therefore, globalization can be understood as a historical process that contains economic, social and cultural influences, compressing them enough to homogenize the current consciousness of the globe; it causes the current vision of the world to shift according to whoever has control of the three influences mentioned above. Zinkina et al (2019) mention that it is a phenomenon that depends on human behaviour and how they connect with the world to nurture itself.

Recalling what is mentioned above, it has been answered why globalization is such a relevant topic for the investigation, yet not a single reason as to why English is so prevalent, which is where the presence of the anglo-american imperialism is felt. Alatas defines: “imperialism in the political and historical sense of the word is the subjugation of one people by another for the advantage of the dominant one” (2000, p 23). Cambridge refers to it as “a situation in which one country has a lot of power or influence over others, especially in political and economic matters” (2024, n/d). Both definitions of the word point to the same: a system that possesses enough power to dominate others to their advantage. Therefore, by adding the prefix anglo, it becomes clear who is in charge of the *imperium*. In this research it is understood then, that the power had been taken first by the British. Gillingham explains it as a rise of the British Empire due to their wealth, resources and population (1992), meeting all the necessary criteria to fit the definition of what is understood as imperialism. Secondly, we have the Anglo-American wave, which is described by Emerson as the continuation of the British ‘genius’ in new conditions (1994). Consequently, the way imperialism has historically shown itself is not by the simple flaunt of their wealth, but by violence. Using the British Empire as an example, Hechter explains that “English military and political control in the peripheral regions was

buttressed by a racist ideology which held that Norman Anglo-Saxon culture was inherently superior to Celtic culture” (1975, p.342). To summarize, Anglo imperialism is the prevalence of the Anglo-Saxon, later on overshadowed by Anglo-American culture in societies such as Chile, and how these societies adapt and integrate these influences. However, such a phenomenon with multiple channels to expand itself needs the same code to work, which is when the term *Lingua Franca* rises as a solution.

Hence, *Lingua Franca* was defined as “a language of commerce, a rather stable variety with little room for individual variation” (House, 2003, p.557). However, as House stated in “English as a lingua franca: A threat to multilingualism” this no longer includes the English language. The new definition can be summarized, according to House, as a functionally flexible language that is spread around the world and where non-native speakers outnumber native speakers (2003). Sequentially, Graddol estimated that by 2050 the population of native speakers would be approximately 433 million, while nonnative speakers will outnumber them by 54%, landing them 668 million more. This ensures the establishment of English as a *Lingua Franca* (hereafter ELF). Equally, it can then be argued that it is not just plain English, but ELF is an amalgam, a combination.

There is no consistency in form that goes beyond the participant .i.e., each combination of interactants seems to negotiate and govern their own variety of lingua franca use in terms of proficiency level, use of code- mixing, degree of pidginization,etc. (Gramkow 1993, p 108)

Gramkow, above all, refers to the importance of the context and culture of the speakers to modify the language. House (2003) emphasizes then how ELF cannot be understood nor measured based on the competence of a native speaker since it is not restricted to the use of code like a pidgin language can be. Understanding pidgin as a “(...) new language, shaped by many of the same linguistic forces that shaped english and other “proper” languages.” (Holm, 2000, p.3). In House’s words, ELF is the end of a negotiation of errors and non-errors of the non-native speaker when introducing the taught structure. Hence, the establishment of ELF as a functionally flexible concept that depends on the non-native speaker's input.

Methodological Framework

This study was made to explore the acquisition of words and idioms through TikTok. In order to measure that, we estimated six broad concepts which comprise the investigation. These concepts are fundamental to understanding how social media influences the acquisition and use of slang. First, we decided to analyze the frequency of word usage, specifically the estimated usage time of these slang on social media. Secondly, we examined exclusive social media slang, which are specifically used on a particular platform and are unique to that platform. Third, we considered demographic characteristics, which are determined by factors such as age, location, gender, etc. Fourth, we analyzed contextualization, particularly the use people give to these slang in different contexts. Fifth, we evaluated the influence of social media on the acquisition and use of American idiomatic expressions, and whether it is possible to perceive a change in language or idiom through the use of these slang. Finally, we examined slang comprehension, specifically whether users understand the meaning of the slang they are using and whether they can use them in context.

4.1 Participants

In order to measure this, the participants chosen are third- and fourth-year students from the English department at UMCE. The age of the students was initially outlined based on the use of TikTok, as according to Auxier and Anderson, “adults under 30 stand out for their use of Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok” (Auxier and Anderson, 2021, p.5). However, this data by itself does not suffice to definitively decide the specific characteristics of our chosen participants, so we decided to study the literature to help with the reasoning.

In their study, Martí-nez-Estrella, E.-C., Samacá-Salamanca, E., Garcí-a-Rivero, A., & Cifuentes-Ambra, C. (2023) discuss the use of social platforms, such as TikTok, in Latin America by Centennials, also known as Gen Z. The authors state that this generation is now known as digital natives (Cifuentes-Ambra et al., 2023) for they were born into a world that was starting to adapt to the new developments of technology, such as cellphones with access to the internet and social media itself. The authors center their discussion around Gen Z consumption patterns, finding that Latin American Centennials prefer to use social media for

entertainment purposes, mentioning TikTok as one of the most used apps for this experience (Cifuentes-Ambra et al., 2023).

Regarding the topic of language acquisition through American culture, the authors point out in the discussion of their findings that “in Panama and Mexico, it is common for young people to use Anglicisms, expressions, and words in English in their conversations or posts, showing a clear influence from the United States” (Cifuentes-Ambra et al., 2023, p. 11), unlike Chilean centennials. This could be a signal that we need to go deeper than just “Chilean Gen Z” and focus on people in the country that would engage in the L2 specifically, and not assume that Chilean youth also incorporates American culture into their vocabulary as Mexican youth does.

Moreover, as discussed in the literature review, the English learning field has been arguably benefited by the eruption of mobile devices and social media. Storz, Maillet, Brienne, Chotel and Dang (2012) propose the idea of informal learning, such as social media use, being complementary to formal learning. The students chosen to participate in the study are currently subscribed to a formal institution of English language learning, specifically in the third and fourth years of their degree. The vocabulary that they may or may not have acquired through TikTok would have been as an instance of incidental learning, previously discussed as a form of informal learning (Marsick and Watkins, 2001), that would be complementary to their formal education. This would imply that along with learning the language and about the language, the students would have an outside-the-classroom source of language exposure, possibly creating a richer experience with the language.

Subsequently, our decision to study this group is informed by the increased likelihood that their social media use might include content in the English language, due to the previously mentioned factor that the sample might be already immersed in formal learning, as well as socialized in the language. To back this idea we should look back on how the TikTok algorithm works. Smith (2021) states in their article that “TikTok has publicly shared the broad outlines of its recommendation system, saying it takes into account factors including likes and comments as well as video information like captions, sounds and hashtags” (Smith, 2021, n. d.) suggesting that users that are not English speakers of any sort will not get videos in the language, since these would not be included in their liked content and they do not interact with

videos including the language, therefore TikTok's algorithm would not assign them to these users.

4.2 Instruments

The method used to gather the aforementioned data was a survey, understanding it as “a method of gathering information from a sample of individuals” (Scheuren, p.9). Specifically, it was a self-administered survey, which as Fink explains in “The survey handbook” is a questionnaire that the “individual respondents complete by themselves” (2003, p.22). The reason why a survey was considered the best way to gather information was the simplicity of the instrument in itself. As explained by Fink, it is “A system for collecting information from or about people to describe, compare, or explain their knowledge, attitudes, and behavior” (2003, p.1). In other words, it is a method of investigation that requires no major effort yet is able to gather vital information that is easily accessible to the researchers.

The instrument was designed to collect data about the idioms that participants have learned through the use of TikTok. The survey consists of nine questions, all of them being based on the respondents' own perception of their English knowledge. The first question asked of them is if they use the platform “TikTok”. If they answer “yes”, they have to keep answering the survey. If they answer “no”, they do not have to keep answering. After this, the respondents will have to answer questions inspired on the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS), this being “a 5-point self-report scale developed by Wesche & Paribakht (1996) that allows students to indicate how well they know items of vocabulary” (Brown, 2008, n/d). In the second question of the survey, the individuals were expected to write down a maximum of five words and/or idioms that they have heard on TikTok and know how to use. Then in the third question they were asked to specify if they heard that word exclusively on the app or any other type of media (literature, other social media, TV, movies, etc). To continue with the instrument, questions five and six were similar in structure. However, in this case the respondents were asked to write slang they did not know how to use. Question number eight inquires on how much time the individuals spent on TikTok. Lastly, question nine looks at how much of the content on their app is in English based on their own perspective.

4.3 Procedure

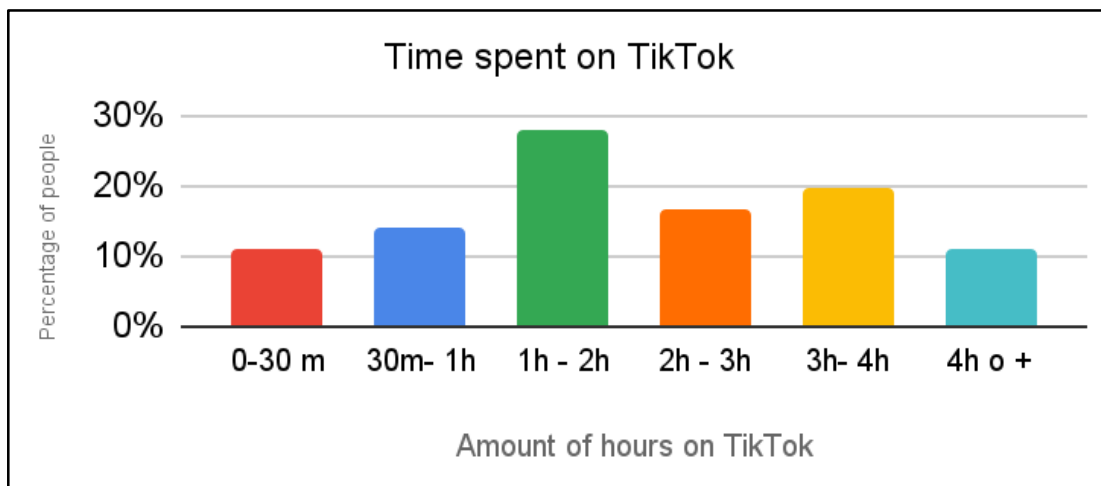
The research design of this study is exploratory research, applying the instrument on the participants listed above in approximately ten minutes, in different classes. The instrument was briefly explained to them, as to not interfere with the answers. After the survey was applied, 50 answers were gathered. The research procedure consists of a mixed method approach proposed by Creswell (2012). The results were listed mentioning the slang mentioned by the participants, and number of repetitions per slang. Regarding the amount of time spent on TikTok and the percentage of the main page in English, they were listed and put into graphics. Although, it is important to mention that the slang classified was provided by the participants, ergo the qualitative feature of the investigation, also considering its results and discussions, which are based on the literature described.

Results

Although the results were separated in two surveys between students from fourth and fifth year, these were combined due to the similarity between their answers regarding the amount of words with their respective repetitions, hours spent on TikTok and percentage of the application's main page in English. Furthermore, this could be due to a similar level of English and immersion.

Figure 1.

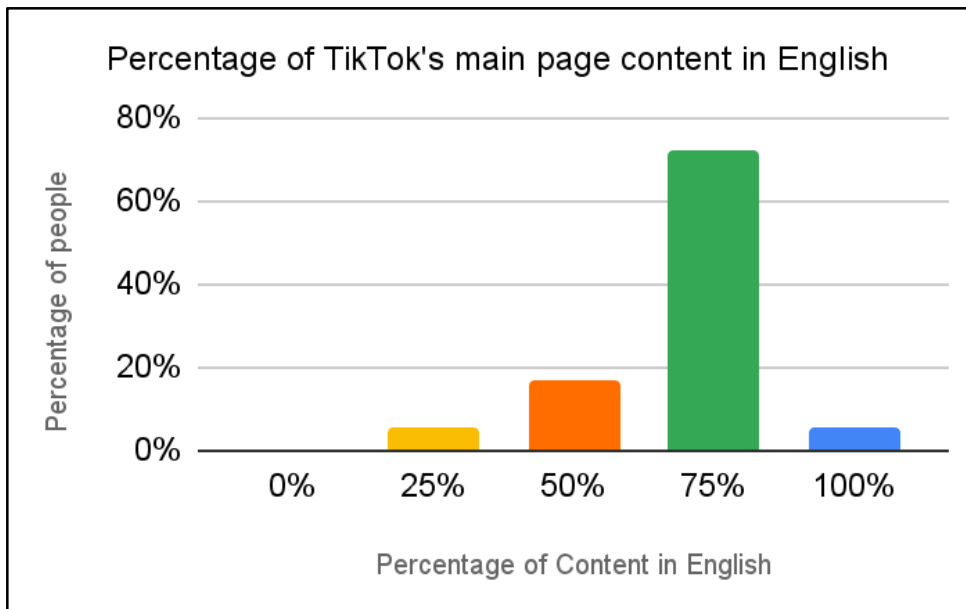
Time spent on TikTok.



Out of the 50 participants, 36 use TikTok, meaning 72% of them. Out of the total, first, 27,7% spend from one to two hours daily on the app; second, 19.4% of them spend from three to four hours daily; third, 16.6% of them spend two to three hours on TikTok; fourth, 13.8% of them spend from 30 minutes to an hour; while the minimum and maximum of hours, being 0 to 30 minutes and four or more hours spent daily on TikTok, share an 11,1%.

Figure 2.

Percentage of TikTok's main page content in English

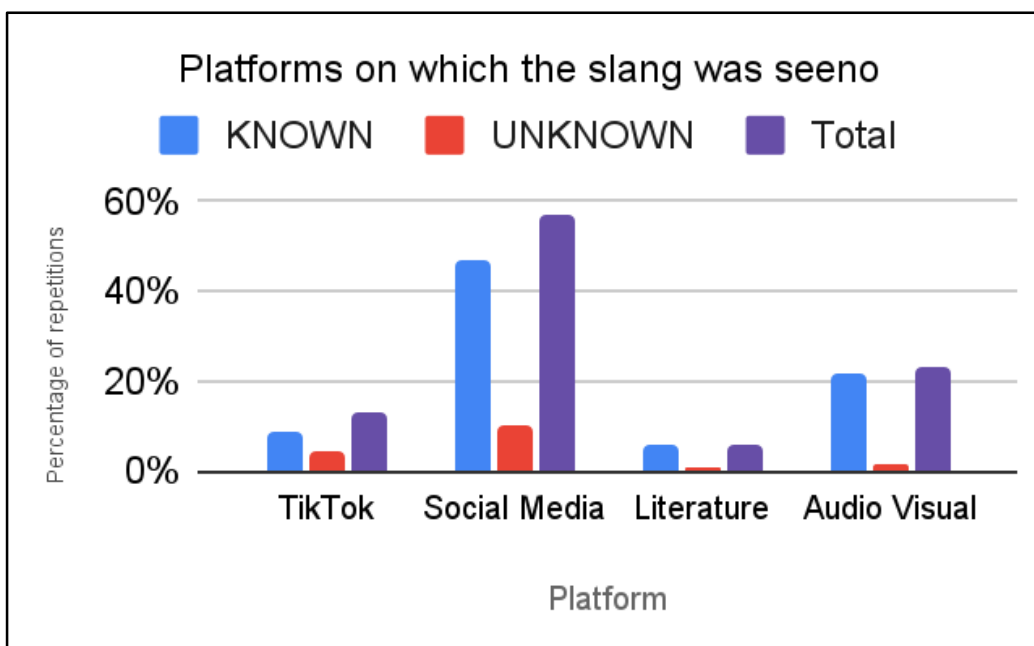


Out of the total of participants, 72,2% said 75% of their TikTok main page is in English, followed by 16.6% of the participants which have a 50% in English, 5.5% of them have a 25% in English and none of them have a 0% of this social media's main page in English.

Among all the answers, there are a total of 62 words. All of the slang the participants mentioned is divided into two sections: Slang they know and know how to use properly in a sentence (KNOWN), and slang they know but do not know how to use in a sentence (UNKNOWN). Out of the total, 56 slang words are mentioned in KNOWN, while 16 are in UNKNOWN. Furthermore, ten of the slang words are mentioned in both at the same time. On average, each person wrote 3,9 slang words in total: 3.25 slang KNOWN, and 0.58 slang per person in UNKNOWN. The most repeated slang words in KNOWN are 'demure' with 19 repetitions, 'slay' with 15 repetitions, 'rizz' with eight repetitions, 'ate' with eight repetitions and 'mindful' with six repetitions. In UNKNOWN, the most repeated slang are 'skibiddi toilet' with four repetitions, 'demure' and 'so Julia' with three repetitions each, and 'slay', 'rizz' and 'cap' with two repetitions each.

Figure 3.

Platforms on which the slang was seen



All of the slang repetitions add up to 179 repetitions total. Out of this total, the slang was seen in other social media 56,98% of the time (46,92% KNOWN and 10,05% UNKNOWN), in audiovisual media 23,46% (21,78% KNOWN and 1,67% UNKNOWN), in literature 6,14% (5,58% KNOWN and 0,55% UNKNOWN) and 13,40% (8,93% KNOWN and 4,46% UNKNOWN) of the total of repetitions were seen only on TikTok.

Discussion

6.1 Acquisition of slang and culture through TikTok

Regarding the acquisition of the words mentioned in the survey, one main question comes up: Were these words “actually” acquired? In order to answer this complicated question, most authors quoted previously can agree that they were. Firstly, there is a differentiation between the words that were claimed to be “known and used in a sentence”, which were three words on average per person, and those which were “known but unable to be used in a sentence”. For the former, most arguments can agree on the actual acquisition of the words. On one hand, considering Paul Nation (2008), these words used the two methodologies

proposed by him: meaning-focused output and input. When the student listens to this word on their TikTok and reads it in the closed caption, the context of the video gives them a meaning-focused input. Plus, when this student uses this word in their day to day life (also using it as an answer in the survey), it becomes a meaning-focused output. It is proven that the student understands the meaning of the word, and can use it in different contexts. On the other hand, using Wesche and Sima's theory (1994), through the use of the words included in the survey, they have achieved level five on the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale, since they recall the word, use it in a sentence, and recognize it as slang. For this group of words, according to both authors, there is a high level of acquisition, meaning they have learned lexemes from their social media.

On the other hand, there is the second group of words, which were claimed to be 'known but unable to be used in a sentence'. Considering Nation's theory (2008), it can be claimed that they do not achieve any of the methodologies proposed by him. It does not fit either in meaning-focused output or input because the students are unable to recognize the meaning behind the slang when they listen to the words, and therefore are unable to use these words in a sentence. There is no meaning-focused input, consequently, no meaning-focused output. Nevertheless, according to Wesche and Sima (1994), these words are considered to be at level one in the VKS, since there is recognition of the vocabulary. In other words, they paid enough attention to it, because they remembered and recognized them as slang, yet they did not know the meaning of them. In this discussion, the question of "real" acquisition remains unanswered, because of the metacognition behind the answer. The students recognized these words as slang, and remembered them enough to use them, even though the meaning and semantics is unknown to them. It can be concluded that the answers of the survey are all within the concept of language acquisition; they stayed in the vocabulary of the students, and had a significant impact on them, therefore there is at least a starting level of acquisition.

Nevertheless, the question of the nature of their answers comes up. All of the answers fall within the category of slang; yet, the survey was titled with "words and idioms", and the example given was "slay", a popular slang from the LGTBQ+ community, which was popularized through TikTok. It is believed that a series of reasons could have caused their answers to fall within this category: Firstly, the example given was quite specific: a word used to express something positive, which came from a specific community and it has been heard on TikTok. Therefore, it could have influenced the answers, making them think that we were

asking for slang specifically. Secondly, as they saw the word “TikTok” in the description of the survey, they immediately could have thought of trends, and the words that come with these trends, which are the ones that end up becoming slang most of the time. Finally, it could have been a combination of the two phenomena, in which the description of the survey, the title and the mentioned app gave them an idea of the answers that were expected. This may also suggest that when asked about content words learnt on TikTok, they immediately think of the words with more cultural impact and relevance in their daily life, such as slang, rather than more formal content words. We believe this would not be out of the ordinary, since nowadays the specific people that participated in this survey use this slang as part of their day to day language.

For this research, the fact that the participants made a connection between slang and TikTok demonstrates the acquisition of the mentioned lexicon, and how these words come naturally to them, since by only reading a couple of words their minds take them to trends and popular expressions. This shows the popularity of American slang among this group of students, as well as the cultural connection they have with it. Moreover, it can be said that the participants feel comfortable with the use of the words, because of their ability to use them in a sentence when asked. Summarizing, their instinct when finding these words in their vocabulary with little stimuli shows how involved they are with trends, and therefore the acquisition of slang as a daily and simple action.

6.1.1 Difference between the average of answers in KNOWN and UNKNOWN sections.

There is a big difference between the average of answers received in KNOWN and UNKNOWN sections. These results relate to how learning and output works and has been explained in 3.2.1. Since participants report these slang as UNKNOWN, meaning they are unable to use them properly in a sentence, and not learnt according to Nation (2008), they are unable to easily retrieve them from their ‘memory’ or ‘knowledge’ (Herschensohn, Young-Scholten, 2013). Basically, since the participants did not complete the learning process for the slang, they do not remember it as much as the KNOWN slang to mention in the survey.

6.2 Where acquisition happens: TikTok or social media in general

As has been stated previously, social media platforms allow for interconnections between one another, therefore, the contents and trends visualized in one platform can be easily found in a different one. Furthermore, guided by the definition given by Pitre (2023), the trends functioning as narratives continue across different social media platforms. Additionally, these trends have been described by the app CEO Sophia Rascoff as prompt, where it can last weeks or only a day (2023). Therefore, it must be noted that some of the most repeated slang ('demure' and 'mindful') were popular at the moment of applying the questionnaire, and are not necessarily as popular currently. Moreover, if the instrument were to be applied again at a different time, the answers are likely to change.

The participants were requested to mention slang they have learnt from TikTok. Nevertheless, as has been explained, most of them were also seen on other social media. Hence, the brief popularity of diverse slang also transcends specific social media platforms. Consequently, the amount of hours spent specifically on TikTok does not necessarily correspond to the amount of hours the students are exposed to said trends, it is more time. Therefore, the amount of daily repetition of the slang is higher than what is seen in the answers by the amount of hours spent on TikTok daily. Because of this, the implications for drill repetition are affected.

6.3 Repetition and vocabulary acquisition

According to the results gathered, the majority of the participants spend one to two hours a day watching TikTok. According to Aho's work (2022), this amount of time could be considered small enough for a person to learn new vocabulary by its constant repetition. Nevertheless, as seen in *figure 3*, the sample stated that they also spend time on other social media platforms seeing these words. Because of that, it can be theorized it is very likely that the content the participants see on their TikTok is similar to that on other social media they may use. Therefore, the respondents are constantly exposed to the same words/slang.

Another important aspect to point out is that the participants were asked to state how much of the content they see on TikTok is in English. As shown in the results (*figure 2*), 72%

of participants said that 75% of the content they see on their main page is in English. Their constant exposure to content in English makes them prone to finding new trends on the platform; these trends being dialogues, idioms, slang, among others. As seen in the literature review, the consumption of media in English has a positive connotation regarding learning through social media (Brienne et. al.,2012). Ergo, the fact that the participants are constantly exposed to content in English nurtures their vocabulary acquisition, slang being in this case. In addition, none of the participants said that they have 0% content in English which is expected since the survey was carried out with the respondents being English pedagogy students.

Furthermore, according to the results of this research, the most mentioned word was *demure* (see in *Appendix 2*). This is because, while the survey was being carried out, this word was trending on TikTok. If we consider the amount of time that the respondents spend on TikTok—without considering the time spent on other social media—, this can be a good example of how the repetition of that trend on said social media played an important role in the respondents' acquisition of the word.

6.4 Cultural acquisition

Regarding the amount of time the participants spend on social media, added to the acquisition concept, the point of culture acquisition comes up. If the participants have acquired slang, have they acquired culture? As stated previously in the literature review, slang is a sociolinguistic phenomenon (Mattiello, 2005). We have to point out that when talking about sociolinguistics, we are referring to human behavior regarding language, which includes the use of language, such as creating new words, synonyms, and the death of certain words (Holmes, 2001). Therefore, by making a simple connection between the concepts, it can be stated that when people acquire slang from foreign countries, they are also acquiring their culture. Moreover, to take it further, people can make these slang words their own, and give them the use that they prefer. By doing this, they are transforming the language even more, and they expand the meaning behind a word. For example the word 'brat'; is a word that has been popularized due to an album released in 2024 with the same name, yet people now use it to describe any action, person, or even moment that has a positive characteristic.

Moreover, because of the short duration of trends on TikTok, slang is constantly changing for Gen z. The culture that this phenomenon brings is constantly evolving, and in this evolution there can be words such as ‘slay’ that endure in the set of vocabulary of this generation; whereas others are left behind as quickly as they appeared such as ‘simp’. This random choice of words has not been profoundly studied, since it is a rather new phenomenon; yet, it is interesting to observe how the corpus created by the applied survey is already changing, leaving words (that at one point seemed mandatory) in the past.

6.5 How niche interests influence the slang that they learn

Some or most of the words found in the results could be traced back to specific ‘corners’ of the app, where the communities around specific interests interact with each other using English. The acquisition of these lexical items is incidental, due to the fact that learning in these contexts is peripheral to the shared experience of the online community around personal interests (Malik & Haidar, 2021). Moreover, social media apps such as TikTok build their algorithms to specifically appeal to these niche interests that you might have shown proclivity towards (Zhang & Liu, 2021), which would keep the users in contact with the constant evolution and additions to the vocabulary used in their communities. Due to the constant evolution of these expressions and items, as well as the nature of our research instrument, we can only speculate as to the niches and communities in which our participants acquired these items from, and which were subsequently reflected in our research material. That being said, most of the items recovered reflect somewhat clear connections to popular communities on social media.

Our results suggest that our subjects might have a proclivity towards words and slang originated or adjacent to queer/LGBTQ+ friendly online spaces. This speculation arises due to the fact that four out of the five most repeated items that our subjects wrote in the research instrument could be traced back to these queer communities online. The literature shows that the LGBTQ+ community has a strong presence in social media spaces, such as TikTok, having a significant impact on the popular culture shared online (Benitez, 2022). At the time that we started collecting our results, two of the most repeated items were connected due to a specific TikTok audio that had gone viral recently, those being ‘demure’ and ‘mindful’. These words of course were not created as slang, but its use online was popularized by this TikTok audio. The original video features a queer man talking about his makeup, so the viral use of the audio

was intrinsically shared by LGBTQ+ adjacent users, gradually being integrated into the popular culture at the moment. Benitez (2022) mentioned in their study that the cultural elements from black, queer and other minority groups often influence pop culture, subsequently being adopted even by people from dominant social groups. Our participants might have heard or read these words in a TikTok video about their favorite artists, TV shows or just in a humorous context, but the origin of these two items remain closely linked to queer online culture. These results also suggest that our participants might coexist in an environment influenced by this cultural subsection of the internet, whether they belong to the LGBTQ+ community or merely interact with individuals that do.

6.6 Globalization and imperialism of American culture through incidental slang acquisition

When talking about globalization, as mentioned above, we need to mention the impossibility for us as a society to avoid it in any way, at least when referring to the context of this research, meaning students of English pedagogy in a Chilean context. Globalization is not something that the members of a society do intentionally. No one goes out of their way to say “Today I’m going to globalize myself” but it is of a natural and incidental phenomenon that refers to what is mentioned above: the economic and social transformation of the culture (McGrew, 1998). Evidently, globalization is not personal but, as the name suggests, a global experience. To further the discussion, it is understood that this process is not rigid, but that its flexibility is the particular characteristic that justifies its constant transformation and its dependency on human connections (Zinkina et al. 2019). Hence the birth of multiple niche groups that have shown themselves to be capable of constant transformation, such as LGBTQ+, K-pop fans, Twitter stan culture, etc., (Malik & Haidar, 2021). An example of this evolution is the slang that, as Matiello (2005) proposes, is a set of colloquial expressions that change depending on the societal groups that use them. This definition can be translated to their dependence on human groups and the fragility of their existence. To further explain, slang works as a tangible characteristic that allows us, individuals of a society, to recognize the existence of different groups of interest that, as societies themselves, can not only evolve but be completely discarded, and become no more than the remains of the past.

Once again, imperialism makes its appearance, since there can exist a rather oversimplified connection between the constant transformation of the social niches and the crude enforcement of the Anglo- Saxon and Anglo- American culture in societies. It is seen then, that the transformation of the niches is a constant and, as is written above, is a response to the exposure to the culture. This exposure can be either provided by pop culture, meaning TV shows, movies, music, etc., or take a violent approach such as how the Pilgrims came to the American continent and built a society on top of the mutilated bodies of the natives. This is not hyperbole. The former being responsible for the lack of knowledge on Native history, stories and traditions, demonstrating how easy it is for the regents of the *imperium* to obtain complete control over which culture is allowed to flourish or perish, based solely on how it will benefit the country that has the most wealth and influence (Alatas, 2000).

What is certain after analyzing the corpus presented in this research is that it is a collection of slang that is most commonly used in the sample of subjects studied. As it has been explained, it can be seen as a basis from which to monitor the possible changes that happen in society and a representation of the constant change in trends. Hence, as it is understood in this investigation based on the theories of Matiello (2005) and Holmes (2001), the transformation of society can be reflected in the slang due to its ephemeral nature and dependance on context.

Pedagogical implications

In the specific field of pedagogy, there are quite a few implications that can be mentioned. Firstly, the use of social media can be beneficial for students, since social media is supposed to offer a platform allowing people to connect through interactions, sharing information and open them a space for collaborative learning. To elaborate, through social media, people can share and connect with native speakers, enabling cultural learning followed by the actual used language. Moreover, by participating in real-time online interactions students can develop their linguistic skills in a more efficient and effective way.

Secondly, social media offers learning opportunities that would not necessarily need a teacher's help. For example, participating in online discussions can help to develop empathy and comprehension of other people's perspectives while actively listening, organizing and sharing information and ideas in the target language. Plus, sharing personal content, which is very common on a platform like TikTok, can help people to develop self awareness, which is very important for teenagers' life experiences, helping them stay grounded during emotionally difficult situations. Moreover, engaging in online activities can help with the effective interaction with other people, and the importance of communication and organization of ideas. At the same, people can reflect about other experiences and comprehend other people's emotions and needs, which could develop empathy. These can be seen as a learning opportunity on an emotional and cognitive level, as well as an instance to practice a second language, either in a basic or advanced level. Yet, it is important to mention that these situations can present themselves when social media is used safely, with the responsibility that is needed when engaging with others through the internet.

Thirdly, from the point of view of teachers, having a type of engagement with the students is relevant, as well as grounding the knowledge they want to share. For this, using pop culture and trends from different social media platforms could create common interests that can be included in the lessons. Consequently, trying to stay in touch with the students' preferences can be beneficial for their learning process. For instance, creating activities in which they can include their interests, or using content that includes the trends that they could be following. This could catch the students' attention easily, therefore, the connection between the content and the trends could make the learning process more effective. Moreover, by

creating these instances, teachers could create emotional connections with the students, making them feel more comfortable with the subject and the teacher. This can be very beneficial for the students, since being comfortable in the learning environment takes the stress and anxiety out of the classroom.

Limitations

After gathering and listing the words/slang given by the respondents, it was considered as a large amount for the corpus, although this one can be considered as momentary. The reason behind this is, since TikTok is constantly presenting new trends, the words listed for this study may no longer be used as frequently as when the intervention was carried out.

Moreover, the sample size for this research is a total of 50 students of English Pedagogy. The results gathered are sufficient to establish them as the norm for the English Department at the university. If every student had been interviewed, the results would not vary too much. However, these results are not the norm for the English Pedagogy degree. Although, if the survey had included other universities, the results could have been completely different.

Lastly, cell phone addiction and its side effects were not considered during the process of this research. In their work, Sunday et al. (2021) stated that cell phone addiction has negative effects on the academic performance of students. The study also establishes that spending excessive time on their phones to the point of neglecting their daily activities is a sign of a developing cell phone addiction. Regarding this study, the respondents established an estimated amount of time they spent only on TikTok, yet they probably spent more hours on their phones in other apps (speculated according to the results of *figure 3*). Further research is needed to tackle this matter.

Conclusions

In light of this information, it can be concluded that the third- and fourth-year of English Pedagogy students at UMCE have learnt an important amount of slang through social media, specifically TikTok. Furthermore, according to different authors such as Matiello (2005) and Holmes (2001), who explore not only the ephemerality of slang but its dependance on culture, this acquisition inherently means an acquisition of culture. Since most of the slang obtained comes from American culture, there is an acquisition of American culture through the acquisition of slang on TikTok. Moreover, this investigation compiled a corpus of slang, which was learnt on the aforementioned social media according to the participants' self-perception. However, regarding this, the corpus has an 'expiration date' that depends on the trends. Nevertheless, for the most repeated slang, these could be used in further investigation. Ultimately, social media has been a source of cultural knowledge that allows communities to express and recognize themselves. All things considered, when exploring the pedagogical implications, this sense of community can ease the relationship between students and teacher, but also be a bridge between students and the second language they are learning.

Upon considering all the facts, it can be said that, based on the sample of students, this research seems to be a stepping stone to further analyze the role of social media and its implications for the acquisition of the language itself in future generations. Not only that but how the use of slang evolves in time based on the prevalence of culture and the existence of different niches.

10.1 Further Research

For further research, an important consideration would be to also include the amount of hours the participants spend on other social media in the survey. From what has been mentioned in the discussion, the participants learned slang from TikTok, according to their own perspective; nevertheless, the majority of these words were also seen on other social media. Therefore, the slang can be said to have been learned onTikTok, but a lot of the learning based off of repetitions and contextual use can be also happening when using other social media.

Because of this, the total hours the participants spend using social media can be a better reflection of their daily incidental learning time, and should be considered for further research.

Moreover, a second consideration for further research is the ephemeral nature of trends on social media. As stated before, these trends are quick to pass, lasting weeks or days. Therefore, the corpus reflects the trends that existed at the time the survey was taken, and this could be very different if applied again, even on the same participants. On the other hand, the slang mentioned by the participants in the KNOWN section have been agreed as learnt by them; because of this, the words with the higher number of repetitions may also be known to a different group of participants. This is assuming these repetitions are related to the popularity of the slang, regardless of its trend being over.

Similarly, an appropriate follow-up to this study would be to research how many of the words mentioned in the corpus would be sustained as slang among the participants. This study aimed to theorize about the slang items gathered possibly influencing the culture of the participants, although the researchers did not concern themselves with the lasting impact of these slang items within the population studied. Naturally, a follow up study would focus on the specific slang words found through our research instrument as time progresses, in order to find out what slang items remained on the vocabulary used by the participants and their culture, and those that did not. These questions could lead to interesting conclusions regarding the topic, as well as the nature of slang itself and the actual impact of American culture on the participants who had been influenced by it through the years.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Words and Idioms on TikTok.

The instrument will not be graded and its purpose is only investigative; we expect you to answer honestly. Thank you for your participation.

1. Do you use TikTok? *If your answer is no, please refrain from continuing with the survey.
 - Yes, I use the app.
 - No, I do not use the app.
2. Mention words and/or idioms that you know from TikTok and you know how to use in English. For example, the word "slay". (This example can be mentioned in your answer.) Write them down as a list numbering each word from 1 to 5; you can write a minimum of 1 word and a maximum of 5 words.

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3. Have you seen these words and/or idioms somewhere else?

Words	No	Yes, other social media (facebook, X, Instagram, etc)	Yes, literature (Books, Fanfics, Scientific articles, etc)	Yes, audiovisual media (movie, series, youtube)	Other
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				videos etc)	

4. If you checked "other", write down where you have seen them.

5. Mention words and/or idioms that you know from TikTok and you do **NOT** know how to use or are **NOT** so sure how to use (Write them down as a list numbering each word from 1 to 5; you can write a minimum of 1 word and a maximum of 5 words).

6. Have you seen these words and/or idioms somewhere else?

Words	No	Yes, other social media (facebook, X, Instagram, etc)	Yes, literature (Books, Fanfics, Scientific articles, etc)	Yes, audiovisual media (movie, series, youtube)	Other
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				videos etc)	

7. If you checked "other", write down where you have seen them.

8. How many hours do you spend daily on TikTok? Approximately:

- 0 - 30 minutes
- 30 minutes - 1 hour
- 1 - 2 hours
- 2 - 3 hours
- 3 - 4 hours
- More than 4 hours

9. How much of the content you watch on TikTok would you say is in English?

- 100%
- 75%
- 50%
- 25%

- 0%

Appendix 2

Results from the instrument for words the participants did know how to use, their frequency and the platforms in which they were found.

Words they know and know how to use them	Frequency (How many times the word was repeated)	Platforms				
		Just TikTok	Social Media	Literature	Audiovisual	Other
Slay	15	0	12	2	7	0
Demure	19	4	13	0	3	0
Mindful	6	1	4	0	1	0
Side Eye	1	0	0	0	1	0
Honestly	1	0	0	0	1	0
Ate	8	0	6	1	4	0
Skibidi	1	1	0	0	0	0
Cap	1	1	0	0	0	0
Rizz	8	2	5	0	3	0
Serving	1	0	1	1	1	0
Flop	2	1	1	0	0	0
Sigma	1	0	1	1	0	0
Alpha	1	0	1	1	0	0
From scratch	1	0	1	1	1	0
Werk	1	0	0	0	1	0
Aesthetic	1	0	1	0	1	0
Looksmxing	1	0	1	0	1	0
Fanum Tax	1	0	1	0	1	0

Words they know and know how to use them	Frequency (How many times the word was repeated)	Platforms					
Drip	1	0	1	0	1	0	
W	1	1	0	0	0	0	
Delulu	3	0	2	0	1	0	
TBH	2	1	1	0	0	0	
Mewing	3	0	3	0	0	0	
Sus	2	0	2	0	0	0	
Spill the tea	1	0	1	0	0	0	
BRB	1	0	1	0	0	0	
LMK	1	0	1	0	0	0	
FOMO	3	1	2	0	0	0	
Aura	1	0	1	0	1	0	
Fine shyt	1	0	1	0	0	0	
Lock in	1	0	1	0	1	0	
Diocope	1	0	0	1	0	0	
POV	1	0	1	0	1	0	
Red Flag	1	0	1	1	0	0	
Green Flag	1	0	1	1	0	0	
Clock it	1	0	1	0	1	0	
No, I'm speaking	1	0	1	0	0	0	
Yapping	1	1	0	0	0	0	
Unalive	1	1	0	0	0	0	
Gatekeeping	1	1	0	0	0	0	
Cunt	1	0	1	0	0	0	
Loogie	1	0	1	0	0	0	
Coquette	1	0	1	0	1	0	

Words they know and know how to use them	Frequency (How many times the word was repeated)	Platforms				
Love bombing	3	0	3	0	0	0
Wrecker	1	0	1	0	0	0
Obnoxious	1	0	1	0	1	0
Unapologetic	1	0	0	0	1	0
Mesmerizing	1	0	0	0	1	0
Grooming	1	0	1	0	1	0
Gold digger	1	0	0	0	1	0
Damn	1	0	1	0	0	0
Girrl	1	0	1	0	0	0
Ah hell nah	1	0	1	0	0	0
BTW	1	0	1	0	0	0
Period	1	0	1	0	1	0

Appendix 3

Results from the instrument for words the participants did not know how to use, their frequency and the platforms in which they were found.

Words they know and not know how to use them	Frequency (How many times the word was repeated)	Platforms				
		Just TikTok	Social Media	Literature	Audiovisual	Other
Drip	1	0	1	0	0	0
Demure	3	1	3	1	1	0

Words they know and not know how to use them	Frequency (How many times the word was repeated)	Platforms				
Slay	2	0	1	0	1	0
Rizz	2	1	1	0	1	0
Delulu	1	1	0	0	0	0
Cap	2	1	1	0	0	0
Skibidi Toilet	4	1	3	0	0	0
Simp	1	0	1	0	0	0
Lore	1	0	1	0	1	0
Sigma	1	1	0	0	0	0
Alpha	1	1	0	0	0	0
Though	1	0	1	0	0	0
Zesty	1	0	1	0	0	0
Clock it	1	1	0	0	0	0
Ain't	1	0	1	0	0	0
So Julia	3	0	3	0	0	0