

Effects of Mindfulness in the Field of English as a Foreign Language Classroom: A Literature Review

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Abstract

The practice of mindfulness has its roots in medicine, where it was initially developed as a technique to assist patients in managing chronic pain. Subsequently, mindfulness was introduced to the field of education, where it is defined as the capacity to be mindful of or focus on one's internal experiences, particularly in the present moment.

This paper examines the benefits of mindfulness in learning a foreign language. A review of 20 research papers on the implementation of mindfulness in EFL settings revealed that mindfulness can enhance the learning environment, improve test results and reading comprehension, increase students' willingness to communicate in English, reduce speaking anxiety, strengthen concentration, alleviate detrimental feelings or emotions, foster better health conditions, boost self-confidence, maximize foreign language teachers' self-efficacy, and strengthen students' attentional skills and emotion regulation. Consequently, it facilitates communication skills, reduces anxiety, and improves the educational environment. The research underscores the value of mindfulness as a strategy educators embrace in countries such as India, Turkey, the United States, China, and Spain. While it has yet to gain widespread adoption in Colombia, mindfulness offers a promising avenue for fostering a more positive and engaging learning experience for students and teachers. This study aims to contribute to the field of foreign language teaching by introducing new strategies that facilitate students' learning processes. As researchers, the authors seek to provide a broad perspective on this technique and its potential benefits.

Keywords: anxiety, linguistic anxiety, linguistic skills, mindfulness

1. Introduction

Mindfulness serves as a bridge connecting actions and how we react in many situations. By practicing self-recognition, individuals can successfully regulate their emotions and maintain composure during stressful or anxious situations. Numerous studies show that regular mindfulness practice can effectively reduce stress, anxiety, and depression. According to Kwon D. et al. (2013), it is a valuable tool to prevent stress and burnout at work, leading to better overall health and well-being for employees. Mindfulness has become increasingly popular because of its potential to enhance mental and physical well-being, the growing body of scientific research, the rise of dedicated mindfulness centers, and their integration into education, workplaces, and healthcare evidence this. The origins are in India. However, it is gaining traction globally.

Mindfulness has been implemented in the EFL classroom to improve the learning environment, enhance communication skills, and, on the other hand, help reduce students' anxiety. In addition, recent research has demonstrated that mindfulness can also increase teacher confidence. For that reason, the researchers searched databases such as Google Scholar and SCOPUS for studies on mindfulness in EFL classrooms. We use an Excel grid to analyze and categorize the research findings using a color-coding technique. We found 20 different studies worldwide in many countries, such as India, Turkey, the United States, China, and Spain, in which Mindfulness was implemented, and it had findings in the last 5 years.

Furthermore, we divided the results into four sections: Mindfulness to reduce language anxiety, students' learning process improvement, learning environment improvement, and Teachers' self-efficacy improvement. Mindfulness practices can help students feel less anxious about speaking up in class and taking tests and raise communication skills by enhancing listening and encouraging participation. Teachers and students can also benefit from mindfulness, experiencing reduced anxiety and gaining emotional control. Various countries have analyzed these

positive impacts, particularly in EFL settings. While not yet widespread in Colombia, mindfulness shows promise as an essential tool for educators who seek to create a more positive and enjoyable learning experience for everyone. This article aims to review research reports on implementing mindfulness in the EFL classroom to reduce language anxiety among learners. Mindfulness and its effects in an EFL classroom reduce language anxiety and enhance language skills.

2. Theoretical Framework

In the current literature, mindfulness practices are frequently conflated with meditation. Therefore, this article focuses solely on mindfulness as a distinct mental state while acknowledging that meditation is just one of many practices that can enhance this state, according to Zeilhofer, (2023). This article examines the application of mindfulness in the EFL classroom to improve students' ability to manage their attention, emotions, and cognitive processes in language learning, ultimately enhancing their communicative competencies and learning environment. Research findings indicate that mindfulness can mitigate anxiety levels in language learners and foster clearer communication skills to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the topics discussed and the impact of this strategy in education; it is crucial to define mindfulness as the primary strategy to approach some negative feelings that can emerge in the classroom such as anxiety, and language anxiety, all of which are addressed in this initial section.

2.1 An Attempt to Define Mindfulness

There are various definitions of mindfulness. It started in the medical field to treat patients with chronic pain and was implemented by Kabat-Zinn in the 1970s to enhance health conditions. However, according to Deuto Salud, (2022), Mindfulness first appeared in India and Nepal, mainly in the Buddhist religion, where meditation had emotional management purposes to drive people's emotional issues into calm situations. Giraldi, (2019) defined mindfulness as an intervention to reduce stress through meditation. Mañas et al, explained that:

“Mindfulness is the English translation of the word Sati (English word). Which means: consciousness, attention, and memory. In this context, we say that we are conscious when we notice or notice what is happening inside us (thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations, etc.) and/or outside (smells, sounds, people, objects...)” (2014, p.4)

McKenzie, (2022), defines mindfulness as a self-help technique for relaxation and temporarily escaping reality by stopping intrusive thoughts and maintaining calm. Additionally, mindfulness is considered a skill, as Gerner states that:

“Mindfulness is a skill that allows us to be less reactive to what is happening now. It is a way of relating to all experiences—positive, negative, and neutral—such that our overall suffering is reduced and our sense of well-being increases.” (2004, p.24).

This means that Mindfulness is a tool that we use to react calmly and logically to the situations we face, whether positive or negative. Lastly, Ryan and Brown (2003), define mindfulness is understood as the awareness of both internal and external experiences, which aids in understanding and recognizing our emotions.

We have merged the definitions and added our perceptions and experiences as teachers and English language learners. We define mindfulness as a bridge that links actions and reactions to different possible situations that a person may have. This connection is facilitated through self-awareness and meditation, allowing for self-control and emotional regulation during stressful or anxious moments. In this article, our definition will be centered on the education field, specifically the ELT (English Language Teaching) related to EFL and language anxiety.

2.2 Anxiety

After discussing mindfulness and its effectiveness in managing certain emotions, it is time to introduce the concept of anxiety. As Rachman (2013) said: “Anxiety is a tense, unsettling anticipation of a threatening but formless event, a feeling of uneasy suspense. It is a negative effect (feeling) so closely related to fear that the two terms are used interchangeably in many circumstances.” (p.3). Anxiety is the feeling that something terrible is going to happen and is a damaging uncertainty of what is coming. In this case, the author characterizes anxiety as a negative emotion. However, Anxiety serves a purpose in human beings, according to Tuma, A.H., & Maser, J. D. (2019): “The various roles of anxiety in human behavior and in psychiatry disorders have psychologists and psychiatrists has recognized long. The instrumental survival value of anxiety must be acknowledged to be as essential in human experience as that of pain”. (p.19). Anxiety is a natural response part of our systems and body to take care of ourselves. Nevertheless, when it attains excessive levels, and it's constant, it starts being a problem due to the unpleasant symptoms that the person has.

These are troubling and stressful symptoms that no one wants to experience. Unfortunately, they are all too familiar. As Zeidner and Matthews (2010) note, "Anxiety is a ubiquitous and pervasive problem in modern society, as encapsulated by the popular depiction of the modern era as 'the age of anxiety'." (p. 13). Our goal is not to increase these disorders in our students. On the contrary, we feel a strong need to create classrooms where the well-being of our students is the top priority.

2.3 Language Anxiety

It is fundamental to clarify the differences between language anxiety and anxiety. According to Horwitz, E. (2001), language anxiety is a specific anxiety rather than a trait anxiety. For that reason, it needs to focus on the language anxiety concept itself, merging anxiety and language as a unique concept. According to H, Yi-Wen:

"Language anxiety is an experience unique to the language learning process, and this unique emotion or experience may be associated with the anxiety of feeling limited, broken, incompetent, having another self or a different personality in a target language, I believe that while learning target languages, L2 or FL identities are developing L1 identities are reconstructed." (2014, p.66)

Taking this main point into account, part of the objective of this article is to reduce anxiety when speaking English because, as is already mentioned, it is not the same anxiety that is occasioned because of experiences or fears that language anxiety is caused along the language learning process. According to Garzon, L., there are "factors such as motivation, anxiety, learning styles, and study strategies, as factors of huge incidence for the learning of a foreign language" (2024, p.4834).

To begin with the construction of the definition, the authors consider what MacIntyre, P., and Gregersen, T. affirm as language anxiety: "Encompasses the feelings of worry and negative, fear-related emotions associated with learning or using a language that is not an individual's mother tongue." (2012, p.103) Based on personal experiences inside the classroom as pre-service teachers and students, we have evidence that it is common to experience fear when using a second language due to the inherent difficulty of the process. In our opinion, this is not a strange phenomenon. Adding to this idea, Horwitz et al, mentioned that it is possible to conceptualize foreign language anxiety in two ways: "(1) As a manifestation or transfer of other types of anxiety (i.e., trait anxiety, test anxiety, or public speaking anxiety) in the language learning context, or (2) as situation-specific anxiety." (2010, p.97). Considering this, it is necessary to pay attention to our students to differentiate if they are having issues with the use of the language or with the methods to assess, express, or with their context.

2.4 Language Skills

To achieve the purpose of this article, it is necessary to explain the concept of language skills and why they are essential. Language skills development is one of the main benefits that may result from using mindfulness in an FL classroom context. Language skills consist of several skills, including reading, speaking, listening, and writing. Language is a tool to convey information in the mind, which is directly transmitted orally or written, according to Raharjo (2022). Indeed (2023), states that language skills are vital for expressing thoughts coherently and communicating effectively. These skills include reading, writing, listening, and speaking. They provide structure and relevance to the information being conveyed. Cambridge (2024) defines skill as: "An ability to do an activity or job well, especially because you have practiced it." Taking this skill concept deeply into the language field, we found a more specific definition, according to Preetika (2023): "English language skills refer to the ability to speak, read, write, and understand the English language fluently and effectively." The combination of practice and good use of these skills results in "The ability to use language." (Collins Dictionary, 2024). According to Stephens, A. (2023,). The skills previously mentioned result in everyone having a way of living in society and using them to express or transmit their thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly and precisely.

Therefore, we realized that our five sources coincide in defining Language Skills as an ability that is developed along the practice and use of each LS, such as listening, writing, reading, and speaking to communicate a message to an external person with a specific purpose, Indeed (2023) provides what we consider a missing part on the other definitions, as they take into account of the context in which the message is omitted whether if it is a formal or informal situation, this is important because the skills can be developed and worked in both ways depending on the person that uses the language and the target audience that will receive it.

As is well known, today's citizens must achieve high communicative competence levels in English, enabling them to interact in different contexts according to the globalized world and its demands. Thus, the development of communicative skills in English has shifted from being a privilege to a necessity across various productive sectors. (Cely, 2020), in this sense, the development of communicative skills makes sense to the extent that it facilitates communication between members of different cultures.

3. Methodology

This article employs Qualitative Thematic Analysis (QTA) with color coding, a widely recognized approach in qualitative research for organizing and analyzing large volumes of textual data. This technique enables the systematic identification of patterns and themes within the data, thereby providing a structured means of summarizing findings from diverse studies.

In this methodology, color coding is a visual and practical tool for classifying data into distinct categories, facilitating a more efficient and comprehensible analysis process. Thematic analysis has been widely employed in qualitative research, with numerous scholars utilizing color coding as an adjunctive tool to facilitate the management of voluminous datasets. To illustrate, Braun and Clarke (2006) formalized thematic analysis as a rigorous qualitative methodology, emphasizing its flexibility in analyzing patterns across data. Nowell et al. (2017) In this methodology, the use of color-coding serves as a visual and practical tool for the classification of data into distinct categories, thereby facilitating a more efficient and comprehensible analysis process. Thematic analysis has been widely employed in qualitative research, with numerous scholars utilizing color coding as an adjunctive tool to facilitate the management of voluminous datasets. To illustrate, Braun and Clarke (2006) formalized thematic analysis as a rigorous qualitative methodology, emphasizing its flexibility in analyzing patterns across data. Nowell et al. (2017) emphasized the value of thematic analysis in ensuring transparency and trustworthiness in qualitative research. Additionally, it was observed that color-coding can enhance the organization and accessibility of data. Castleberry and Nolen (2018) discussed the use of thematic analysis in the context of qualitative data visualization., emphasizing how tools such as color-coding can facilitate the clarity of themes and sub-themes.

In the course of this literature review, we examined 20 resources published in the last five years on the application of mindfulness in diverse educational and cultural contexts. The initial identification of 22 categories led to their grouping into four main themes: reducing student anxiety, improving language proficiency, improving the learning environment, and increasing teacher self-efficacy. The results demonstrated that mindfulness effectively reduced language anxiety and other detrimental feelings, thereby fostering a more positive and engaging classroom atmosphere. Students exhibited greater confidence and attention, which improved their disposition toward English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes and strengthened their communicative competence. Furthermore, mindfulness improved teacher performance by promoting self-efficacy and emotional regulation, benefiting the overall educational experience. The articles that were related according to its findings for the main categories developed for this literature review in the color-coding structure can be evidenced in the following grid:

Table 1. Acuña, A. & Ayala, J. (2024). Self-elaboration based on the articles related to each one of the four categories developed along this literature review

Category:	Research Design:	Article
Mindfulness as a Language Anxiety Reduction Strategy	Mixed method	Anila, M. M., & Dhanalakshmi, D. (2016). Mindfulness-based stress reduction for reducing anxiety, enhancing self-control, and improving academic performance among adolescent students. <i>Indian Journal of Positive Psychology</i> , 7(4), 390.
	Qualitative research	Ersanlı, C. Y., & Ünal, T. (2022). Impact of Mindfulness Training on EFL Learners' Willingness to Speak, Speaking Anxiety Levels and Mindfulness Awareness Levels. <i>Education Quarterly Reviews</i> , 5.
	Qualitative research	Charoensukmongkol, P. (2019). The role of mindfulness in reducing English language anxiety among Thai college students. <i>International journal of bilingual education and bilingualism</i> , 22(4), 414-427.
	Mixed method	Choomchaiyo, N., & Varma, P. (2021). The influences of mindfulness on foreign language fluency mediated by irrational thoughts, foreign language anxiety, and self-efficacy on Thai English learners.

	Mixed method	Fallah, N., Abdolazadeh, F., & Yaaghobi, M. (2023). Mindfulness and anxiety among foreign language teachers: The role of cognitive reappraisal and self-efficacy.
	Quantitative research	Karunananda, A. S., Goldin, P. R., & Talagala, P. D. (2016). Examining mindfulness in education.
	Mixed method	Morgan, W. J. (2019). Investigating the effects of mindfulness meditation on L2 learners' self-efficacy in an instructed foreign language context.
	Questionnaires	Rahman, V., & Syafe'i, A. F. R. (2019). Using guided meditation for lowering senior high school students' anxiety to speak English as a foreign language.
	Quantitative research	Zhao, S., Yuan, L., & Wu, M. (2022). Does a 5-minute brief mindfulness or listening activation help college students reduce English listening anxiety before an EFL listening test?
Students' improvement in communicative competencies:	Mixed method	Ersanlı, C. Y., & Ünal, T. (2022). Impact of Mindfulness Training on EFL Learners' Willingness to Speak, Speaking Anxiety Levels and Mindfulness Awareness Levels. <i>Education Quarterly Reviews</i> , 5.
	Qualitative research	Fayerberger, S. (2023). Enhancing Foreign Language Enjoyment and Weil-Being Through a Mindfulness-Based Intervention Program in the Efl High School Classroom Teacher's Insights.
	Mixed method	Moghadam, H., Ghanizadeh, A., & Ghonsooly, B. (2020). Differences in EFL learners' burnout levels and receptive language skills with regard to mindfulness-based instruction. <i>Explorations in English Language and Linguistics</i> , 8(2), 185-219.
Learning environment improvement.	Mixed method	Mortimore, L. (2017). Mindfulness and foreign language anxiety in the bilingual primary classroom. <i>Educación y futuro: revista de investigación aplicada y experiencias educativas</i> .
	Case Study	Wang, Y., & Liu, C. (2016). Cultivate mindfulness: A case study of mindful learning in an English as a foreign language classroom. <i>IAFOR journal of education</i> , 4(2), 141-155.
	Qualitative research	Fayerberger, S. (2023). Enhancing Foreign Language Enjoyment and Weil-Being Through a Mindfulness-Based Intervention Program in the Efl High School Classroom Teacher's Insights. <i>Educacia</i> 21, (25), 365-375.
	Action research	Largo, D.G. (2022). The articulation of Mindfulness and English as a Foreign Language Teaching in a fifth grade: Exploring contemplative practices in language teaching.

	Mixed method	Ersanlı, C. Y., & Ünal, T. (2022). Impact of Mindfulness Training on EFL Learners' Willingness to Speak, Speaking Anxiety Levels and Mindfulness Awareness Levels. <i>Education Quarterly Reviews</i> , 5.
	Action research	Trojan, Samuel, "Integrating Mindfulness Strategies and English as a Second Language Instruction" (2020). School of Education and Leadership Student Capstone Projects. 485. https://digitalcommons.hamline.edu/hse_cp/485
<i>Teachers' self-efficacy:</i>	Quantitative research	Fallah, N., Abdolazadeh, F., & Yaaghobi, M. (2023). Mindfulness and anxiety among foreign language teachers: The role of cognitive reappraisal and self-efficacy. <i>Mindfulness</i> , 14(12), 3020–3032.

4. Findings

Regarding student's learning processes, it was found that mindfulness can work as a tool to gain different aspects in the classroom and learning of EFL; these are some of the aspects found and analyzed:

4.1 Mindfulness as a Language Anxiety Reduction Strategy

Among the articles reviewed, some were related to the use of mindfulness to reduce language anxiety. According to Geng, Y. (2021), this study was inspired by the mounting pressure experienced by students in public institutions caused by the high expectations that society has of them. This study was carried out using questionnaires that divided foreign language classroom anxiety into three main labels: Communication anxiety, exam stress, and fear of being judged negatively; the test was sent via Ethernet and required the students to fill it seriously and truthfully. The results showed that there is not a significant difference in mindfulness levels regarding gender; this was one of the possible demographic aspects to analyze during the research, and others such as if students were only children, place of origin, and ethnicity; these factors were related to some differences on the mindfulness levels showed by the questionnaire. The findings point out that upper-grade students, urban students, and those with higher college entrance examination scores (especially in English) tend to have higher levels of mindfulness; besides, lower-grade students and those from rural areas might benefit from interventions or practices to enhance their mindfulness levels, particularly in non-judgment and observation dimensions.

To conclude, this article suggests that according to Geng, Y. "...to integrate psychotherapy methods including mindfulness meditation into English classroom teaching to improve students' mindfulness level. Through mindfulness, students' motivation for learning can be improved and they can better focus attention and awareness on classroom learning." (2021, p.142)

Furthermore, some other authors found during their interventions that students tend to decrease their foreign language anxiety. Choomchaiyo, N., & Varma, P. used questionnaires based on standardized scales and found that: "There is a significant direct positive relationship between mindfulness and foreign language anxiety. Therefore, Mindfulness directly influences foreign language anxiety among Thai people." (2021, p.174) Also explains this reduction of anxiety due to some irrational thoughts that are generated because of the expectations that their partners have on them, but those thoughts get to be eradicated through and after the mindfulness sessions. In addition, Morgan, W. J. stated in the findings of his research: "In particular, though, participants gave the most positive responses for the first two items, which center on enjoyment and helpfulness. They also were highly positive regarding their willingness to recommend mindfulness meditation to fellow peers." (2019, p.53) It confirms that students realized the progress raised through mindfulness but also recognized that this strategy would be able to improve their performance as well with other students. In addition, Zhao, S., Yuan, L., & Wu, M. found in their research that: "The intervention focused on mindfulness was effective in reducing state anxiety before the listening test, which corresponds to the previous hypothesis that a short-time intervention focused on mindfulness could help students reduce state anxiety." (2022, p.54) This highlights that mindfulness strategies are also functional to reduce anxiety regarding a specific skill or task besides general language anxiety reduction.

Taking into account the previous findings provided by different authors and with different populations, we can conclude thanks to Zhao, S., Yuan, L., & Wu, M. (2022) that mindfulness is a valuable classroom strategy to reduce the possible types of anxiety that a student may arise during the foreign language learning process whether in general or in specific aspects related to the class and also foster awareness on classroom learning procedures and results as recorded by Morgan, W. J. (2019). As pre-service teachers, this is valuable information that can help us

change and foster a good and healthy relationship between the target language and the students in the process of acquiring it.

4.2 Students' Improvement in Communicative Competencies

The literature review revealed that mindfulness has a beneficial impact on communicative competencies. For a productive conversation to occur, it is essential to comprehend the other person's perspective and be willing to consider their opinions. Consequently, the initial step in enhancing communication is to improve listening skills. In a study conducted by Zhao, S., Yuan, L., & Wu, M. (2022) at a university in China with 91 participants (71 females, 20 males), it was found that a 5-minute period of mindfulness or listening activation had a significant effect on reducing participants' levels of listening anxiety. It is beneficial when the teacher has decided to facilitate a discussion in which students are required to consider alternative perspectives and contribute to developing the topic under discussion.

When the students have overcome their listening skills, they are supposed to be ready to respond and explain their points. To complete that process, they need to be motivated, in a study conducted by Ersanlı, C. Y., & Ünal, T. in 2022 some students who were studying in the Aviation Management Department were more willing to communicate in the second language after the use of mindfulness when making speaking activities in the EFL classroom, students resulted more confident about themselves participating in discussion activities.

The students also found that they had a better concentration level, which is important when having conversations. This improvement matters to us as EFL teachers because to develop a language, it is necessary to work also on the communicative competencies, not just on the grammar approach; practicing is how we learn, and it is the best way to upgrade in any language acquisition process; if we have this strategy to achieve that progress on the communicative skills it is essential to take a look on it to inquiry ourselves, how can I do as a teacher to implement this strategy and make my students feel better on their relationship with the language and the practice along the learning process.

4.3 Learning Environment Improvement

Some authors have proposed that mindfulness functions as a tool to enhance the learning environment, benefiting both students and teachers by promoting efficient, safe, and calm learning and teaching experiences.

Mortimore, L. (2017) conducted a mixed-method study over nine weeks with primary school students. It utilized self-reporting questionnaires (one pre-test at the beginning of the first term and another post-test during the intervention) to measure mindfulness and attitudes toward the target language. This study was born from the acknowledgment that the primary classroom is the first exposure or encounter children have with English as a Foreign Language (EFL), influencing their attitudes towards language learning. Furthermore, data were collected from teachers to ascertain their receptivity to mindfulness techniques and their expectations. The intervention made by Mortimore, L. took place with 4 sessions per week of a "short-guided mediation for 5-10 minutes on either mindful listening, observation of the breath, body scan, or loving-kindness, and followed with teacher-led class discussion." (2017, p. 24). The study demonstrated improved L2 among students who showed high attention and low distraction scores in the classroom generated after each mindfulness session.

A case study conducted by Wang, Y., & Liu, C. (2016) with university-level students used pre-surveys and post-surveys during the practices of mindfulness strategies. This study was born due to some concerns that the author Liu had regarding students' need for more engagement and awareness in learning English as a Foreign Language. This guides authors to explore mindfulness in language learning to foster a more engaged and aware learning community. This was taken over during guided meditation sessions, where deep breaths were used to relax, write about their thoughts, and share their ideas. Finally, students were allowed to use their first language or the target language to feel more comfortable when expressing their thoughts. The surveys took place to help the mediator decide which type of activities to use with the foreign language learners and to know if those activities worked, helping improve aspects in the classroom and their relationship with the language. Findings presented by Wang, Y., & Liu, C. (2016) showed that by engaging in mindfulness practices, EFL students fostered a sense of community and became attuned to their supportive social environment and cognitive processes. The use of mindful cooperative learning allowed students to explore their awareness, gain insights from peers, and engage in reflective and critical thinking. This highlights how mindfulness aids students in establishing a supportive learning environment and increasing their awareness of social comfort.

In addition, an investigation based on a classroom project made by Largo, D.G. (2022) implemented mindfulness and collected results through qualitative methods such as observation of the practitioner, teachers' journals, and students' artifacts. This study was born from the need to develop speaking skills in the students so that they can

communicate authentic and current experiences, thoughts, feelings, and ideas in the target language (in this case, English as a lingua franca). The mindfulness-guided practices were carried out, placing students in a comfortable space and using some acoustic instruments and different types of authentic videos; according to Largo, D.G. (2022, p. 40), this audio-visual stimulus helps to recall learned vocabulary and language structures. The findings provided by Largo, D.G. (2022, p. 59) showed that students in the end, felt safe and comfortable in the environment they were living together to share experiences, feelings, and thoughts without judgments and at the same this was linked to calm and relaxing feelings decreasing detrimental ones.

The articles pertaining to mindfulness offered insights into the development, analysis, and implementation of mindfulness practices, with the aim of enhancing the learning environment. The specific objective is to enhance the learning and teaching processes. Drawing on our experiences as both students and prospective educators, we are convinced that a secure learning environment is conducive to a more positive relationship with the language. This assertion is supported by the findings of Mortimore (2017), as referenced in the aforementioned article. In addition to fostering a judgment-free environment, mindfulness can promote relaxation, which in turn can mitigate detrimental emotions such as anxiety and language anxiety, as evidenced by research conducted by Largo, D.G. (2022). Mindfulness is not only beneficial when working with students; it can also be advantageous for educators.

4.4 Teachers' Self-efficacy

The preceding sections have outlined the numerous advantages of mindfulness for students and the learning environment. However, the experience from the teacher's perspective was not addressed despite the crucial role that teachers play in the classroom. This gap was addressed by a revision of the article "Mindfulness and Anxiety among Foreign Language Teachers." The article entitled "The Role of Cognitive Reappraisal and Self-Efficacy" was written by Fallah, N., Abdolazadeh, F., and Yaaghobi, M. (2023). In this study, the participants were 245 foreign language teachers, and the requisite data were collected via self-report scales.

The objective of this study was to examine the extent to which self-efficacy and cognitive reappraisal contribute to the relationship between foreign language teaching anxiety and mindfulness strategies. The article thus concludes that teaching foreign languages can be a challenging task for teachers, which may give rise to anxiety in students. Despite the best efforts of the English teacher to achieve excellent results, it is not guaranteed that students will advance at the desired pace.

This study's results indicate that the educational community should be mindful of the positive impact of CR and SE in FLTA management. Integrating mindfulness training in teacher training programs is a justifiable approach to enhance the self-efficacy and emotion regulation of foreign language teachers, thus alleviating their anxiety. The authors consider the mentioned aspects before because, according to Mañas, et al:

"Only a conscious educator can educate consciously. an educator will be attentive, calm, relaxed, and at peace with himself and with others. Through his mere presence, you will embody qualities and attitudes such as patience, trust, respect, and kindness. He will be a model for his students and will motivate them, will guide and help them develop these and other qualities, attitudes, and competencies. He will be in a position to help his students generate their self-knowledge. and mindfulness skills." (2014, p.12)

5. Discussion

Colombia has one of the lowest levels of English proficiency in Latin America, ranking 17th out of 21 countries. According to EF (Education First) Furthermore, it is important to highlight that "the social and emotional development of Colombian children and adolescents is in decline, exacerbated by the effects of COVID-19 (Instituto Colombiano de Neurociencias, 2020)". As pre-service teachers, we find it interesting to implement mindfulness in English classes in Colombia because part of the improvement in a language or subject is the emotional improvement of the students.

This literature review demonstrates that mindfulness is not a novel approach, having been pioneered by Kabatt Zinn in 1978 through the incorporation of meditation into medical and psychological practices. However, our literature review in countries such as Colombia revealed a need for more articles and evidence on the subject, which makes it an innovative approach in our country. The research yielded a unique article from Colombia, published by the "Instituto Bilingüe Alfonso Jaramillo Gutiérrez", a public coeducational institution located in Pereira, Risaralda. In this case, the results were positive. Introducing mindfulness techniques fostered a more relaxed and conducive environment for students to participate in speaking activities. Largo, D. G. (2022). In our view, mindfulness is a viable strategy to address these anxieties, thereby fostering a safe learning environment in which students feel empowered to participate and comfortably use the English language actively; by cultivating a positive rapport among all participants within the learning environment, mindfulness promotes a harmonious

relationship with the language and facilitates its effective learning. The use of mindfulness techniques is of paramount importance, especially given the unique contextual and socio-economic circumstances that many Colombian students experience.

As we reviewed the literature, we were struck by how mindfulness continues to demonstrate its transformative potential in EFL classrooms. We were particularly inspired by Geng's (2021) emphasis on how mindfulness techniques, such as non-judgment and observation, can help students manage classroom anxiety and foster a more accepting and attentive mindset. Similarly, Zhao et al. (2022) inspired us with their findings on how even brief mindfulness practices can reduce listening anxiety and improve concentration during tasks. We also felt a strong connection to Largo's (2022) work in the Colombian context, where mindfulness practices helped students feel emotionally safe and comfortable, enabling them to engage authentically in English. These findings reinforce our belief that mindfulness is much more than a stress reduction tool; it is a comprehensive strategy that transforms the emotional and cognitive aspects of language learning. It is clear to us that mindfulness not only removes barriers to effective learning but also creates an environment of mutual support and increased self-awareness for both students and teachers.

6. Conclusions

This review of research reveals mindfulness as a powerful tool to enhance the English language learning experience. The results of our research indicate that mindfulness successfully reduces student anxiety related to communication, tests, and negative evaluations, thereby contributing to a positive learning environment. Furthermore, mindfulness enhances listening skills and encourages students to speak up, creating a safe and supportive atmosphere for active participation.

These benefits extend to teachers as well, increasing teacher self-efficacy by reducing anxiety and ameliorating emotional regulation, leading to a more effective teaching experience. This review highlights the positive impact of mindfulness that has been observed and probed across various countries and age groups, whether children, teenagers, or adults, particularly analyzed in this case in EFL settings.

While mindfulness adoption in Colombian education seems limited, its potential to address student anxieties and improve learning outcomes is promising. This review promotes mindfulness as a valuable strategy or resource for educators seeking to transform English language learning for both them and their students into a more positive and enjoyable experience.

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