



# *Role of pedagogical mediation in the process of learning Spanish as a foreign language*

## **Henry Alexander Murillo Reyes**

National Autonomous University of Nicaragua, Managua  
(FAREM-Chontales)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6497-3106>

[hmurillo@unan.edu.ni](mailto:hmurillo@unan.edu.ni)

## **Jader Wilder González Solís**

National Autonomous University of Nicaragua, Managua  
(FAREM-Chontales)

<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-6523-9921>

[jader.gonzalez@unan.edu.ni](mailto:jader.gonzalez@unan.edu.ni)

## **Madia Gisselle Morales Soza**

National Autonomous University of Nicaragua, Managua  
(FAREM-Chontales)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2938-3207>

[madia.morales@unan.edu.ni](mailto:madia.morales@unan.edu.ni)

## **Marta Elizabeth Miranda Téllez**

National Autonomous University of Nicaragua, Managua  
(FAREM-Chontales)

<https://orcid.org/0009-0007-3873-6098>

[mmirandat@unan.edu.ni](mailto:mmirandat@unan.edu.ni)

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## **ABSTRACT**

**P**edagogical mediation as a strategy for learning a foreign language is an option that favors both the learner and the teacher so that effective acquisition is carried out. Hence, this article presents a brief analysis of pedagogical mediation based on theoretical-practical elements related to the teaching-learning process. The objective was to analyze the perception of the main actors of the teaching-learning act on the importance of pedagogical mediation to achieve the scope of competencies and meet the interests of the learners. The research was carried out using a qualitative approach and a larger unit of analysis was identified: pedagogical

mediation as a teaching-learning strategy. In the same way, minor units: pedagogical mediation from a vision focused on know-how and pedagogical mediation focused on school performance and pedagogical experiences within an education centered on being. For the analysis of the data, a double-entry matrix was developed. Also, triangulation of the information was applied, considering the objectives, research questions, and units of analysis. This article presents a description of elements of some conceptual positions that teachers and principals have on the concept of pedagogical mediation and its implication in the learning process. It also explains how the actors in charge of carrying out teaching consider which school actions and experiences learning can be carried out and their relationship with the interests of the learners.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The implementation of learning strategies in the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language is directly linked to the conscious attitudes and actions of an individual and focused on facilitating learning more efficiently. The study of these focuses on the student of foreign languages and their way of learning in different contexts. Hence the importance for Spanish teaching centers to take into account the other strategies, focused on the learner, and their implementation, considering elements intrinsic to the person: age, interests, sex, attitude, aptitude, and nationality, among others.

However, from the teaching side, they should consider, among other aspects: the previous learning of the group of learners, the cultural characteristics, learning rhythms, the pedagogical mediation of learning and above all, not forgetting the interests for which the group of students chose to learn Spanish, so it is imperative that there is coherence between the intentions of the learner and the training actions.

Finally, this article investigates, on the one hand, the ways in which learners study analyzing to what extent these pedagogical practices can be considered strategic that allow learners to learn. On the other hand, an interpretation is made of the mediating role of teachers from the different fields of study, as well as the evaluation instruments, so this implies a retrospective look at the use of strategies from their beginnings as Spanish learners.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the context of teaching Spanish as a Foreign Language (ELE), it is evident that strategies for acquisition to arise are often lacking. In this sense, one of the strategies that has proliferated strongly in Spanish as a foreign language teaching center is pedagogical mediation. This arises to strengthen the classroom work of teachers who teach Spanish as a foreign language. Hence, from a learner-centred perspective and the way of teaching ELE, this action comes to favor the

feeling, thinking and pedagogical action more humanized, that is, focused on the interests of the learners.

According to Lantolf and Beckett (2009), pedagogical mediation in the learning of second or foreign languages, this action is mediated not only by the teacher's speaking or explanation activity but also by the writing of the documents for the development of the classes and the gestures that are produced for the development of these activities.

Therefore, from this field of Spanish as a Foreign Language, pedagogical mediation becomes a key element for human development that allows the interconnection between human beings and the world, and because of this, it is possible that it will result in work (as an effect of classroom activities) or products in which the culture of origin of the learners is manifested. Hence, pedagogical mediation in the learning process, in general, and especially in the ELE scenario, can be considered not only as an intention of innovative and proactive pedagogical thinking but also as a didactic action in which students are placed at the center of the process through the communicative act as the main tool in the exercise of the acquisition of a second language.

Consequently, Madrid et al. (2010) considers that the issue of mediations in language learning is made up of two fundamental elements:

Self-regulation, which is done through "private speech": in this field, it is considered whether learners self-regulate and how they use L2 to organize their mental activity. It also looks at the extent to which trainees continue to function through L2. In this research, private speech is considered to serve as a mediator in the selection and use of learning strategies (p. 310).

Regulation of others, which is done through "social speech": this regulation can occur through the interaction of the learner with his classmates, instructors, and in the classroom. It distinguishes between the forms of use of L2 and the mediation that is organized around its meaning. This is important to distinguish whether L2 is used to regulate and whether it has any influence on individuals' mental activity (p. 311).

Finally, it is important to make it clear that pedagogical mediation in the educational process arises spontaneously and always with the help of a (guide). This is carried out through actions, that do not restrict, but promote, excite, liberate and motivate learners to enhance their linguistic, communicative (oral and written) and investigative skills and thus overcome their limitations. Hence, the elements that constitute pedagogical mediation are aimed at favoring academic processes, and that these represent an opportunity for learners to transform themselves and their social and cultural environment. Meanwhile, pedagogical mediation is a

matter that necessarily requires a teacher mediator when executing a pedagogical activity, and that these are based on standards that allow the acquisition of an L2 (Tebar, 2014).

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The research work was carried out using the qualitative approach and this type of research, according to Hernández Sampieri et al. (2014), is guided by significant areas or themes. This indicates that qualitative studies may develop guiding questions before, during, or after data collection and analysis. Likewise, Lawsy and McLeod (2014) suggest that: “while a quantitative research design identifies and addresses specific variables, a qualitative research design focuses on a holistic view of the object studied” (p. 2). Thus, this methodological option allowed the use of instruments and techniques that allowed to have a significant impact about research studies.

In the research there is a large unit of analysis: pedagogical mediation as a teaching-learning strategy. Minor units depend on this, such as pedagogical mediation from a vision focused on know-how and pedagogical mediation focused on school action and pedagogical experiences within an education centered on being. In addition, minor units of analysis were considered, such as the discourses obtained from the interviews conducted with the teachers of Spanish as a Foreign Language.

To collect the information, a questionnaire was constructed for teachers of Spanish as a foreign language, a script for discussion groups, and in-depth interviews. To process the information obtained, it was carried out through interpretative analysis and triangulation of information with the documentary analysis technique. This allowed an analysis of the study programs or syllabuses of ELE teaching. All this is in accordance with what Solís (2013) states that this method: “allows us to select informationally relevant ideas from a document (...). The purposes of documentary analysis transcend the mere retrieval/dissemination of information. They are also aimed at facilitating cognition or learning” (p. 18).

The information triangulation technique was also applied and the relationship between the objectives of the study, the research questions, and the units or categories of analysis proposed in the categorical system was considered. It was analyzed, considering the proposal made by Piñuel and Gaitán (2010, p. 212) on the analysis of content, which states that this is a:

(...) A set of interpretative procedures and techniques for testing and verifying hypotheses applied to communicative products (messages, texts or discourses), or to communicative interactions that, previously recorded, constitute a document, in order to extract and process relevant data on the conditions.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

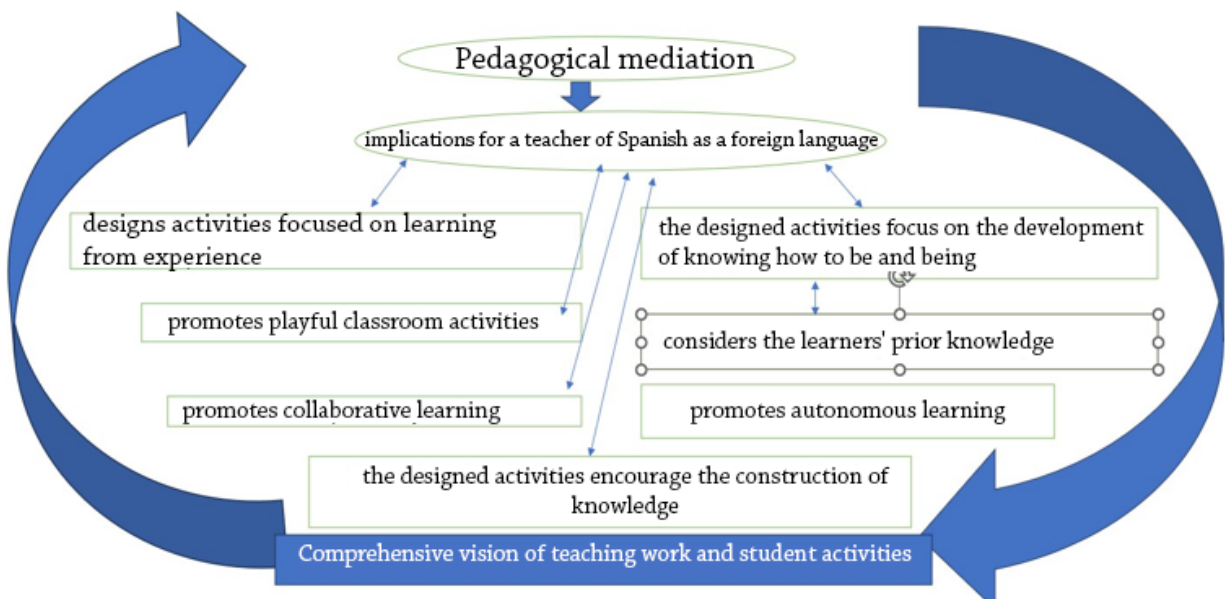
Considering that this work was carried out with a qualitative approach with the purpose of analyzing the incidence of pedagogical mediation based on different theoretical-practical elements related to the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language and the intentions of learning, it was necessary to select the informants; teachers, as well as directors of the ELE teaching center and were intentionally selected.

##### a. Pedagogical mediation as a teaching-learning strategy

The following figure systematizes the concepts that the interviewees expressed recurrently in relation to pedagogical mediation. These concepts refer to actions that, according to the interviewees, suggest positive actions for the development of classroom activities.

**Figure 1**

Own elaboration: Teachers' conception of pedagogical mediation



As can be seen in graph n°1, the teachers' conception of pedagogical mediation as a learning strategy for Spanish as a foreign language is considered as a comprehensive vision and, from there, other forms of knowledge generation are developed and, at the same time, new forms of learning are promoted. Additionally, it is possible to promote autonomous learning by considering previous learning and thus also assess the learning of the learners and carry out a self-evaluation of both actors (teacher-student) and, from this, aim towards continuous improvement.

In other words, pedagogical mediation serves, according to the professors, "to consolidate an inter- and transdisciplinary vision of teaching and learning and motivates communicability and

*generates a natural well-being of students and allows them to become protagonists in any process or activities presented” (EDoc1p3).*

### **b. Pedagogical mediation focused on school performance and pedagogical experiences.**

The act of teaching supposes, in the first place, a vital scenario that guarantees individual and collective well-being, based on multidimensional experiences where it is possible to overcome those activities based on knowledge and consider know-how and being. Secondly, and this is where the role of pedagogical mediation plays an important role since it is not always the knowledge, but the person and how what he or she acquires serves him or her according to his or her learning interests.

In line with the above, the director of the center states that: *“it is urgent to ensure that the teaching processes promote the possibilities of interaction between learners, context and know-how and being that are promoted based on the previous knowledge and interests of the students” (EDirecp3).* In this sense, it is worth mentioning what Maturana (1998) proposes when he insists that we should enter into harmony with what we have experienced, leaving behind desires, emotions, and compatible interests, and creating spaces for encounter and acquisition in a very natural way.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Considering the different approaches, it can be said that pedagogical mediation is conceived as a strategy that rescues a vision of learning based on and focused on being and knowing how to do it. That is, the teacher or mediator must be oriented to promote activities that allow autonomous learning, from experience and for life, where the main motivation is to meet their goals and training interests.

Likewise, pedagogically mediated education aims at the development of competencies that allow both teachers and students to consolidate assertive communication processes, both oral and written and this facilitates the process of self-evaluation in both (teachers-students) based on lucid, flexible, and open activities according to the learning interests of the students.

Finally, it is urgent to promote pedagogical mediation in LE teaching centers, and that this allows the construction of educational practices that favor learning experiences based on previous knowledge, promoting dialogue through the resolution of activities that aim at the development of intelligence and thus create relevant solutions to the needs and interests of the learners.

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