



REVISTA KRONOS

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in a Diverse EFL Classroom: A Case Study.

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ABSTRACT Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, also known as ADHD is the most common neuropsychiatric disorder worldwide in the pediatric population, persisting on adulthood in some cases. According to The World Health Organization (WHO) (2004), this disorder is considered a public health problem in Latin America and approximately affects 36 million people. Despite its importance, the topic has not been deeply studied in Ecuador, which is why general and even specific studies of patients diagnosed with the disorder should be carried out. This case study involves a 7-year-old student diagnosed with ADHD, and it also includes relevant information about the disorder and its types. The qualitative method was used in this descriptive study to collect information from a student data sheet containing details of the learner's condition. After the analysis of facts, concrete strategies and activities for the student diagnosed with ADHD were proposed. Subsequently, an observation sheet was used during the application of the suggested strategies to examine the student's performance. Findings show that despite the fact that teaching English to students with ADHD represents a complex challenge for teachers, this disorder can be effectively treated by developing adaptations in the teaching-learning process, which include systems, routines and activities that help ADHD learners to direct their energies adequately.

KEYWORDS ADHD, EFL teaching, inclusion, behavior disorders

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Trastorno por Déficit de Atención e Hiperactividad en un aula diversa de inglés como lengua extranjera: un estudio de caso

RESUMEN El trastorno de déficit de atención e hiperactividad (TDAH), es el trastorno neuropsiquiátrico más común en todo el mundo en la población pediátrica, persistiendo en la edad adulta en algunos casos. Según la Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS) ICD (2004), este trastorno es considerado un problema de salud pública en América Latina y afecta aproximadamente a 36 millones de personas. A pesar de su importancia, este tema no ha sido estudiado a profundidad en el Ecuador, por lo cual, se deben desarrollar estudios a nivel general y específico de pacientes diagnosticados con este desorden. Este estudio de caso involucra a un estudiante de 7 años diagnosticado con TDAH. A la vez, se presenta información relevante sobre este desorden y sus tipos. El método cualitativo fue usado en el presente estudio descriptivo y la información fue recopilada a través de una hoja de datos del estudiante la cual incluye detalles de la condición del estudiante. Luego del análisis de los hechos, se propusieron estrategias y actividades concretas para el estudiante diagnosticado con TDAH. Posteriormente, se aplicó una ficha de observación durante la aplicación de las actividades sugeridas para identificar el desempeño del alumno. Los resultados muestran que a pesar de que enseñar inglés a estudiantes con TDAH representa un desafío complejo para los maestros, este trastorno puede tratarse de manera efectiva desarrollando adaptaciones en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje que incluyen sistemas, rutinas y actividades que ayudan a los estudiantes con TDAH a dirigir sus energías adecuadamente.

PALABRAS CLAVE TDAH, enseñanza de EFL, inclusión, trastornos del comportamiento.

INTRODUCTION

ADHD is a prevalent neuropsychiatric disorder affecting approximately 36 million people worldwide, making it a significant public health concern (Barragan-Pérez et al., 2007). Both in Latin America and globally, ADHD impacts an estimated 4% to 12% of school-aged children, with recognition and diagnosis in adults steadily increasing (Polanczyk et al., 2007). Despite this progress, treatment for adults with ADHD continues to lag behind that of children, highlighting ongoing gaps in support across age groups.

In the context of education, students with ADHD face unique challenges, particularly in acquiring skills, such as English language proficiency. This study aims to address these challenges by proposing practical strategies and activities tailored to the needs of students with ADHD, emphasizing their specific learning characteristics and fostering a supportive educational environment.

The successful implementation of these strategies relies heavily on institutional support, including access to human, material, and technological resources. Furthermore, teacher engagement through project socialization is critical, as it promotes reflection on the importance of differentiated instruction. However, challenges such as limited knowledge of ADHD and misconceptions among educators about the disorder remain significant barriers.

This study underscores the importance of inclusion in education, advocating for an environment grounded in respect, tolerance, empathy, and acceptance. By addressing the needs of students with ADHD, this research aims to create learning opportunities for all members of the educational community in a safe and inclusive setting.

To better understand how ADHD affects learning in a diverse EFL classroom, the next section explains the key ideas and theories that guide this study.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

This behavioral disorder has been given different names over time. Rafalovich (2001) recounts the terminologies and theories related to ADHD, including pejorative names such as imbecility or stupidity, and other medical terms used from 1920 to the present, like encephalitis lethargica, atypical development of the ego, minimal brain damage and hyperkinesia (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Although the contemporary concept of this disorder was first given by the American Psychiatric Association in 1980, research and study of ADHD began around 30 years ago in Latin America (De la Peña & Palacio, 2019). Locally, in Ecuador, a study carried out by Acosta-Rodas et al. (2019), aimed to analyse the psychometrics properties of ADHD RS IV, one of the most widely used scales in the evaluation of ADHD, based on student behaviour reported by the teachers of some Ecuadorian student' sample. The authors concluded that it is possible to affirm that ADHD RS IV scale is valid and reliable properties to be applied in our context. The findings of this research agree with others that state that children with higher scores in ADHD's evaluation scales have higher difficulties in experiments which evaluate motor control. Even though this study was an important contribution to the research of ADHD in Ecuador, it was recommended to replicate the study in a national level with a greater sample.

Nowadays, ADHD is defined as a behaviour disorder characterized by a certain degree of attention deficit and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that is maladaptive and inconsistent with the child's developmental level (Hidalgo & Soutullo, 2008). Barkley (1997), Bitaubé et al. (2009), and Faraone (2002), as cited in Fernández et al. (2017), argue that ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by a strong genetic basis and high heritability. This condition involves multiple neuropsychological factors that contribute to attentional deficits, impulsivity, and motor overactivity in children (Inostroza, 2007).

Furthermore, it should be noted that studies by Barragan et al. (2007) and Hidalgo and Soutullo (2008) agree that the clinical manifestations of ADHD are observed in the family and school environment, where daily life is socially and academically affected. In fact, a study by Carneiro da Silva et al. (2013), focused on interviewing the relatives of children with ADHD. It was found that there is also parental anxiety when kids are medicated to treat this problem, which is not completely understood in some cases. In several cases, parents of children with ADHD have faced condescension, shame and even humiliation at the hands of professionals involved with their children (Barkley, 2020).

It is important to note that parent reports provide important information concerning the child's difficulties. A study conducted by Moen et al. (2014) used a phenomenographic approach to analyze members of families with children diagnosed with ADHD, finding struggle for the acceptance of the children with the disorder and a negative impact on the family structure and stability; therefore, it was recommended to provide support for family members, as well as for the person with ADHD.

Years ago, it was not possible to talk about a treatment for ADHD. In recent years, several proposals for treating ADHD have been developed. For example, Fernández Jaén and Calleja Pérez (2004) proposed a psychostimulant approach. However, according to Ureña (2007), the most effective treatment is a multidisciplinary one that combines psychology, medication, and psychopedagogy. Therefore, it is crucial to provide teachers with the information and tools necessary to effectively teach learners with ADHD.

Young (2019) highlighted the updates made by the American Academy of Pediatrics to its guidelines on treating children and teens with ADHD, which has happened for the first time since 2011. Some criteria for diagnosis have been changed, current medications have been added and the need to rule out other causes of symptoms has been emphasized, drawing attention to team-based care among health professionals, parents, and school staff.

As it has been mentioned, ADHD is a neurodevelopmental condition that affects both children and adults, characterized by persistent patterns of inattention, impulsivity, and, in many cases, hyperactivity that interfere with daily functioning and self-regulation (Rodgers & Kalyn, 2019; American Psychiatric Association, 2022). The disorder presents in three main types: predominantly inattentive, predominantly hyperactive-impulsive, and combined type, the latter displaying symptoms of both categories (American Psychiatric Association, 2022).

In Ecuador, the Ministry of Education has implemented the *Instituciones Educativas Especializadas* (IEE) program to guarantee inclusive education for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN). As of 2022, there are 139 such institutions serving 10,181 students, 7,918 of whom have been diagnosed with ADHD, demonstrating the growing need for specialized educational support (Ministerio de Educación, 2022).

Types of ADHD

ADHD has been specially studied in the USA in the last decades. These studies have pointed out some of the characteristics of this behavioural disorder (Faraone et al., 2003). As the name suggests, the condition involves inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity; however, there are three general types of ADHD learners: predominantly hyperactive-impulsive, predominantly inattentive, and a combination of hyperactive-impulsive and inattentive. Studies, such as the one by Narbona (2001) mention that the most frequent type of ADHD is the combined hyperactive-inattentive (with triple prevalence in males), followed by the predominantly inattentive non-hyperactive type (with prevalence one and a half times higher in females) (p. 230).

Predominantly Hyperactive-Impulsive.

In his guide to ADHD for parents, teachers, and professionals, Bauermeister (2014) explains that in the past, the predominant hyperactive-impulsive type of disorder was known as minimal brain dysfunction, hyperkinetic reaction of childhood, or hyperactivity. Mena et al. (2006) indicate that children with ADHD predominantly hyperactive-impulsive tend to move constantly from place to place, talk a lot, and interrupt conversations or activities. They often answer questions in a hurried manner, and have difficulty performing tasks or playing quiet games. The authors mention that these behaviors are annoying and often very disturbing because of the manifestations of aggression in the classroom and in the family environment (p. 2).

Hyperactive kids are extremely restless and can be a challenge for teachers and parents. They are always walking, jumping, climbing, talking, tapping their fingers or stamping their feet. Meanwhile, impulsive children are impatient, and they usually blurt an answer out in the classroom, ignoring the teacher's instructions. It is also hard for them to respect turns in games and other activities or conversations. Needless to say, that complicates communicative group work and pair work that are usually used in EFL teaching and negatively affects the ADHD learner and the rest of the class.

Predominantly Inattentive.

Parents and teachers of children who suffer from the predominantly inattentive type may overlook ADHD because Predominantly Inattentive children are less likely to demonstrate the symptoms. That is, they are quiet; however, they do not pay attention to what they are working on. In one of the numerous studies about the relationship between ADHD and underachievement, it was seen that although parents and teachers rated students similarly on the hyperactivity scale, teachers rated students as more inattentive than parents did. (McCoach et al., 2020). These children have a hard time concentrating when working on tasks, listening to the teacher, or completing tests. They get distracted very easily because they are very sensitive to all visual and aural stimuli, therefore, they experience problems with self-regulation.

Studies have demonstrated that there is a relationship between learning disabilities and ADHD symptoms, especially in the inattentive type, for instance the study done by Mayes et al. (2000), whose finding showed that a learning disability was present in 70% of the children with ADHD, being the disability in writing two times more common than in reading, math, or spelling.

Combination of Hyperactive-Impulsive and Inattentive.

Roth and Marcin (2018) explain that most people with and without ADHD manifest some degree of inattentive or impulsive behavior, which is more severe in people with ADHD because such behavior occurs more often and interferes with attitudes at home, school, work, and in social settings.

People with ADHD combined type experience the symptoms of the two types equally, and according to the U.S. Department of Mental Health, most children have the combined type presenting inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity in the classroom.

Some of the symptoms that ADHD learners may often show were summarized by the American Psychiatric Association, as follows:

Table 1. *Types of ADHD*

Inattention	Hyperactivity and impulsivity
- Do not pay close attention to details; make care-less mistakes. - Have trouble keeping attention. - Do not seem to listen when spoken directly. - Do not follow instructions (loses focus, gets side-tracked). - Have trouble organizing activities. - Do not want to do things that require a lot of mental effort for a long time. - Lose things needed for tasks activities - Get distracted easily. - Are forgetful.	- Fidget with fingers or feet. - Often get up from their seats. - Run about and climb when is not appropriate. - Have trouble playing or doing leisure activities quietly. - Act as if «driven by a motor». - Talk excessively. - Give answers before questions are finished. - Have trouble waiting for their turn. - Interrupt or intrude on others.

Note. ADHD types and symptoms (adapted from American Psychiatric Association, 2013)

Teaching ADHD Learners

ADHD learners can present significant challenges for teachers, as their frequent inattention, distractibility, and daydreaming are common issues encountered in the classroom and must be effectively addressed by teachers, given that they often have a very short concentration span and difficulty following instructions. These are not the only problems to be seen in a classroom with one or more ADHD learners because the social aspect is affected negatively too, which may even cause frustration, depression and poor self-esteem in these children. Moreover, the academic underachievement often associated with ADHD can have long-term consequences, increasing the likelihood of school dropout or placement in special education programs. These and other potentially long-term effects need to be considered so that researchers and educators can intervene (Junod et al., 2006). It must be understood that it is not that these types of learners cannot or will not learn. In reality, the difficulty they face is not due to a lack of intelligence, but rather to the need for additional support in processing information and fostering meaningful learning.

Teachers can facilitate learning for these students within the classroom by making some adaptations and using the proper techniques and strategies such as dividing complex tasks into smaller simpler ones, over-learning, and cascade activities (Pokrivčáková, 2013). It is also advisable to give ADHD learners preferential seating and promote a safe environment in the classroom, reinforce appropriate patterns of behavior of all learners, among others (Pokrivčáková, 2015). Concordantly, Ha and Uyen (2020) emphasize that two important classroom management strategies are to consider special students' characteristics and reinforce their self-esteem.

ADHD and Learning a Foreign Language

First of all, it is important to point out that students with ADHD show difficulties in several language areas; thus, teaching a foreign language requires more dedication and planning on the part of the teacher in order to provide the student with the necessary tools to achieve the learning objectives. As Clares (2012) points out, teaching English to students who have ADHD implies an extra point of difficulty because it could be even more difficult for students with ADHD to maintain attention in the foreign language class because they do not understand the language. The author suggests applying appropriate methodologies to motivate and involve students in the learning process.

Likewise, as stated by Akbasli et al. (2017), one of the biggest challenges for students of a foreign language who have learning problems such as ADHD, is to find the motivation and commitment to start and finish a task. Students who have ADHD may lack learning strategies or may not know what strategy to apply for activities that demand attention,

and that is exactly what the teacher should do, provide the ADHD learners with strategies and use the proper techniques to engage them.

Undoubtedly, studies have explored the historical evolution, the symptoms and the challenges faced in educational settings; however, locally, there is a gap in research focusing on strategies that might work when teaching ADHD learners in the EFL classroom. Limited studies have been carried out in Latin America, particularly in Ecuador, where cultural and systematic differences need to be taken into account when choosing strategies that might turn EFL classrooms into inclusive settings that promote equitable learning opportunities.

Inclusive Education and differentiated instructions for ADHD students

Inclusive education for students with ADHD is currently understood as a pedagogical imperative that requires specific adaptations, personalized approaches, and evidence-based strategies to address the neurodevelopmental characteristics of these learners (Tello & Argudo-Serrano, 2024). Inclusion, therefore, should not be limited to mere physical presence in the classroom but must be realized through teaching practices that respond to the cognitive and behavioral traits associated with ADHD. Several studies concur that Differentiated Instruction (DI) serves as an effective pathway toward this goal. Rehman and Baig (2024) found that implementing DI produced remarkable results when meeting the individual needs of a student with ADHD through customized worksheets and lesson plans.

Similarly, Palacios and Prado (2025) emphasize the need for educators to adopt personalized and modified teaching strategies aimed at addressing the diverse requirements of learners with ADHD, particularly in the context of English as a Foreign Language instruction. Additionally, the incorporation of educational technology, such as interactive whiteboards, tablets, and gamification tools like *Kahoot* and *Quizlet*, has proven to enhance motivation, focus, and student engagement. Collectively, these studies reject the traditional *one-size-fits-all* approach and advocate for structured, flexible, and personalized pedagogical practices. They converge on the importance of establishing clear routines, employing multisensory methods, and promoting self-regulation through organized and predictable classroom environments, reaffirming that genuine inclusion is built upon a deep understanding of neurocognitive diversity and continuous pedagogical adaptation.

To provide a clearer understanding of the case, this study is grounded in the principles of inclusive education and differentiated instruction, which emphasize adapting teaching methods to meet learners' diverse needs (Tomlinson, 2014). Drawing on Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, the research assumes that learning occurs most effectively through guided interaction and scaffolded support. Within this framework, attention to learners with ADHD becomes essential, as their cognitive and behavioral characteristics often require flexible instructional strategies that balance structure with opportunities for active engagement. Furthermore, this study responds to the limited research on ADHD within Ecuadorian EFL contexts, offering localized insights into how inclusive pedagogical adaptations can improve language learning experiences for students with attention-related challenges.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in strict accordance with established research ethics. All participants were fully informed about the purpose of the research and the intended use of the data, and the school principal provided formal consent for the study. Data were collected over a five-month academic year and although these data were gathered a couple of years ago, they continue to be relevant due to the persistent challenges and instructional strategies associated with teaching English to learners with ADHD.

Prior to the implementation of this research study, the student diagnosed with ADHD was not differentiated from their peers in terms of instructional strategies or assessment practices, as educational settings often adopt a standardized approach to teaching and evaluation based on the assumption that equality means treating all learners the same. As a result, the specific cognitive, behavioral, and attentional needs of the student with ADHD were often overlooked, limiting opportunities for tailored pedagogical support and inclusive learning experiences.

This study makes an original contribution by addressing this gap and systematically examining the effects of targeted educational measures for this student, thereby generating new data and insights that enrich both the theoretical understanding and the practical approaches to supporting diverse learners in academic contexts. The findings thus offer valuable insights that remain applicable to current EFL pedagogical practices and contribute to the understanding of effective teaching approaches for this learner population.

Why a case study?

Owing to the fact that a case study is an appropriate research design which allows researchers to obtain in-depth knowledge about a specific real-world subject, the current project has been developed in order to identify the key characteristics, meanings, and implications of the particular case of a 7-year-old learner diagnosed with ADHD.

According to Yin (2014), a case study is a form of empirical research that deeply explores a contemporary phenomenon, referred to as the «case», within its real-world context, particularly when the distinction between the phenomenon and its context is not clearly defined, that is to say the phenomenon being studied cannot be fully separated or isolated from the environment in which it occurs. Therefore, a case study is the methodology that is best adapted to understand the specific situation of a particular student diagnosed with ADHD, who has his own story, school and family backgrounds that makes him unique. As it has been claimed, the cases are highly interesting for what they are unrepeatable, as well as for what they have in common, and the goal is to understand them (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011; Stake, 2007; Yin, 2009, as cited in Franco, 2019).

Setting and Participants

The participants for this research include one seven-year-old student enrolled in the third grade, his EFL teacher, and the school psychologist with whom interviews were conducted.

It is important to mention that the institution where the current study was developed is a private bilingual school in Ambato – Ecuador that provides students with high-quality bilingual education and additional services such as sports programs, arts and music workshops, library services, psychological care, and support systems to guarantee the well-being and academic success of all students. Moreover, both teachers and students have access to all the necessary resources including textbooks and technology. Lastly, the school offers customized education where each student is given the necessary attention from all the teachers; therefore, the school has the policy of having a maximum of 20 students per classroom. In the case of students with special needs or learning difficulties, the teachers work along with the school psychologist in order to support learners and provide them with the necessary help and guidance during the teaching – learning process.

Data Collection and Instruments

The present case study focuses on a qualitative method and descriptive study which aim to disclose patterns and connections in relation to theoretical constructs in order to advance theory development. In this regard, methods such as analysis of sources, interviews and observations have been applied. On that account, the instruments used for data collection include a student data sheet which was used during the first interview with the

teacher and school psychologist to gather information about the learner's situation, and an observation sheet to obtain data about the student's academic performance and behavior during the application of the suggested strategies.

Procedure

As the initial step, the analysis of the literature was developed in order to obtain relevant information about the characteristics and types of ADHD and its impact on English language learning. Subsequently, the information about the students' condition was obtained through a first interview with the school psychologist and the teacher using a student data sheet that includes specific aspects about the students' background, his academic performance and behavior.

By collecting detailed information on the student's behavior, attention patterns, learning styles, and social and family interactions, this sheet provides valuable insights into the student's individual characteristics. This information allows the development of a tailored proposal of strategies designed to address these unique needs. These strategies will focus on fostering engagement, improving attention, and enhancing task completion. Forthwith, the suggested strategies were presented to the teacher as a way of promoting an inclusive classroom environment where the student diagnosed with ADHD could be provided with equal opportunities during the teaching-learning process.

The researchers arranged classroom visits in order to identify the appropriateness of the proposed strategies based on the student's response and attitude towards the chosen activities. Data on the ADHD learner's academic performance and behavior during class were reported in an observation sheet. This information led to the reported findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Table 2. *Student data sheet*

Student's data	
Age: 7 years old	Date of birth: 09-08-2016
Areas / subjects to be adapted to the curriculum:	
Language and Literature, Science, Social Studies, Music, English	
Summary of educational history:	
The student is enrolled in the third grade of primary school. Maintains maladaptive behaviours such as physical and verbal aggression towards peers most of the time.	
The student does not follow the teachers' orders, does not fully comply with the tasks in class, does not do teamwork because they are not comfortable sharing and does not have good communication with his or her classmates because of their aggressiveness.	
Summary of the student's difficulties:	
The student presents an average academic level due to the fact that most of the time they are outside the classroom without the authorization of their teachers.	
Type of activities in which he presents more and less difficulty:	
Activities with more difficulty: group work, difficulty remaining in class, written work, does not follow orders. He does not like musical instruments, especially the flute.	
Less difficult: Mathematics; the student reasons well. Likes crossword puzzles, the more difficult the better. Likes to sing.	
It is important to emphasize that the student's long-term memory is average.	
Adaptation to class climate, classroom dynamics:	
The teachers have not yet made a curricular adaptation because the parents have not provided the student's psychological report. Their work dynamic is currently based on the commitments and guidance established during weekly meetings with the dece Mentor. It is also important to note that classroom activities are not fully carried out due to the lack of materials, which are not being provided by the parents.	
However, the following activities have been recommended by the dece while receiving the diagnosis:	
- Use of pictograms and crosswords - Setting times - Oral evaluations - Continuous feedback	

Relevant data and aspects of the family context:

Parents in the process of divorce, there is no good relationship even though they live in the same household. The student's older sister assumes most of the responsibility for his care, both in academic tasks and in personal needs. However, the student does not readily follow her instructions, which makes it challenging for her to provide the support he requires. It should also be noted that the sister is a 14-year-old adolescent.

Data and relevant aspects of the social context:

The student does not find it difficult to relate to his peers, it is easy for him to make friends with older people. In the classroom when relating to children of the same age, there have been several drawbacks as peers have begun to fear acts of aggression. The student wants to cut the hair of his classmates, breaks and destroys things that are not theirs.

For this reason, the student seeks out other children, usually in higher grades, to play with because his peers do not want him around because he is aggressive.

Further observation:

Currently, the psychological report from the external professional is expected, since a document has been signed with the commitment that the parents will act on the matter immediately.

The report, which was drawn up under the supervision of the mentor dece/pep, is valid for 20 working days, according to institutional procedure under ISO standards.

The student is already at the appointments corresponding to the intervention protocol, for this reason the results obtained from all the multidisciplinary work for the student's well-being must be expected, in addition to the respective follow-up according to the student's needs.

There is no great openness on the part of the teachers who do not find the mechanisms to deal with the student in a harmonious manner.

Note. Information obtained during an interview with the EFL teacher and school psychologist.

Table 3. *Strategies and specific activities*

Strategy	Theoretical Basis / Evidence	Specific Activity
1. Game-Based Learning	Hilliard and Kargbo (2017) indicate that game-based learning is a way to integrate learning into the instructional process facilitated by teachers, who should identify the ways in which their students learn best. Likewise, game-based learning encourages students to become more engaged in their own learning. Moreover, Sullivan-Carr's (2016) study indicates that game-based learning aimed at students with ADHD has a positive effect, as their interest and engagement increase. The author also concludes that it is important to consider game-based learning during curriculum development for students with ADHD.	Echo Game The echo game can be applied to practice English pronunciation. The teacher selects a word, and students echo by repeating the last syllables of that word. This activity promotes attention and verbal working memory, which is particularly beneficial for students with ADHD.
2. Use of Rewards and Incentives	Muntean (2011, cited in Richter et al., 2015) points out that gamification or the use of reward systems can be an effective motivational tool, as students respond positively to challenges and recognition of their progress. When applied in the efl classroom, this strategy can help students with ADHD stay focused and motivated through achievable goals.	Specific Activity: Award Badges and Recognitions. The teacher may give badges or digital certificates to students who complete tasks on time, participate actively, or demonstrate improvement. This approach encourages persistence and focus in students with ADHD.
3. Use of Music in English Classes	Considering the publication in <i>Frontiers in Psychology</i> (2021), listening to and playing music can improve attention and emotional regulation in students with ADHD. Similarly, Hallam (2010) indicates that music can positively influence mood, motivation, and concentration, especially when integrated into language-learning activities.	Specific Activity: «Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes» Song. Incorporating songs that involve body movement allows students with ADHD to release energy while reinforcing vocabulary and pronunciation in a fun way.

Strategy	Theoretical Basis / Evidence	Specific Activity
4. Use of Technological Resources in English Classes	Taking into account that students with ADHD tend to respond better to dynamic and interactive learning environments, the use of technological tools such as Quizlet, Kahoot, and interactive videos facilitates concentration and retention of information (Lee & Hammer, 2011). Technology allows content to be adapted to the student's rhythm and level of interest, promoting autonomy and motivation.	Specific Activity: Quizlet. The effective use of Quizlet to learn vocabulary enables students to use spaced repetition and engage in independent practice, while immediate feedback supports attention and motivation.
5. Collaborative Learning	Previous studies have shown that collaborative learning promotes the development of social and cognitive skills, which are essential for students with ADHD (Gillies, 2016). Working in pairs or small groups allows them to share responsibilities, regulate their behavior, and learn from peers, fostering inclusion and participation.	«Find Someone Who...» Rief (2016) suggests using interactional activities such as «Find Someone Who» to promote communication and cooperation among students. These activities foster attention, social engagement, and meaningful language use.

Note. Strategies, theoretical basis / evidence and suggested specific activities.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings of this case study highlight the importance of creating an inclusive environment where respect, tolerance, empathy, and acceptance are at the forefront, enabling every student to learn and thrive. For the ADHD student involved in this case study, providing tailored support during the English learning process was crucial in allowing them to unlock their potential within a safe, supportive environment. The integration of engaging activities such as games, movement, singing, dancing, and the use of technology not only motivated and involved the ADHD student, but also helped manage their motor restlessness, enabling active participation and focus during lessons.

Moreover, clear and concise instructions from the teacher were pivotal in maintaining the student's focus. When the teacher modeled tasks and expectations, the ADHD student demonstrated greater engagement, completing activities with energy and attentiveness. Additionally, the importance of setting specific goals and tasks was highlighted, as it allowed the student to focus their efforts and stay on track. The data also revealed that capturing the student's attention and motivation from the outset significantly influenced their behavior and overall commitment to the learning process.

Effective interventions for students with ADHD often focus on enhancing attention, motivation, and self-regulation. Kajka and Kulik (2022) emphasize that metacognitive strategies, such as mind mapping and sketch-noting, can significantly improve students' engagement, verbal fluency, and classroom behavior. Similarly, Jain (2022) highlights that sketch-noting—an approach combining visuals and written notes—helps reduce distractions and improve memory retention, though it may challenge students who struggle with organizing information efficiently.

Beyond academic strategies, behavioral approaches also play an important role. Jackson (2022) explains that structured reward systems, which provide consistent and meaningful incentives, can effectively motivate children with ADHD, reinforcing desired behaviors and helping them develop self-discipline over time. Together, these educational

and behavioral strategies demonstrate that a multifaceted approach—combining institutional support, cognitive training, and motivational tools—is essential for promoting the academic success and emotional well-being of students with ADHD. Continuous positive reinforcement, including recognition and encouragement, played a vital role in improving the student’s behavior and academic performance.

CONCLUSIONS

As previously discussed, students with ADHD often face challenges such as poor academic performance, low grades, frustration, and low self-esteem due to difficulties in organizing and focusing. These issues can create significant long-term consequences if not addressed early. Thus, it is essential for educators to be informed about ADHD and recognize its signs in the EFL classroom. Without early identification, an ADHD learner’s academic development can be severely affected. Once teachers are aware of ADHD features, they can adjust their educational approaches, materials, and activities to meet the individual needs of these learners. This requires a collaborative effort among educators, school psychologists, special pedagogues, and parents.

Teaching English to students with ADHD presents a unique challenge; however, with a clear understanding of ADHD’s characteristics and its impact on language learning, effective strategies can be implemented. By making simple adaptations, such as establishing systems, routines, and energy-directing activities, teachers can better support ADHD learners. The aim of this study was to propose practical strategies to foster inclusion and support the learning of English in an EFL classroom with an ADHD student. As Marashi and Dolatdoost (2016) note, teachers should explore different strategies tailored to their specific classroom contexts, as there is no universal solution for managing ADHD-related challenges.

Given the importance of raising awareness about ADHD in educational settings, it is crucial to implement campaigns that inform teachers about the characteristics and types of ADHD and equip them with effective strategies for supporting ADHD learners. This includes integrating varied activities, like those proposed in this study, into lesson plans to enhance English language communication skills for ADHD students. Additionally, the development of curricular adjustments and consistent follow-up processes to observe and assess ADHD students’ academic and behavioral progress can further ensure their inclusion in the learning process. By fostering a safe and supportive learning environment, the responsibility for the success of ADHD learners should be shared among educational institutions, teachers, and parents.

In summary, the results show that effective support for ADHD students should not solely focus on reducing hyperactivity or impulsivity, but rather emphasize their intelligence, creativity, and spontaneous contributions, which can significantly enhance their learning experience. This study adds originality by documenting and analyzing an under-explored classroom experience in the EFL context of Ecuador, providing context-specific evidence on how targeted pedagogical adaptations can positively influence an ADHD learner’s engagement and performance. The observations and reflections gathered during the implementation offer practical insights for teachers working in similar settings, thereby extending the existing body of knowledge with localized, practice-based evidence.

CONTRIBUTOR ROLES

Cynthia Hidalgo: Conceptualization, introduction writing, results analysis, review and editing, final manuscript preparation, literature review, discussion writing, abstract.

Cristina Salazar: Methodology design, data collection, survey and interview design, results description, conclusions, review and editing, final manuscript preparation, literature review, discussion writing.

ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

The authors state that there are no ethical implications.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no financial and non-financial conflicts of interest that could have influenced the work presented.

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