< 29

Énfasis

{ ELT LOCAL RESEARCH AGENDAS II }

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Harold Castañeda-Peña

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UNIVERSIDAD DISTRITAL
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Doctorado Interinstitucional en Educación DIE

Universidad del Valle · Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas · Universidad Pedagógica Nacional

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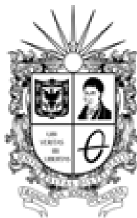

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PREFACE

Resisting Coloniality in ELT Research from the Global South

Clarissa Menezes-Jordão

According to the sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2020), there are principles regulating modern societies (the State, the Market and the Community). In the last 40 years or so, however the Market has been given an absolute priority, to the detriment of the other two. States have been governed by Market forces which have established policies controlled by the logics of profit, which commodifies all dimensions of life. This can be noticed when, for example, it is thought that public policies for the collective good have to be financially lucrative, or when State policies are seen as “expenses” rather than investments. Education itself also operates under the logic of economic gain, turning learning (as well as teachers and students) into commodities to be bought and sold.

In times of pandemics and global health crisis, all our strength seems to have been drained by authoritarian governments that resurface every now and then in South America. These governments thrive on the denial of the interconnectedness of all elements on this planet, thus justifying, among other necropolitical attitudes,

- the destruction of the environment (as for them white settlers should be able do with the rain forest, for example, whatever they see fit),
- the silencing of so-called minorities (who should submit to the desires of the majorities)
- and more recently, the underplaying of the latest, extremely serious world pandemics (referred to, in their obsession with a conspiracy theory, as an exaggeration of their enemies, who keep plotting against the success of such governments).

In Brazil, for instance, during the COVID-19 pandemics, the president continuously disrespected State and Municipal government laws against crowding and, when questioned, explained he was not afraid of a "minor flu" (Jornal G1, 2020; Revista Veja, 2020)[1]. "Divide and conquer" is said to be the common strategy of these governments and their followers, apparently resuscitated from Julius Cesar and Napoleon, in order to keep countries, communities, minorities from collaborating with each other.

Some of these far-right politicians have also been trying to make us believe that there is no alternative to this wild capitalism (or neo-liberalism) we see all around us. Projected as the only future ahead, the violence of capitalism and its counterpart, modernity, has been so widespread that it has become almost impossible to envisage a different world – violence against diversity, the quest for economic profit as the only way to survive and the rule of the Market seem to be the only possibilities for life on the planet.

Unfortunately, this capitalist world view appears to have been haunting the southern part of the Americas long before 2020, the year COVID-19 broke through. Brazil, where I was born and where I have lived and worked most of my life, is the largest country in Latin America, both in population and area, but it has consistently turned its back on its neighbors, and looked up to the global north[2]. The only country that speaks Portuguese in the continent, surrounded by Spanish-speaking neighbors, has historically isolated itself and denied its Latinity. Such an attitude might have been responsible, together with capitalism and elitism, for the savage rise of conservative, right-wing, hateful leaders and their followers. In education, this has largely meant privatization and, especially in Brazil, a push towards negationism, ranging from educational authorities who try to erase from textbooks references to our military dictatorships and coup d´États, to the violence suffered by indigenous, black and LGBTQA+ populations in the country. It has also meant the institutionalization of the logic of quantitative testing in education, on the assumption that teaching and learning can be measured objectively. In order to comply with this, rigid national standards and general content lists for the different school subjects to be "applied" regardless of local differences have been pushed forward by the Federal government. Thereby "educação bancária", the model of education Paulo Freire has openly and exhaustively combatted, is by and large privileged by the educational authorities: schools

1 https://g1.globo.com/politica/noticia/2020/04/30/veja-frases-de-bolsonaro-durante-a-pandemia-do-novo-coronavirus.ghtml e https://veja.abril.com.br/brasil/nao-adianta-eu-falar-fiquem-calmos-diz-bolsonaro-sobre-pandemia/

2 Global north and global south here are not geographical locations, but loci of enunciation. Global north refers to privilege, superiority, normativity; global south refers to devalued onto epistemologies that are usually invisibilized by those of the north.

are to be places for the imposition and *transmission* of knowledge, and not just any kind of knowledge: the knowledge that is widely approved by evangelical churches, rather than by science.

This contextualization is important in order to understand my take on the book being prefaced here, for this brief analysis of the present political scene leads me to see some irony in the fact that the South American studies of English presented in this book can build a bridge that brings together researchers in Colombian and Brazil. This is how I see the importance of the honor that has been given to me to preface the present book.

Before referring to the book per se, however, I would like to describe my ontoepistemological locus of enunciation in a little more detail, for it can be determinant of the meanings readers will attribute to this text. I am a recently retired Brazilian teacher of English working as a volunteer in a postgraduate program in a public, totally tuition-free university. My research is mostly on the area of English as an International Language and as a Lingua Franca. It is from this field that I construct my understandings of critical literacy (with Paulo Freire and Menezes de Souza), translanguaging (with Ofelia Garcia and Canagarajah), decolonial praxis (with the modernity/coloniality group) and southern epistemologies (with Boaventura de Sousa Santos).

My readings in these areas are greatly similar to the readings you will find in this book, even though we come from different countries, and mine has consistently turned its back on the knowledge produced in the other countries in South America, where the authors have developed their own onto epistemologies. Perhaps the similarity of interpretation comes from us having had (and still having) very similar experiences of oppression and having felt similar needs to react. Perhaps oppression has built bridges that unite us also with other oppressed populations in other parts of the world – and raised in us the need to fight back. So that we could breathe, as Eric Garner and George Floyd couldn´t. I do not intend this comparison as a reduction of either struggle, but I use the reference to illustrate that struggles from oppression do happen in various walks of life, from civil rights to freedom for our bodies and our minds, for our tongues and accents, for our meanings and interpretive procedures.

If we take into account the experience of oppression, which is never the same for two people but unites us in the need to resist, we have to refer to the violence perpetrated by the colonial project of modernity against

local knowledges, cultures, ontoepistemologies. Modernity[3] has highlighted homogeneity, linearity and rationality (to name but a few of its tenets) as elements that define progress, growth, value. It has declared that in order to understand the world, we need to isolate its elements and analyze them in their smallest possible unities; it has created binary thinking and separated reason from emotion, mind from matter, nature from culture, man from woman, black from white, Colombia from Brazil. This movement has also made it possible to separate the individual from the social, from the collective. Races, countries, languages started to be counted, separated and discriminated against. The same has happened to knowledge, broken into school disciplines. Whatever (and whoever) did not subject itself to this *rationale of separability* was considered to be inferior, not worth any scientific concern or positive value at all. Whichever cosmology was different from the so-called coherent, rational, consistent cosmology of modernity was condemned to silence, to invisibility, to the other side of the abyss created by coloniality (Santos, 2019). Thus our indigenous populations' ways of teaching and learning, based on the knowledge of their elders and on the interconnectedness of everything (people, animals, plants, spirit, matter, mind, emotion, reason, thinking, doing, etc), have been considered inefficient and thus have been erased from our horizon of possibilities in education.

The chapters in this book discuss studies that resist modernity and coloniality in the field of English as a second language which is foreign but used all over the world: English as a language existing in contexts where it functions as a lingua franca – or maybe not quite. They focus on the teaching-learning of English in Colombia, where it is not an official language nor a must for intra-national communication. In this book, the PhD students of the Doctorado Interinstitucional en Educación problematize the impacts of teaching-learning English on the subjectivities of *non-native* teachers and learners of English, considering regional policies for the education of English teachers that seem to emulate practices from the global north without much, if any, regard for local contexts. Some of them also struggle against the centrality of research methods and quality criteria set up by the global north, refusing to abide by their rules and thus making explicit the violence inherent in established practices in the ELT field, whose research protocols, scientific methods, norms and characteristics of academic writing hide their situatedness and project themselves as purportedly global quality-control systems. Such struggles revolve around the subjects which PhD students chose for their research,

3 I will follow the modernity/coloniality group in Latin America, led by Mignolo, Escobar, Quijano and others, in their claim that modernity and coloniality are two faces of the same coin, and therefore in-separable. I will use both words as synonyms and I ask the reader to remember that when they read one word, the other is there as well.

namely, the unobserved dimensions of class observation in ELT (chapter 2), the co-construction of subjectivity by Colombian teachers of English in immersion programs (chapter 3), English teachers and peace construction (chapter 4), primary school teachers´ practices which confront local EFL policies (chapter 6), hybridity and interculturality in a teacher's identity (chapter 7), and the experiences of transgender students in an initial English language teacher educational program (chapter 8). Another indication of innovation in the field is that two supervisors are also authors: chapters 1 and 5 present the investigations of two professors in that program, one more evidence of how this book is structured in a way that questions the homogenizing practices of separability in ELT in universities (such as having either professors OR students authoring texts in the same book).

As you read the papers that constitute this book, you might at times perceive their resistance as almost invisible, barely noticed in what seem to be mere adaptations of practices imported from the global north. This impression evidences the researchers´ awareness that, in order to be heard by the establishment, one frequently needs to conform, to some extent. Facing the power and rigidity of many educational institutions, we need to act in its gaps, to look for their *grietas* and strategically operate from within such fractures which, luckily, seem to have become larger as time goes by. Therefore, do not be fooled: the studies presented in each chapter promote re-appropriations, re-interpretations and re-significations explicitly imbued with Colombian and South American colors.

This book presents local insights into EFL and EFL teacher education, focusing on issues related to identity and power, as noted on the official program emphases (cf. http://die.udistrital.edu.co/enfasis/elt_education). Such insights can inspire all of us who live their existences in sites of oppression of various sorts, in the experience of being in and with the Global South.

Along their lines of thought and research, we move together into a collaborative future, situating our praxes within our own loci of enunciation, our own ontoepistemologies and, like sea tides, always moving, always negotiating: sometimes openly challenging certain practices, sometimes unaware ourselves of the destabilizing dimension of our "adaptations", and at still other times, establishing intercultural partnerships that defy our certainties: welcoming the pluriversality of ELT and existing comfortably in it.

It is high time we started a south-south dialogue in Latin America about our praxes as teachers of English. This book is an important step in that direction.

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PART I

English Language Teachers' Subjectivities and Struggles

Chapter 1

Subjectivity and Resistance Practices in the ELT Field

Pilar Méndez-Rivera

Where there is power, there is resistance.
(Foucault, 1978, p. 95)

Introduction

My research into Teachers' struggles and resistance practices in Colombia has been shedding light on some actions teachers have taken to challenge and resist some practices (linguistic policies, standardization, certification). It has made the pervasive effects of some hegemonic and normalizing discourses evident (English as a must, Bilingualism as English-only, B2/C1/C2 as musts), that is, in relation to an ideal English language Teacher, and provokes/prompts comparisons between Native English Speakers and Colombian Language English Teachers, bilingual practices and immersion practices, certified teachers and noncertified teachers, certified native speakers and graduate teachers, English teaching in public schools and English teaching in private schools, bilingual schools and non-bilingual schools, among others; all of which affects the ways society in general thinks of Colombian English teaching and English Language teachers in Colombia. As can be seen, the way these comparisons place subjects and objects on the same level aggravates an objectification process that dehumanizes and totalizes the construction of identities and the comprehension of realities, which inevitably threatens other subjectivities and other existing conditions of possibility.

It is not a secret that English teaching and learning education has been historically affected by marketization practices (Ramos, 2018) that society in general tends to have normalized due to the effects of these hegemonic discourses (English as a must, a native-like command of English, English-only) and also due to the reduced visibility of other ways to understand English teaching and learning that are not aligned with the marketing of its learning and the control and objectification of teachers' lives. Our recent research into English teacher subjectivity and English teaching in Bogotá (Méndez, Garzón, Noriega, Rodríguez, and Osorio, 2019) found us compiling an archive to trace discursive and non-discursive practices in these domains: subjectivity and subjectification in ELT. The analysis of these domains shows, on the one hand, the productive power to position one´s self and others in a system of beliefs presented as the ultimate truths (Walls, 2009) and, on the other hand, the subjects' capacity to obey or resist these "truths" as part of their reflections, decisions and actions. In this particular project, we wanted to shed light on what Colombian English teachers think of themselves as subjects of a practice (subjectivity), sometimes in alignment with the official rhetoric, but in some cases by rescuing specific bodies of knowledge and the ownership of English with meanings that oppose the learning of English as a commodification.

In this chapter, I would like to reflect upon some of my findings and those of my colleagues and students (concluded or in process) in order to broaden this discussion and enhance my reflections. In doing so, I would like to draw your attention to some events in the history of the teaching of languages when we abandoned or lost sight of something. The significance of this historicity will allow us to see what has been there but has been ignored or neglected. I'm interested in showing the black and grey areas of what is regarded as a perfect practice: The success of English in Colombia.

Stolen Chances and Neglected Possibilities for Other Subjectivities

A review of the memoirs of some Ministers of Education and some newspaper/magazine articles, among other sources, shows us that interest in learning a foreign language has long been a concern in Colombian education. In the past, the teaching of other languages at secondary schools in Colombia was rich and varied. For instance, special courses in Latin, English, German

and French featured in the curricula of schools between 1930-1950; later, in 1970, they focused on English and French, until 1998-2000, when French was dropped and the dominance of English teaching was officially established in the public sector. This means that from a varied repertoire of languages students could learn, we turned to a unique option. Students who depended directly on the State thus had fewer options to learn a foreign language (and learn about a different culture).

In fact, in the early 2000s a number of laws, decrees, and programs about the learning of a foreign language strengthened this pact with English. However, it is mistaken to say that the pact was sealed by the power of the law, because by that time Colombia's population had already been influenced by the hegemonic discourse that depicted English as the language of progress and success. Some education programs for language teachers in Colombia which prepared them to teach French and German were also affected by this decision. There were fewer positions for them in public schools, so they had to teach Spanish or learn English.

I still remember the fear, sadness and anger this caused in my classmates who were studying French and German when I was an undergraduate at the Atlántico University in 1998. The lucky ones got a job teaching the language they loved in private institutes, but the others were forced to adapt and shape themselves to the new demands. Language Teacher Education programs also began to focus more on English than on other languages. Although, at the present time, some of these programs still offer other languages (different from English) in their main curricula or as options, the job market is more competitive nowadays and those who teach, French for example, have become an elite.

As can be seen, this situation is a clear indication of the effects of the law and the type of wounds that can be inflicted on people who relate differently to other languages and to education. The history of the English Pact in Colombia has neglected these other professionals and ignored their struggles to win recognition. And it has also ignored the blighted pasts and future possibilities for different subjectivities and forms of bilingualism.

Hidden behind the laws and regulations there is a mechanism of control which favors the creation of identities that subject students and teachers of foreign languages to prescribed ideologies (Popkewitz, 1984). That means that a very few arrogate to themselves the right to define and shape what

kind of teacher is needed for a certain kind of society. The study of policies is pivotal for revealing how the promotion of a particular policy may hinder the autonomous creation of one's own identity.

In this respect the studies of Guerrero, C. (2010a; 2010b); De Mejía, A. (2011; 2012); González, A. (2007; 2010); and Usma, J. (2009), among others, have problematized the ways linguistic policies in Colombia have been imposed on the population, privileging an elite bilingualism which disdains other foreign languages and favors the teaching of English in the country. They introduce a critical line of thought to explore the ways in which such policies lead to exclusions and injustices and place local practices of ELT in an inferior position. In my view, these studies call on us, as teachers and scholars, to reflect on and expand our understanding of bilingualism.

Bilingual National Plan: A Legacy of Subjections

Once the Bilingual National Plan (BNP) was launched, an entire system of subjections came into effect. I would like to comment on some of those subjections. The most notorious were aimed at Colombian English language teachers (CELT). The BNP diagnosed them as deficient (because of their poor command of the English language) and lacking adequate methods of teaching (because of their use of Spanish in the classrooms). Consequently, a shadow of doubt, disbelief, and suspicion fell on English language teachers and their professional and linguistic formation in Language TE programs. As the native English Speaker model became the new ideal to assess the appropriateness of CELT, a dichotomy (NESTs and NNESTs) spread its assessing influence among different types of practices: teaching practices, recruitment practices, the social consideration of teachers, to name a few. Let's dig deeper and elaborate more on what has been ignored in some of these practices.

Teaching practices in schools. The *Only English* mode of teaching became the rule for teaching English in classrooms and defining and understanding bilingualism in Colombia. For the NBP, the use of Spanish was penalized, and local teachers were forced to move away from their Spanish-English methodologies to follow the new conditions. A traditional technology was restored. Classroom observation practices were implemented to guarantee compliance with the program guidelines and obtain an effective class (Martínez, M., 2021, this volume). Somebody has asked what it means

for an experienced teacher to contradict his/her own ideas about teaching and the implications of this obedience for his/her own well-being. It is not easy to follow a course of action which limits your teaching conditions and possibilities for governing your own classroom. That aside, what is the meaning given to observation? Can the observers and the observed negotiate the meaning of an "effective class"? Martínez' problematization of classroom observations and the ways these subjectivities are prescribed offers a new angle on denaturalizing, coercive and corrective practices and gives them a more humanistic perspective.

Training programs. Another device created by the Colombian Bilingual Program is a number of Immersion Programs (IPs), which are designed to show teachers how to do their job and improve their level of English. It seemed to me that the "making" of teachers in these scenarios needed to be problematized in order to tackle the *system of reasoning* (patterns, norms, ideas) behind these types of artificial scenarios and in this way understand the stakeholders' aspirations "to inscribe a certain selectivity as to what teachers see, think, feel and talk" about English (Popkewitz, 1998, p. 5). The study of Ayala, J. (2021, in this volume) pays particular attention to the relation between training and power, more precisely between English Teacher participants' subjectivities and the ways they relate, negotiate, and position themselves in this training. Teachers are not "empty vessels", and even though they voluntarily participate in these IPs, they do not wholly submit their free will to the training.

Policy-making beliefs. Behind the *only English* teaching focus there is a monoglossic view of bilingualism. Why call a program "bilingual" if the use of Spanish in our classrooms is not seen as correct? In doing so, the program privileges a source of knowledge distant from our realities. There are cases where bilingual models have been adopted with success to maintain the balance between both languages as teaching languages and not mere subjects (Garcia, O. 2009). In Colombia the work of Guerrero, C. (2010) and de Mejía, A. (2012) has stood out for pinpointing this erroneous conception of bilingualism and the injustice of disdaining other languages so, I will not expand on this as you can read these studies yourself. But for me, this construction of reality represents the dissemination of a false belief, which influences the general understanding of a phenomenon and normalizes a particular view of it. In fact, it constitutes a new form of social pressure which affects not only language teachers and education programs, but society in general by means of a self-fulfilling prediction, which may be expressed as

follows: “Citizens who choose not to learn English become responsible for their lack of progress” (Macedo et al., 2005, p. 24).

The turn to certification. Once the policies which made the C2/C1/B2 levels a “must” in for a (good) teacher with a great command of the language were implemented, a university teaching degree was discarded in favor of an English proficiency test certificate. Teacher Education programs were forced to include a C1 language proficiency certificate as a fundamental prerequisite for awarding degrees (Colombia, Res. 2041, February, 2016). Some B. A. programs have long resisted this certification practice because they regard it as typical of a market logic that favors the racialization of a teacher´s identity (Castañeda-Peña, 2018; Rosa & Flores, 2015; Kubota, R., & Fujimoto, D., 2013) and ignores the potential of pedagogy to shape English teachers’ subjectivities as educators. Davila (2018, p. 224) asks how such English Language Educators think of their roles as teachers of teachers? What epistemological and pedagogical stances do they adopt in order to train the next generation of language teachers?

Such questions are pivotal for casting light upon the subjectivities of a humanistic and pedagogical logic that subverts the idea that a command of the English language is the only condition for being a good teacher.

Recruitment practices. As a consequence of the turn to certification, the divisive effects of the NESTs/ NNESTs dichotomy have increased. A recent study by Martínez, Y. (2018) explores the ways in which this dichotomy pops up in English Language Recruitment practices. It notes that the native speaker approach sets the standards for the recruitment of teachers. It further reveals “that while some local teachers resisted the normalization of tests and certificates as [a] mandatory and indisputable requirement to participate in employment selection processes, other local users in fact supported the idea of using them as a filter to accept teachers who have reached a native-like proficiency level and reject those who have not” (p. 84). These findings highlight the dispute revolving around a contradictory system of ideas about English language teachers’ identities in which these subjects must become entrepreneurs of themselves to fit into the system´s classifications (Castro-Gómez, 2016, p. 14). Viáfara’s study (2016) is also useful in showing how “nativespeakership and associated ideologies” affect the self-perception of prospective English teachers, insofar as most were afraid of the drawbacks of failing to achieve native-like abilities in English, while as Spanish speakers they felt self-confident (p. 21).

We cannot ignore that this ideology involves a teaching hierarchicalization that places local teachers in an inferior position regardless of their professional preparation as English Language Teachers. We cannot ignore either that disadvantages, discrimination, differentiated scale payments and stereotyping are emerging as part of this market logic in which some English language teachers (local and foreigners) are attacking each other, with feelings of hatred.

At the institutional level, this market logic also attacks/reverses the meaning of teacher education through the creation of power-subjectivity. Being a professional in the teaching field implies a high commitment to learn how to think, theoretically and pedagogically, and to act as an educator in the ELT field. This power-knowledge emerging from pedagogy -as a fundamental discipline to educate English language teachers- leads "teachers to reason and enact their teaching in various instructional situations for different pedagogical purposes" (Karpov, 2003, in Johnson, E. and Golombek, P., 2016).

Depending on our understanding of teaching as a profession, we can accept or resist these practices of teaching hierarchicalization and social competitiveness. To me, testing is a colonization technology of the market-ratio-logic that contributes to the de-professionalization of the work of teaching in the ELT field and affects the social treatment of teachers. We need to resist this ideology and the pervasive effects of its objectification and rescue the humanistic vision of education in order to understand the struggles of both English language teachers and English language learners.

The Educator Embodied Subjectivity as a Resistant Identity

When we reviewed the academic publications of English language teachers (schoolteachers, university teachers, scholars) we noticed that some teachers regard themselves as educators and not simply as instructors or teachers of the English language. This enunciation of themselves as educators (implicit or explicit and declared) can be traced to concerns that go beyond the teaching and learning of English as a curricular subject, and thus reaches into multiple areas of education. There are a lot of studies devoted to discussing ELT as a means to attain other kinds of knowledge and reflect upon broader social and political problems. These writings say more about the English Language teachers' subjectivities than any profile, law or label because they subsume the real making of the teachers into actions and reflections.

The social and political idea that English language teachers are mere instructors that just teach the code is contradicted by the type of work done by many English language teachers, who struggle to open up different spheres of action for themselves in their workplaces in order to subvert the limits imposed by some restrictive methods of positioning identity. For instance, Aldana, Y. (2021, in this volume) brings to the surface the subjectivities of some English language Teachers who are working for the construction of peace, in which English is one of the tools with a potential to transform the school culture and have a positive impact on students' lives. Aldana is able to show how the prescriptive and canonical calls on teachers to work on peace projects reinforce their instrumental role as educators and the ways they think of it.

Conclusion

In this chapter, subjectivity is seen as an empirical reality and not just a discursive production and clearly reveals struggles, injuries and also contradictions. I agree with Munro (1998) when she claims: "We cannot limit subjectivity to being solely shaped by discourse because we may be limiting the experiences that individuals can articulate" (p. 34). This notion enables us to notice the work that teachers have done to ensure for themselves forms of being different to those imposed by a norm, a label or a tradition. In other words, subjectivity seen as the "last trench of resistance against the advance of neoliberalism[4]" (Castro-Gómez, 2016, p. 18) and its forms of domination. Although it is not easy to resist the new demands of a competitive world justified by aspirations to globalization and naturalized by "must be" discourses, subjectivity is a space in which subjects can work on themselves and try to heal the wounds left by the antagonistic forces that turn us into subjects of a practice.

I would like to conclude by saying that no one has considered the power that desire and the construction of one's own subjectivity has to promote actions and relations in the teaching and learning of English, which is linked instead to one's own will to be and, in the case of some teachers, shapes their struggles to be educators or intellectuals even in incredible times.

4 (original in Spanish)

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Chapter 2

Problematizing the Subject Position of the Observers in the ELT Field

Miguel Martínez-Luengas

Abstract

This chapter explores the unseen, silencing and effective practices of invisibilization in the classroom observations made by the Ministry of Education- external institutions - of English teachers in public schools in Colombia. This study argues that such practices of classroom observation are not simply normalized practices (formats, rubrics and data), but represent more than a process of instrumentalization, functioning as a social practice, where the teacher, observer and school directors, among others, are involved in an asymmetrical power-relation where an *expert reasoning system* in school contexts prevails, merged with reflection and criticism.

As such, I will recall my experience as an Observer, recruited and trained by a well-recognized institution for one of the activities of the National Bilingual Program. This study deals with the systems of reasoning, power-knowledge observation and control which are applied to EFL Teachers in order to make their classes effective. As a trained Observer, I set out to explore the decolonial option [5] in order to problematize classroom observation practices and their utility for normalizing English teaching, teachers and even Observers in an English as a Foreign Language Program.

5 Decolonial option becomes the horizon to imagine and act toward global futures in which the notion of a political enemy is replaced by intercultural communication and towards an-other rationality that puts life first and that places institutions at its service, rather than the other way around. (Mignolo & Escobar, 2010)

I would also like to analyze the Observers' discourses about the training they receive from other institutions; and what these teachers feel when trained with a specific and primordial parameter and when they are observed by an expert trainer/observer. My decolonial perspective will enable me to reveal what the canonical method of observation ignores in its formats and reports.

Introduction

I would like to start by drawing the readers' attention to a scene in the movie *The Bone Collector* which depicts a conversation between an expert detective (he has had many years of experience and major professional achievements) and his assistant (a nurse, with little education or experience). The expert detective asks the assistant, "What do you see there in this crime scene?" Then he adds, "You have the ability to see farther than the regular eye…" After analyzing, thinking, and observing, she gives him a fundamental lead for his investigation; in a few words, with a deep/reflexive observation she sees what the expert failed to see even though they were both looking at the same thing and he, as the "expert", had far more professional training and experience.

This, an example of how a non-expert may disrupt what has been naturalized and taken for granted, equally applies to classroom observation practices. There is an "expert" (Observer) who observes some things but fails to see others and so requires the support of another person to follow the guidelines of his or her work. This means that the Observer is not a machine (a thing like a magnifying glass, microscope, or telescope); he or she is a subject like any other, granted this title because of his or training and experience and whose expertise is taken for granted and is solely responsible for the observation, even though he or she cannot have a whole view of the classroom. Despite his subjectivity, the system fosters the belief that his eyes can see all and arrive at the ultimate truth. In view of this situation, I would like to problematize the Observers´ practices and reactions in terms of aspects like obedience, resistance, solidarity, interactions between the observer and the observed teacher, the role of the "expert" and the formats of bilingualism/ language strengthening, all in order to better understand the heightened instrumentalization of bodies, objects and practices which take place in this context.

Whenever I have had the opportunity to work closely with EFL teachers in public schools in Bogotá, many tell me that they do not feel comfortable when they are observed by an "external" person. Teachers understand that the Ministry of Education and Secretariats of Education (2019) need to employ classroom observations to assess, measure and evaluate their classroom practices. In fact, the Bilingualism Education Program in Bogotá offers a package of training materials and resources (including human ones) meant to help public school teachers to give "effective" classes. As part of this package, classroom observation plays an important role. It is no secret that it one of the most useful tools for getting information about classroom practices. The EFL teachers themselves sometimes welcome these observations in the belief that it will "improve" their teaching and provide them with a valuable feedback. Although forced on them, many teachers rise to the challenge of following official procedures and step by step, adhere to the recommendations made by the experts in order to improve their classes.

On the other hand, there are teachers who refuse to be observed. They argue that there is no need to be observed by a person who does not know the context in which they work – the reality of the school, its students and daily routine. In their opinion, this "expert" will not know what "a good class" is because or he or she is an outsider and does not understand the environment of the school. But in general terms, my role as an observer, as an "external" person, as an evaluator, is not questioned because I am a member of a prestigious institution and they believe that my social and professional credentials have given me the authority to act as a "trainer". Despite this privileged situation, however, I acknowledge that, as a former teacher of EFL, I am not "superior" to them. Rather, my training as an Observer has furnished me with a multifaceted approach to my work.

Nevertheless, the observed teacher becomes an object for me, an object who needs to be analyzed in terms of the different facets of its performance: the attitudes, environment, strategies, goals/aims and materials/resources seen in the class; the behavior of the students; and the job of assessment and feedback. In doing so, some questions arise, such as: What about the teachers' opinions and feelings? What does the Mentor-Observer feel at the time of observing? These situations come into play (…But these are in my mind). In this sense, I became an instrument, another object, with a trained eye, but which eye? And what for?

Normalized Practices in Classroom Observations

The classroom observation aimed at creating a "good teacher" has normalized the emphasis on the idea that teachers are responsible for the effectiveness of a class. Many procedures have arisen to normalize the definition of a good teaching practice. Moreover, observing a teacher has been accepted in society as a necessary practice that serves many purposes. A recent study by Murphy (2013) highlights various aspects of classroom observation (CO). For instance, it offers a method for supervisors to assess the teachers'"styles", classroom management and other skills which elude other forms of evaluation.

Moreover, CO allows teachers to receive a constructive feedback on their techniques in order to further improve. In a nutshell, CO is one of the most common ways of analyzing pedagogical practices (Farrell, 2011) and it can help teachers to spot their strengths and weaknesses (Choopun & Tuppoom, 2014), serves as alternative assessment of their performance (Campbell & Duncan, 2007), is an important staff appraisal mechanism (Lam, 2001), a tool for self-monitoring (Wichadee, 2011) and unique device for supervision (Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2010). These aspects are also mentioned by Merc, related to the dynamics of observing teachers in English classes, (2015). It means that observation is centered on the teacher. In fact, the observed teachers are sometimes told about the procedures beforehand. To further develop to this point, several authors such as Wang and Seth (1998), Waijnryb (1992) and Williams (1989) have proposed the Classroom observation should get some stages (pre-while and post).

As can be seen, there are discussions in a pre/post classroom observation which are important to problematize. There is evidence that a teacher-centered approach is one of the major components of this observation. The automatized procedure is also taken for granted when the different situations in the class are evaluated. A class observation also requires a rubric in order to follow the specific patterns and these become the disciplinary technologies which measure the program's success. Behind these technologies, there is a canonical logic which EFL teachers must follow. The teachers' compliance is a prerequisite for guarantying the success of the procedures.

In our local tradition, Classroom Observation Practices (COP) have been teacher-oriented (as was said above). The success of a class is entirely the responsibility of the teachers, even if they are handicapped by administrative problems caused by others. The students must react differently in every class

or the EFL teacher will not feel good at all. As a consequence, we have normalized rituals for the achievement of a good class and we have also normalized CO as an effective technique. This technique involves demanding patterns, and the teacher must follow specific rubrics, step by step procedures; this is one of the many normalized facets of COP which I have discussed but they raise many disturbing questions which require a guiding thread from here on.

Classroom Observation in Relation to Effectiveness

In a review of studies of EFL/ESL, we have found that coupling observation and effectiveness has been overused, for example, in one, done at the King Abdul-Aziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, 2014, of EFL teachers' perceptions of a classroom observation system in its English Language Institute. It states that the classroom observations, which are originally intended for the teachers' professional growth, are usually more evaluative and less developmental, leading to teacher burn-out and less-effective classroom performances. The author also points out how instructional supervision is a "ubiquitous mechanism in teachers' professional lives", used to collect data about what goes on in classrooms through a box-ticking exercise, and based on judgments made in both Western and non-Western contexts.

Another study, "Keeping SCORE': Reflective Practice Through Classroom Observations" (Farrell, 2011), discusses a short series of classroom observations which the author, acting as a facilitator, made to a novice teacher to help her negotiate her first year of teaching. What I learned from the article is that observation tools and patterns are important aspects of classroom observation. Those low-inference tools may be more useful because they focus on separate features of classroom interaction, including verbal, paralinguistic, non-linguistic, cognitive, affective, and discourse features (Chaudron, 1988). The SCORE tool (the one used in this study) is useful for assessing "teacher and student talk; at task and movement patterns" (Farrell, 2011, p. 267). The effectiveness of the COP in the previous study is related to some procedures the observer should carry out. The procedure: First class and Second class (Pre-class discussion- Class observation- Post-class discussion- Follow up Process). This procedure offers one way of facilitating reflective practices in EFL teachers and encouraging them to engage in classroom observations as part of their training.

Another relevant article is “Classroom observation: desirable conditions” by teachers David Lasagabaster and Juan Manuel Sierra (Spain- 2011), which examines the attitudes towards observation of a wide range of teachers in terms of three components: the cognitive, the affective, and the conative. The authors state that the observation has to be systematic, to avoid obtaining a distorted view of what happens in class and so that its benefits are tangible: ‘It needs to be followed through properly, not something which is done once and leads nowhere’ (p. 459).

In relation to the conative component, in figures 2 and 3, there are some questions about the study that were mentioned before, and a list of the observed teachers´ perceptions of the procedures. It shows that most teachers agreed to be observed, understanding that it is an effective way to improve their teaching so long as the observation is done by a colleague or in some cases, a teacher trainer.

Figure 1. Is observation an effective way of improving teaching?

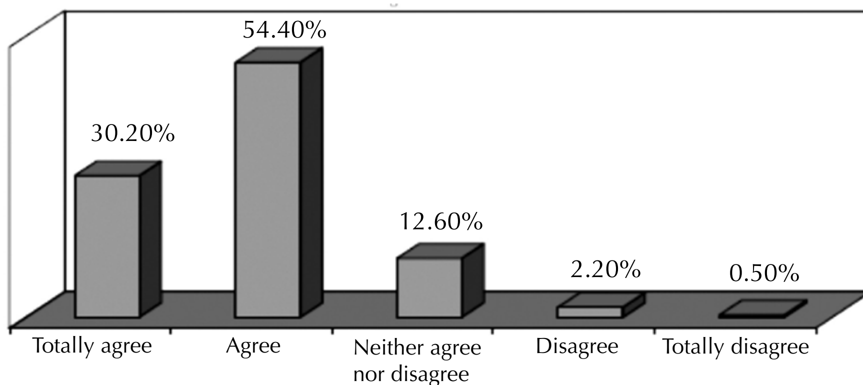
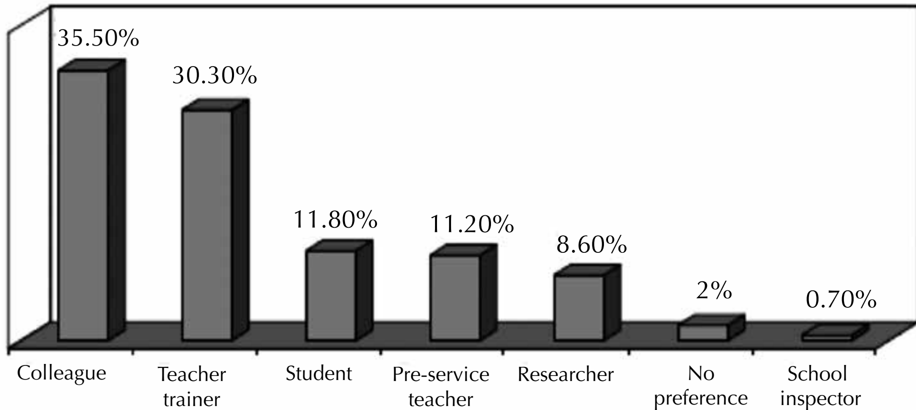


Figure 2. Who would you prefer to be observed



Source:

Appendix 1. Figures are taken from an article called "C*lassroom observation: desirable conditions*" established by David Lasagabaster and Juan Manuel Sierra, (Spain- 2011)

I mean that when a practice is used to set an order, to impose a monolithic view of teaching, it seems to be a "rigid" and "scripted" practice. I found that an instrumentalization of COP in ELT is a flaw and for that reason, I again wonder if there is a lack of rigor and correct formats and rubrics in this method of assessment.

Little has been said about the conversations between the Mentor Observer and the EFL Teacher. I also know that these conversations entail a kind of negotiation, which means that the social relationship between the two subjects should be analyzed and shown in the reflective teaching practices and feedback procedure. I have had to deal with these "negotiations" myself: unfortunately, there is not much information about them. Perhaps they need to be silenced and invisible.

The Direct or Indirect Effects of Classroom Observations on Teachers' Behavior

One of the first psychological studies of observation was Watson's Manifesto [6] (1913), which found that the traditional methods of observation carried out in the home, hospital, nursery, school, research laboratory or other locations were done by relatively untrained observers such as parents (mainly mothers) or observers with some degree of training.

Observation is regarded as direct if done in the natural environment of the subject with no intervention or intrusion other than the presence of the observer(s), and without the use of questionnaires, interviews, standardized tests, and experiments (Wright, 1960). Observation is a practice that has been validated in, for instance, a). the laboratory, to verify the phenomenon that is faced and to stablish a diagnosis, b). hospitals, to assess the progress of a patient's treatment, and c). education, to gauge the behavior of students and teachers. In other words, it is a technique that has been accepted and widely used in different fields and disciplines.

Classroom observation is used in teacher-training programs. Indeed, it has been institutionalized as a way to train or assess the effectiveness of teachers. These results are used to evaluate the teachers' performance, reward them when it is correct or inform them of the mistakes in their methodology. For in-service EFL teachers, CO is crucial, since educational administrators believe it is "trustworthy" when they evaluate their performances and indicate mistakes and areas in need of improvement. Many teachers do not agree to participate in these COPs, but if they do not, they may be misjudged or penalized. Teachers are naturally aware that their refusal to participate may hinder their careers, but the subject is a taboo that is not spoken of aloud.

COP is organized and based on principles. As Schatzki points out: "Orders are arrangements of entities (e.g. people, artifacts, things), whereas practices are organized activities. Human coexistence thus transpires amidst an elaborate, constantly evolving nexus of arranged things and organized activities" (2002, p. xi). It would thus seem that COP consists of a regular, fixed activity in which the participants interact in a certain space. This sense of a social order marked by regularity, stability and interdependence can be found in observation practices. One sees it, for example, in the daily routines

6 John B. Watson's 1913 article "Psychology as the Behaviorist Views It" is widely known as the "behaviorist manifesto" that initiated behaviorism as a discipline and academic field of study.

of teachers, faculty meetings and the observation of classes. It is here where teachers construct an unconscious sense of regularity which give them a feeling that their activities are based on principles and norms. However, the social order in COP is irregular; there are some ruptures which we need to be aware of.

A characteristic of classroom observations I have mentioned is the control of the time and space of ELT teachers. In the COP it is important to organize the teacher´s performance into a sequence of activities that must be fit into the correct time and space. It represents a mechanism of control, power and subjection in which the discursive and non-discursive components are subject to that mechanism. In Foucault's view, power and knowledge are inextricably linked. The control of space and movement is built into the architecture of the classroom. In some cases, the COP changes the social relations because there is an interaction between the observer and the observed teacher in the classroom.

This situation may have an effect on the teachers' behavior. This conversation between the two subjects (Mentor and Teacher) has been made invisible in the method of classroom observations of English teachers devised by the Ministry of Education and non-governmental institutions for public schools in Colombia. Similarly, the subjective feelings of the Mentor observers during the COP should be taken into account. Some of us do not want to evaluate teachers' performances, others don´t feel comfortable with the assessment rubric and still others just want to criticize and show their superiority to the teachers. The Mentor observers' narratives thus form a subjective universe(s) which will help us to understand the events inside the classroom.

Classroom Observations based on Local Assumptions

After reading about CO, I found that some academics in South America have been researching this subject as well. I learned that these studies focus on the evaluation of teachers, teacher training methods, improving the effectiveness of teachers, and evaluating educational programs. Furthermore, most claim that COP provides a useful feedback to teachers and may strengthen their overall effectiveness. The first study I discuss here, "Through the looking glass: can classroom observation and coaching improve teacher performance in Brazil?" (Bruns, Costa & Cunha, Brazil, 2018), is of "a program in the northeastern

Brazilian state of Ceará designed to improve teachers' effectiveness by using a method of information "shock" (benchmarked feedback) and expert coaching to promote professional interactions among teachers in the same school." (p. 1). However, what is suitable to highlight in this research is the implementation of three meaningful and trustworthy tools in the program of classroom observations which serve to predict differences in a teacher's ability to improve learning in the classroom.

Other US researchers have likewise found that children who are taught by teachers with higher scores on the CLASS measurement learn more, are more self-disciplined and have fewer behavioral problems. (Grossman and McDonald, 2008) (p. 2). The results of this strategy suggest that COP may help to maximize the planning of classes, provide more feedback and coaching to teachers and serve as follow-up teachers and administrators. The program also appears to have helped schools to attain more consistent teaching practice and increased their teachers' use of more interactive techniques, like question and answer. (p. 35).

A Colombian study discusses the effect of classroom observations in on the quality of teaching and learning in secondary education. Specifically, it proposes a methodology, called "classroom observation in context" (CoC), to deal with many of the epistemological limitations of mainstream input-output models for the professionalization of educators. (Parra & Hernandez, 2019). One of the interesting aspects of this study (which perhaps reveals an "unseen" situation in COP) is the importance it gives to observing in context, as shown in the following excerpt:

> To observe in context entails working with a non-structured observation strategy to spot patterns in classroom events and the subsequent opening of opportunities for collaborative dialogues (among observers and between the observer and the observed teacher) about the mechanisms behind these patterns. The results of an exploratory study of CoC in northern Colombia indicate the potential of such a strategy in shaping debates about educational policies which go beyond the classroom. (p.1)

There are some parts of this study which echo my own concerns. For example, I would like to find out more about the narratives that emerge from the dialogues between the observer and observed teacher. I think it might throw light on the ontological situation of subjects who share a common space, the classroom, and participate in the same observation. The challenge I see

here is to unveil these "hidden" dialogues between these two subjects and determine the change in the position of the subjects during the observation, which, in turn, may explain how some practices are ignored by the norms of CO or suppressed in order to meet the "high quality goal" of government programs.

As shown in the previous research studies, classroom observation techniques are a major concern in discussions of the quality of education. There are different implementations of mainstream observation techniques to measure the professional skills of teachers and help policymakers and practitioners to improve teaching practices. Finally, these two South Globe studies confirm that COs are standardized tools which are meant to help teachers to organize their work and innovate in the classroom. Acknowledging that such tools do lead to real improvements in teaching and learning, I nevertheless insist that more research needs to be done into these "other" methods of observation, because there are certain practices in the field of ELT which have not been sufficiently analyzed or questioned.

Local Bilingualism Policies

Another important source in relation to CO, locally speaking, can be found in some documents of Bilingualism policies in Colombia. The documents were chosen since they offer a wide picture of the Classroom Observation. The Bilingualism policies in Colombia have focused the education projects in reinforcing the teachers' professional development, assessment procedures and curriculum design. I would like to examine the objectives of the policies and their models of classroom observation as a tool for assessing teachers.

1. The first document is called "Plan de Bilingüismo Municipal de Mosquera". (Mosquera Bilingualism Plan) Mosquera is a small town near Bogotá, Colombia's capital. The following Bilingualism Plan was created: "Mosquera Lives English 2012-2021". was drafted there. The Plan seeks to promote the professional development of EFL teachers through several strategies. The Secretary of Education of Mosquera states that CO is a valuable tool for improving the performance of teachers since the SWOT matrix it uses assesses all its aspects and provides them with feedback about the quality of their teaching. (2012).

2. The second document, a national program, called "Colombia Very Well- 2015-2025". Its objective is to strengthen the communicative skills of Colombians who speak English, since this language "empowers citizens and allows the country to enter into global cultural dynamics and the knowledge economy." One of the methods for improvement are Peer Observations. (2014).

3. The final one is "EFMMa Teacher Training and Teacher of Teachers", a joint effort of the British Council and Colombian Ministry of Education in 2017 that seeks to make teacher training a fundamental device to improve the quality of teaching. It is based on a number of observations of trainee EFL teachers and it includes a class observation guide to assess the methodology of teachers, their activities and the materials they use, among other indicators.

When one reviews the main assumptions about CO on the part of academics and policymakers, it becomes clear that it serves as a tool for monitoring the quality of educational projects or strategies. This methodology may provide valuable information to policymakers about class dynamics and the environment in schools.

The Role of External Institutions in ELT Observation

It is important to note that this study includes the British Council (BC) as an agent in relation to the implementation of the National Bilingualism Plan in favor of the English Language. This institution, along with public and private-universities and publishing houses, among others, has been involved in bilingualism education projects in Colombia. The British Council trained me as an observer: it taught me about several standardized practices that can be used in CO. The guidelines a trained Mentor observer should follow consist of rather rigid rubrics which do not allow the observer to step out of that "frame": adherence to this step-by-step approach is the mark of a "good" observer. In its defense, however, I found the British Council to be well organized and influential since its services have been used by many local governments in Colombia for teacher training and guidance on COP for EFL teachers.

Despite criticism and bias, I cannot avoid the previous scenario, but my focus will be unpacking the relationship between when EFL teachers are the topic of discussion. I nevertheless remain critical of its abovementioned methodology,

but for my purposes here, I will focus on untangling the relationship between the BC/NBP/and local agencies. The role of the BC in EFL projects is well known and some local governments rely on it to implement statistical measures of teachers´ performances. Several Colombian government bodies have consulted external entities to strengthen bilingualism in the country and the BC is the one most often chosen to assess ELT projects.

In my opinion, it is very important for us -- teachers, academics and local education administrators – to play an active role in this field... since we know the context, understand students' needs more closely and are excellent professionals. As mentioned above, this discussion can be left to the future; for now, my interest centers on the reality of the BC as an agent for power and the control of educational projects in the country and especially in the COP.

The core of the BC program in Colombia is that "We connect people with learning opportunities and creative ideas from the UK. Whether you want to learn or teach English, take an exam, study in the UK or find out about our forthcoming events, this is the place to start" (BC, Colombia home page). Also, the BC seeks to strengthen teachers' potential skills, "through our teacher training courses, expert advice, teaching tips, materials and support networks, we're here to help you become a more effective English teacher." (BC, Colombia, Professional Development Intro page).

As noted, the BC has supported the professional development of teachers, students, and administrators in Colombia for more than 80 years. To explain my point of view, I would like to detail its work in the COP area. It is no a secret that the plans of the government include improving the knowledge of students and teachers in public schools and, with the help of the BC, achieving the bilingualism plan. As a participant in these programs, I know that its training of Mentor observers is demanding.

The BC leaders (Seniors) use different strategies for forming a "good" class observer; they provide us with the rubrics, guidelines and step by step formats, we need to correctly observe a class. This approach seems to encapsulate the characteristics of a "high quality" COP.

Understanding the BC's pedagogical support

During the training of the CO, the Senior is more than a classroom observer: he or she provides "pedagogical support" to a certain group of trainee observers in different situations. I will now mention some of the parameters of this training I observed:

General information about the school and the class (number of students, average age of students, hours of the class, and date, among others)

Class preparation (the observes if the teacher has a class plan and if the objective is in accordance with the level of the students)

Use of the language (does the teacher use English to teach; do the students use English? is the use of English encouraged in the classroom?)

Class development: Is the topic of the class clearly presented? Is there an introductory activity or warm up? Are there transitions between activities? Is the class centered on the learners? Is there a clear objective? Does the teacher use strategies to catch the attention of the students? (The observer notes whether the teacher promotes collaborative work and uses digital tools for.)

Evaluation and feedback (the teacher offers constructive feedback, the teacher welcomes different types of feedback (self-assessment, peer feedback) and the teacher accepts the use of rubrics for evaluation.)

Materials and resources (The materials used in class help to meet the objective and encourage the participation of the students.)

There is not anything in these parameters about the personal relationship between the Observer and the observed teacher. That is to say, about whether the conversation between the "expert" observer and the teacher throws light on a series of epistemological and ontological concepts that may improve the procedure. A number of teachers feel that engaging in this small talk would be much more helpful than invading their spaces or having a magnifying glass / microscope inside the classroom. I am pretty sure that such a talk would give the teachers a chance to explain the awkwardness of being observed and, in terms of fairness, put the Mentor observer in the shoes of the teacher, so the observer becomes familiar with the reality of his or her daily life in the school. This interaction would build what I would call a "bridge of dialogue";

it would make the voice of teachers heard and should appear alongside the figures, numbers, and statistics in the National Bilingualism Plan (BNP).

That there are many public schools where the CO is not used is a cause of constant concern for me, as is the exclusion of such conversations from the CO guidelines. For example, what happens when a teacher does not let me observe his or her class? What happens if the students do not show up for the class? And if I (as observer) cannot enter the school? I would like to know much more about the role of COP in public schools. I am also worried about observers who, like myself, sometimes do not want to follow an evaluation rubric. Does it make me a bad observer? I have seen many classes where teachers do not follow a step by step method, and/ or do not have an advanced level of proficiency but their classes are amazing, the students enjoy and learn from them... but the CO format only leaves room for notions like "excellence" "the follow-up of rubrics"," ideal teaching" or "needs to improve" and the observer is forced to evaluate the teacher in accordance with the narrow guidelines found in the BNP. These COPs clearly reveal the imbalance of power between the observer and the teacher. I will go more deeply in this problem in the following section.

Top-down Observation by an External Actor

To do that, I employ social theory, specifically certain ideas about social organization found in Tollefson, (1991), Habermas (1986), Foucault (1977) and Giddens (1990), which provide a useful framework for analyzing the impact of the National Bilingualism Program.

Power

From my contact with EFL teachers and time as EFL teacher in public schools, I have seen how State and private institutions employ their power to determine the nature of "quality" education and implement programs in line with their criteria (without consulting the observed teachers or their students). I have likewise noted how these institutions sometimes are not aware of the context in which teachers (and their schools) work. The State currently gives these external institutions the power to implement their programs in schools: this is

the result of the political, economic, and administrative relations between the State and the "recognized" external institution, which reflects the dominant position of the two parties. Tollefson (1991) argues that:

> Government implies a group of individuals sharing equally in the exercise of power, whereas State refers to the apparatus by which dominant groups maintain their power. Also, the State is an independent source of power with an interest in retaining and expanding its dominance. Although power implies dominance, individuals in subordinate position[s] in social relationships are never completely powerless, as they may carve out specific areas of control over their daily lives. (p.46)

This power is seen in schools, where teachers do not always decide on the type of training, the methods employed or the particular needs of the school. During this evaluation, the power relations are seen in the interaction between the observer and observed teacher, where the "expert" Mentor observer asks questions, assembles information, and gives an analysis of the activities he or she observed. The EFL teacher knows that this "expert" Mentor observer works for a well-known institution and this is one of the reasons why the teacher obeys the Mentor and follows the activities in the COP agenda.

I keep in mind that power is expressed in terms of regimes of truth; in this case, the CO. These formats of truth are sets of guidelines that define what is true or real at any given time in the COP. This idea of power is seen when the external observer arrives and assumes a superior position towards the teacher, who accepts observer´s top-down observations because of the latter´s power.

Knowledge

The theories of training which underlie classroom observation are totalitarian, imposed on minority groups as a unitary discourse. This discourse is that teachers must be observed by a Mentor who stipulates the rules for improvement and gathers data about their performance. Canagarajah (1999) believes that: "such grand theories are regarded as totalitarian in that they impose the dominant groups' world view and intellectual tradition on other communities who have their own local bodies of knowledge." (p.47)

The good teacher may also be regarded as the receptor of canonical knowledge which is then reproduced. I have noticed that when these dynamics of knowledge are imparted to teachers, some EFL teachers only copy a model lesson and this enters into the evaluation of teacher and feedback from the Mentor.

Marginalized Subjectivity

From the standpoint of a constituted subject, the practice of thinking [of] oneself as [a] subject of English teaching practices implies paying attention to the ways that English Language Teachers perceive themselves and how they are affected by the ways that society in general perceives them and, as well, the ways that they face the roles, duties and tasks that are demanded of them and what they accept, adapt, or impose upon themselves to accomplish them (Mendez, 2016).

The heterogeneous and conflictive nature of discourses open the possibility that the subject may enjoy a range of positions in accordance with the different discourses and that subjectivity is always fluid and negotiable. This provides the subjects with the possibility of forming new identities and obtaining a critical awareness by resisting the dominant discourses. (Canagarajah,1999, p. 30).

Some discourses about how to have a successful English class, or how to be an effective teacher, have been preferred for many years. The picture of a "good" English class is ordered through structural patterns that must be followed. EFL teachers have developed different techniques and strategies to teach a good class and they can also change them at their convenience. The teacher may change his or her role during the observation in order to achieve a "good" class; here is when the observer runs into some problems because this COP is scripted… this is an exceptional situation.

I would say that once you are trained as a Mentor observer, you are invested with a new role and a body of knowledge you can act on; sometimes this new information contradicts your previous views about teaching, and sometimes it complements it. Likewise, the subject position of the Mentor observer only acts in a multifaceted way whereas the social interaction in the COP may

improve his or her point of view and offer more insight into the observation procedure.

The Subject Trainer

This subject trainer is molded and trained to be a coach of teachers; in other words, as an "expert" in his field. The task of the subject trainer is to provide the appropriate tools for the success of the project. The preparation of this subject trainer is fundamental and will help to form a subject capable of following precise and rigid guidelines to comply with the proposed objectives.

In the words of Wajnryb (1992): "the task of the trainer is to help trainees understand the various processes involved in the teaching and learning of a language and the complex array of activities that occurs in a language classroom. The classroom, therefore, should play a role in the training process." (p. 5). The trainer subject needs a skilled and trained eye to perceive, understand and benefit from his or her observation of the class.

It would be useful to delve into the hidden narratives of Observers and find out what they think about COP and how their subject position changes as they exercise their profession and likewise, analyze the points of view of teachers who have been observed, judged, and evaluated by external institutions. I am sure that something important would come out of it. Of course, these questions are about power relations and a deeper exploration of them would throw light on the relationship between the observer, teacher, and "expert" in CO.

With that in mind and as an initial effort, I propose the following research questions:

How have classroom observation practices been used to regulate EFL teachers and establish a monolithic approach to English teaching in the Bilingualism National Plan?

What kinds of teaching practices and subject positions are ignored by this approach?

What mechanisms of power-knowledge are responsible for the notion of "expertise" in COP?

Trying to answer these questions will help us to understand the subjectivities of trained Observers. In COP the characteristic of the subject position is constant change; in that respect, it would also be useful to explore the practices which are not evident during the observations: the conversations between the observer and observed, their negotiations before and after the CO, and the uncertainties or unstated positions of the ELT Observers.

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Chapter 3

Problematizing Local English Immersion Programs: Unpacking their Training Mechanisms

Jair Ayala Zarate

Abstract

Colombian teachers of English (CTE) are overdiagnosed since we have always been judged to have a deficit perspective, based on international standards, like the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), which do not take into account the reality of our lives, (Ayala & Alvarez, 2005), knowledge or experiences. Additionally, Colombian English Language Teaching policies, like the National Bilingualism Program (NBP) replicate and perpetuate imported practices (Sánchez and Obando, 2008. CTE use them to find ¨professional alternatives to achieve higher standards in their jobs¨, mainly in two aspects: the linguistic (Gonzalez, Montoya & Sierra, 2001) and the pedagogical. In 2015, through the Ministry of Education (MoEd), the previous administration encouraged CTE to participate in Local English Immersion Programs (LEIP) to improve those two skills. This chapter focuses on their experiences of a colonial mechanism like the LEIP.

Introduction

To start with, I will present my thoughts on the local realities to do with the subject of this study, in the form of a narrative which touches on the Local English Immersion Programs (LEIP) and language teaching in Colombia in general in Colombia and also includes some studies of other geo-political

contexts that will serve to reveal the finer shades of what it means to be a Colombian teacher of English who participates in immersion programs, mainly on the basis of my own experience of learning English, the methods I was taught as a student-teacher, and how they influenced my own subjectivity as a teacher, trainer of teachers and academic coordinator.

The first section, *How it all started*, describes the issue of the institutional *power* to impose such methods I faced as a trainee teacher, which were based on Eurocentric models (Arias, 2018) of linguistic and pedagogical skills. The second, *Normalizing Practices*, explains how my practice as a teacher and teacher trainer repeated the concepts I had been taught as a student- teacher (Clavijo, 2000), which was further evidence of the strong influence and standardization of the Eurocentric models used in Colombia: ones which include other forms of knowledge (e.g. experiential) and *other ways of being*. For Shatzky, 2002 this social practice represents stability, understood as one of the three conceptions of social order, being the other two, regularity and interdependence. Stability refers to ¨the repetition of given components of social life¨ (p. 7). The third, *Turning monolingual-training into bilingualism,* is a narrative (Barkhuizen, 2016) about five Local Immersion Programs (LEIP) I coordinated, which are an example of the imposition of these Eurocentric programs (Shatzky, 2002). It is worth stressing that these programs do not respond to local interests: on the contrary, *they ignore or deny the validity of the local knowledge and ways of being of CTE*. They homogenize knowledge in line with the standard of policy-makers and exclude the personhood, humanity and agency of the Colombian teacher of English. The fourth section, *Locating the wounds,* analyzes the power relations and normalized practices in the LEIP are worth studying, especially the approach to ELT in the Doctorado Interinstitucional en Educación in relation with its research line on Identities, power and Inequity.

In short, this chapter discusses how the implementation of LEIP in Colombia has imposed a single way of learning and teaching that ignores the previous knowledge and experience of Colombian teachers and fails to make their realities the foundation of these programs, because it sets up the native-speaker as a role model. To address this problem, our study then asks: What do Colombian Teachers of English say about their participation in the Local English Immersion Programs?

To do that, I employ the notion of the "epistemic decolonial turn" to throw light on the standardized idea of Colombian teachers of English, who are

located in the "not-yet" zone. Based on the fallacy that the native speaker is the model for language teaching, CTE are required to show strong linguistic skills (comparable to those of native speakers), as if proficiency were the only qualification for a language teacher.

In other words, you can never be a ¨good¨ language teacher unless you are a native speaker. In addition, we are obliged to show a constant improvement, validated by professional certifications, to prove that our teaching practices are effective, measurements based on our students´ evaluations results and not on what they have actually learned. These, among other requisites, make the personhood of the teacher invisible and invalidate the knowledge we impart. Consequently, relations of power, a denial of our existence (as CTE) and a disdain for other kinds of knowledge are at the core of the ILEP.

How it All Started

After twenty years of teaching English at various universities and language institutes, I became the academic coordinator of a series of English Language Immersion programs for, among other institutions: the UPN (Universidad Pedagógica Nacional), SENA (Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje-National Apprenticeship Service[7]), MINCIT (Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism) and MoEd (National Ministry of Education). This post, which was funded by the MoEd, made me reflect upon the path which had led me from being an English teacher to a *leader* of programs for guiding English teachers.

When I was an undergraduate student of English, I never thought I would teach in the same way that my teachers were teaching me, nor did I realize how much (apart from the linguistic aspect) I would learn from my teachers and later replicate as a professional, nor that the teaching methodologies and materials I used then would later shape my own work as a teacher.

Most important, I did not understand that those methodologies and materials were part of a standardized practice. (see Richards and Rodgers, 1986). I learned British and American English -- their pronunciation, linguistic similarities and cultural features. The textbooks were for speakers of English as a Second Language rather than for student-teachers of English and they

7 The SENA is a national institution funded by the State whose aim is to train a qualified labor force in various fields; it has national and international agreements to provide well-trained interns to companies.

did not teach us to speak English in a natural setting. They are still used in teacher training programs.

That is, the curriculum did not take the needs of future English teachers into account: it imposed one kind of English and one way of learning and favored one culture, the *English* culture. It did not consider our language, our culture: it was a monolingual and mono-cultural environment. Whether directly or indirectly, that teaching method made my teachers invisible and therefore made me invisible too (as a person, student and future teacher).

Along with twenty-one other universities, mine (a public university in Bogotá) was part of the COFE (Colombian Framework for English) project, sponsored by the British Council (BC), which, according to Rubiano, C. I., Frodden, C. & Cardona, G. (2000) aimed at *improving* the teaching of English in the early 90´s. Therefore, I was strongly influenced by my teacher trainers, who, in turn, were influenced by those Eurocentric concepts which had proven to be effective in the Third World.

However, it was only years after I graduated that I realized I was using the same methodology as my teachers (Communicative Language Teaching- CLT). It had been imported from England, where the COFE sent some Colombian English teachers (including a few of mine) to hone their teaching skills with *the newest, most efficient and effective methods*.

In the words of Taylor (1993, cited in Li, 1998) ¨CLT is characterized by 1. a focus on communicative functions; 2. a focus on meaningful tasks rather than on language (e.g., grammar or vocabulary study); 3. efforts to make tasks and language relevant to a target group of learners through an *analysis of genuine, realistic situations*; 4. *the use of authentic, from-life materials*; 5. the use of group activities; and 6. the attempt to create a secure, non-threatening atmosphere¨.

As usual, this sounds doable in theory until you confront real people, real students, who have different goals and maybe different motivations (or none), that is, it was not possible to use the above six points of the method I was using when teaching a heterogeneous group of students. What Li (1998) found in Korea, was exactly what I found in Colombia. There was no connection between those theories and the reality of the classroom, because the methodology tended to generalize, as if all teachers and students were the same and regardless of the context. It assumed that the circumstances surrounding education are the same in the First World as in the Third World

(which Colombia belongs to). Those models excluded the possibility of including local characteristics and forms of knowledge, as many studies have shown (Ayala & Álvarez, 2005; Gonzalez 2005; Guerrero, 2010; Usma, 2009; Bonilla & Tejada 2016; Mosquera, O. A., Cárdenas, M. L., & Nieto, M. C.2018).

So, when I became a trainer of teachers, I perpetuated the model used by the teachers who had trained me and this is probably true of Colombian ELT in general: a model which excludes the possibility of different individuals and contexts.

The LEIP followed the same method, with the same principles, same activities and same materials which CTE were familiar with: a standardized practice they then perpetuated. Thus, talking about it may explain who Colombian teachers of English are, who we are like, where we come from and what we may do in our classes.

Along the same line of thought, Viáfara González, J. J., & Ariza Ariza, J. A. (2015) concluded that a crucial part of understanding a foreign language is an exposure to the culture it belongs to. Therefore, cultural awareness should be included in the teaching curriculum. The question here is how to do so, if the students are not given the opportunity to *use* the language as a means of communication, rather than an object of study, which usually happens in Colombia and is not remedied by the LEIP. Gonzalez, A. (2005) recommends teaching programs, based on our social, cultural and economic conditions, which are created in our country and give a priority to our own methods and knowledge. Similarly, Guerrero (2010) denounces our acceptance of a hegemonic knowledge produced in other latitudes. That is, those three studies argue that ELT in Colombia must stop importing foreign practices which are not suitable for our teaching English here. This replication is a feature of LEIP and influences CTE. The mistake of these pedagogical policies is that they assume that practices which have been effective in one context can be replicated in another, with the same results.

This is clearly evident in the LEIP, where the models, materials and an emphasis on the skills of the native speaker are reproduced by the CTE without further reflection on their suitability to our socio-cultural context. These practices do not permit the teachers to do what they know is meaningful for their students: on the contrary, teachers are forced to teach as they have been taught, in order to be regarded as *good teachers*.

Standardizing Practices

It does not seem that the implementation of a National Bilingualism Program (BNP) in 2004 was the result of an informed decision, if we take into account, first (see Sanchez and Obando 2008), the likelihood that bilingual Colombians will find a suitable job. And the second (see Cárdenas, 2006), the readiness of Colombia to be bilingual. As Sanchez and Obando (2008) and Cárdenas (2006) further point out, the implementation of BNP indicates that it was launched without a rigorous planning, another example of the mechanical repetition of models that were effective in other contexts but not in our own, mainly because it was successful in other countries. As Correa & Usma (2013) state, the National Program of Bilingualism (NPB) ¨was not connected to the actual needs of public schools and the people who worked and studied in them¨.

The same seems true of the LEIP component of the NBP, which was financed by the Ministry of Education (MoEd) for the schools which focused on teaching English. Therefore, it is understandable that the policy, its implementation, methodologies and teacher training programs (which prescribe the pedagogical materials and activities) were not based on a thorough study and do not correspond to the needs of the students or teachers. It is just the opposite; they repeat models which ignore our local realities and have become standardized practices which the subjects of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Colombia accept unthinkingly. In the words of Schatzky (2002) ¨Social order is the repetition of given components of social life¨, and this is evident in the field of ELT. The aim of this study is to focus on the Local English Immersion Programs conducted in Colombia in terms of the type of activities and the profile of the participants. A clear evidence of this is provided by Gil (2013), who discusses an immersion program used in part of his class in 1967. After he obtained an M.A. in an English-speaking country and began to teach English in Colombia, he noticed his students´ lack of confidence and low participation in his classes, compared to what he himself had experienced *as a student*. So, he decided to give his students the opportunity to openly speak about various topics in a relaxed setting. This was done over a weekend in the countryside, far from the stultifying atmosphere of a classroom, with the accompaniment of some native speakers who informally interacted with his students. Additionally, the topics of the sessions were songs, music and their cultural interests. This project was conducted in English and meant to encourage his students to familiarize themselves with the language and later

transfer what they learned to the classroom. It was based on the context in which studied English, which he had found to be meaningful and effective: what he had experienced as a student he put into practice as a teacher, following the principles of CLT.

Some aspects caught his attention in this event. First, his students were not as accomplished as he expected (compared to his own progress in an English-only context). He expected that once they were away from the classroom and in a relaxed atmosphere, his students would use the language more naturally. Second, the native speakers dominated the discussion of the cultural aspects of English. In both cases, the problem was similar to that found in the LEIP: the replication of models that seemed to be successful in one context did not yield the same results in another, despite the willingness of the participants.

Based on the above experience, one could then define the immersion method as the activities of a group of students or teachers in a relaxed, yet artificial setting, who, accompanied by native speakers, talk about such topics as music, food or the culture of the native speakers. Although the concept of immersion has not been clearly defined in Colombia, those who are responsible for educational policies here have understood and put it into practice, as is seen in the growing number of such programs for ELT in the country.

These programs were based on the methods used to teach English to immigrants in Canada, the United States and Australia during the 1960´s (Cummings, 1998) and their aim was to integrate those foreigners into the respective local societies, with the support of their governments. In Colombia, by contrast, they are an example of the strong influence of international agendas, like the one of the British Council, which has overseen English teaching programs in the country (Bonilla and Tejada, 2016) since the COFE project in the early 90´s.

In Canada, an officially bi-lingual nation, French was taught to English-speaking Canadian children so they would have better opportunities for education and employment. The aim of the program was to provide them with the same linguistic and cultural skills in both languages. Due to the strong demand for these programs, three models of immersion were created, all the result of an analysis of the local realities. The only common feature of the three was that at least 50% of the teaching was done in the target language (French). The first, called “early immersion”, was for children in kindergarten

or the first grade of primary school. There was also a “middle immersion” program for those in the fourth grade and a “late immersion” one for children in the seventh grade. After they graduated from high school, the children´s knowledge of both languages qualified them to work in the government. It is worth noting that these programs included the families of the children as well. Extensive studies of these programs have been done by Barik, H., & Swain, M. (1976), Cummins, J. (1998), Safty, A. (1988), Day, E., & Shapson, S. (1988). My point here is that these programs in Canada were carefully planned, in accordance with local realities.

By contrast, in the United States, In the Harvard Law Review, in its Vol 116. No 8 (June 2003) it is stated that despite, ¨the resurgence of bilingual education policy “took place in the context of [the] civil rights movement. Broadening the scope of civil rights, Congress passed the Bi- lingual Education Act of 1968 to offer financial support for bilingual education programs serving national origin minorities¨ there are still some states against this Act favoring monolingual education, as it can be seen with the Act in 2001 No Child Left Behind. As a result, these opposite ideas intensify the debate about the implementation of immersion, transition or bilingual programs for immigrants or minority groups. According to the *Harvard Law Review* (2003), such a policy explicitly imposes the American way of life on foreigners. There, the situation is much more complex, since there are many more immigrants than in Colombia, with as many backgrounds as languages. Hence, these bilingual or immersion programs should have been more carefully designed and implemented, but, unlike Canada, it did not happen in the United States: it seems it was easier to establish a law that fits all, without considering differences, with the idea that everyone would become American.

In Colombia, it was not until 2015 that these LEIP began to be used by teachers. However, since 2004 the MoEd has sponsored those programs on the Colombian island of San Andrés, where English is an official language. To implement them, Colombian teachers of English stayed for a month in the homes of one hundred native families (whose members are called *raizales*), where they attended classes in the morning and interacted with the locals in the afternoon, with the idea that they would replicate the scheme when they returned to their respective schools. As Gil did with his students in 1967, the program *recreated an artificial setting* to improve their knowledge of English.

To sum up, the standardized immersion programs used around the world, including Colombia, are based on ones previously tested in bilingual countries

like Canada, which are constantly being studied and evaluated. The programs currently carried out in Colombia basically have two main components (Gil, 2013): the presence of native speakers and a location far from the conventional classroom. Thus, they might be called monolingual programs which are meant to improve the teaching skills of Colombian teachers.

Having discussed the above, I will now show how the LEIP and the activities which revolve around them have become a colonial practice which rests on exclusion and the rejection of local knowledge and pedagogy.

Paving the Way for Monolingual-Training to Improve Bilingualism: The Consequences of the Standardization of LEIP

I will start this section with two quotes that show why it is important to understand LEIP as a social practice within the framework of the Colombian NBP:

In order to understand language teaching and learning we need to understand teachers; and in order to understand teachers, we need to have a clearer sense of who they are; the professional, cultural, political, and individual identities which they claim or which are assigned to them (Varghese et all, 2005.p 22).

That is, it is important to understand the reality of the teachers and students, which is what the LEIP, NPB and other programs and policies should be based on, rather than the adoption of alien practices.

a) The absence of a clear definition

The second quote is from Peláez and Usma (2017): ¨With Spolsky (2004) we define foreign language education policies as those implicit and explicit norms or regulations that shape what, when, and how languages, and in this case, foreign languages, are taught and learned in the school system¨ (p. 122). In other words, it is important to understand how the State defines LEIP and determine whether or not it fits the participants. Such immersion programs

have been successful in bilingual contexts. As Torres-Guzman & Etxeberria, citing De Jesús, 2008, note: "Dual language programs are proliferating in the United States, Canada, and even in the Basque country of Spain". The Associated Press (2007) reported that "the proliferation of programs in the US is dramatic. This increase is so rapid that there is now a shortage of qualified language teachers". This does not mean that the same results can be expected in our Colombian socio-cultural context, even though the current NPB has been put into practice since 2004. Still, it seems that meeting these objectives was guaranteed by the LEIP and it is now regarded as the program which solves all the linguistic and pedagogical problems in ELT.

For the purposes of this study, the definitions of bilingual education, immersion programs, dual immersion and two-way immersion are the same as those used when those programs were inaugurated in Canada in the 1960´s, namely, they are a method of education which promotes additive bilingualism. According to Lucido, F & Montague, N. (2008) "bilingual programs operate with the objective of producing communicative and literate children who can negotiate between two languages in their daily interactions". This shows how each analyst uses his/her own previous knowledge and experience to define the core concepts of this study.

In Spain, there is a Linguistic Immersion Program as well, run by the Department of Education (Jimenez, 2012). It is worth noting, first, that this program is meant for immigrants, studying in Spanish schools, who do not speak Spanish and its purpose is to integrate them into Spanish society and second, the NPB in Colombia is also meant for immigrants whose first language is not Spanish, with the similar aim of inclusion, though they are still excluded for the most part.

b) The conditions of existence

Gil (2013) states that an English immersion program at the Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia (UPTC) in Paipa, Department of Boyacá, in 1967 was aimed at familiarizing the participants with the native speaker´s culture in a natural and spontaneous way. Now, two decades after Gil´s program, the same basic components are still found in the current LEIP of the NBP. One is that the use of term "immersion" turns the same class into an immersion program. Another is that when the classes are held outdoors, that too is a method of immersion. Further, there is the mistaken belief that the participation in and/or leadership of a class by native speakers means

that they can teach the culture just because they know their own language, an example of what Shatzky (2002) calls the concept of regularity. Therefore, based on what we have heard, the underlying idea is that the linguistic proficiency of a Colombian student will only be recognized when he or she can effectively communicate with native speakers. The problem this raises is that a Colombian who has studied or lived in an English-speaking country may not necessarily speak English like a native. These programs seem to be aimed at those who have a need that must be met: persons who are in deficit, the zone of the "not yet".

The current LEIP aims at:

1. Teachers in public schools.
2. Teachers whose linguistic competence is considered to be insufficient (though it is not clear by whom) or based on *another* international standard (see Ayala & Alvarez, 2005) (Common European Framework of Reference) demonstrating a B1 level or lower.
3. Teachers who do not teach English, but require a knowledge of English for other subjects they teach.
4. Teachers who work for focalized [8] schools.
5. Teachers who have been recognized by an international immersion authority and thus qualify to teach in local immersion programs.

Similarly, the application for certification has various requisites, like the presentation of a project that would benefit the applicant´s students when he or she participates in the LEIP (the application procedure uses technologies like the internet and video recordings). This turns the LEIP into another device of exclusion. The LEIP and the NBP are only for those who earn the right to be in them. It creates a need which the applicant must satisfy and if you do not meet the requirements, you simply do not exist, you cannot participate, although in theory the NBP is meant for all teachers. There are no requirements to take part in it and it does not include ALL institutions.

8 Public schools that based their results on national standardized tests and complied with certain administrative, geographical and socio-economical requirements are supported by the local and national educational authorities: they can participate in professional development programs and receive closer accompaniment and assessment.

c) Being Native or not being

The tendency in Colombia is to replicate imported practices and, in that way, to perpetuate our belief that since those practices are apparently effective elsewhere, they will be appropriate for our ELT programs as well. As the academic coordinator of the Local English Immersion Programs during 2006 and 2007, I was asked to create an immersion program for Colombian teachers of English whose proficiency was B1 and above. The main aims were to improve their linguistic competence and knowledge of English culture. The participants interacted with a group of native speakers with a variety of backgrounds and nationalities. However, there were some whose first language was not English. Most of the Formadores Nativos Extranjeros (FNE) or English Native Speakers did not have any teaching experience, but they were volunteers[9] who served as language role models for the CTE. From the participants remarks at the end of the program, I would say that the objectives were met within two or three weeks.

I noticed various aspects that really matter for the implementation of such programs, and as a result, for the NBP during the development of the LEIP. For example, the mistaken belief that it is best to learn a foreign language from native speakers and if the student can interact with them, he or she will reach an acceptable proficiency. Second, the participants had to match the linguistic skills of their language role models (native speakers). Despite some of those Volunteers were not native speakers they were given that condition which somehow made them conceal their own background and identity. And third, language was placed over pedagogy and experience: the measurement of the good teacher was his or her linguistic skills rather than his or her talent at or experience of teaching. The presence of native speakers thus imparts a hierarchical notion of knowledge to the participants: native speakers are in the top rank and non-native speakers below.

Locating the Wounds: The Invisible, "Not Yet" Members of the LEIP

So far, I have focused on the perpetuation of certain social practices to do with the preference given to native speakers. I now turn to the way in which

9 Foreigners who came Colombia to work as co-teachers of English were paid almost twice the minimal legal national wage: their responsibilities were not the same as those of the homeroom teachers.

Colombian teachers of English participate in a local immersion program which excludes their prior knowledge and experience. Inclusive immersion programs use both languages and cultures. Those Colombian immersion programs, which are led by native speakers, are meant to promote effective communication, but make the knowledge of language and pedagogy of Colombian teachers invisible (Guerrero, 2010).

The LEIP insists that the target language and culture are the only means of communication, despite the fact that, in various contexts, inclusive immersion programs do more to promote the interaction of both languages and cultures. Thus, it is worth analyzing how these Colombian LEIP foster exclusion and leave no room for the local language or knowledge (Mosquera, O. A., Cárdenas, M. L., & Nieto, M. C., 2018).

In the words of Castañeda-Peña (2018), ¨English language teaching and learning is simply an established hierarchy, traditionally imposed by a European / capitalist / military / Christian / patriarchal / white / heterosexual / male ideology, as part of the global policy which dominates the teaching of English in Colombia¨. (p.27) Therefore, it is easy to understand why Colombian teachers, as non-native speakers, suffer from the notion of a deficit, since you are either a native speaker or you are not. LEIP in Colombia is based on that hierarchy, which places Colombian teachers of English in the "not yet" zone.

De Souza Santos, (2016) defines colonialism as a system which disregards differences in order to justify hierarchies, the domination and oppression of one culture by another and the inferiority of certain nations. These LEIP have been designed for those who are thought to be inferior, and whose knowledge has to be corrected (Castañeda-Londoño, 2017). They assume that their teaching does not meet the required standard and they need to be *immersed, in order to live, learn, and satisfy their needs*. That is to say, to become someone else, leave who they are behind, accept a knowledge that is imposed and forget their own. Colombian teachers of English are regarded as inferior and must accept the imposition, despite their prior knowledge and experience.

As Guerrero (2008) points out, there is only one policy, as if one size fits us all and only certain kinds of knowledge and practice are acceptable, hence the justification for the LEIP as a way to improve the work of Colombian teachers of English with those standardized practices, regardless of their realities and teaching contexts. The importance of the first language, first culture and

local realities should be at the core of LEIP, since they are the pillars of the subjectivities of Colombian teachers, but they are not included in the design and implementation of the LEIP, which makes it a colonial mechanism to eliminate the linguistic and cultural knowledge of the CTE.

Walsh (2009) believes that we should think of inclusion as the exchange of cultures through a direct contact, that is to say, an exchange of values, practices, knowledge and cultural traditions; thus, both cultures and languages should be equally important in the LEIP, since they nourish each other. In this view, the co-existence of both languages and cultures (L1 and L2, and C1 and C2) should be encouraged by the LEIP and included in national language policies. But this equal relation between the two cultures does not exist in LEIP.

García (2012) speaks of two kinds of bilingualism: one additive and the other a variety where the mother tongue or first language should only be used at home. This latter, of course, may not be used for academic purposes, which once again tries to erase all traces of the immigrants´ culture. This is exactly what happens in the LEIP, which does not allow the participants to use their native language. On the contrary, they are penalized for using it to communicate, learn or even exist.

Colombian students, parents, teachers, school administrators and businessmen should be alerted to the expectations of such programs and should have a say in their design. If that were to happen, the collective identity of teachers would be actually closer to who they really are rather than an identity which lives up to the expectations of policy-makers.

Maintaining the stability of the social order (Shatzki, 2012) is another feature of social practices implemented by the LEIP. The Secretaries of Education (SoEd-Regional Entities) have copied this model from the MoEd, consequently, schools have created their own immersion programs and, on a smaller scale, language institutes and private classes have as well. This is an example on how models are adopted, without any consideration of their influence on teachers. Likewise, under the leadership of the British Council, the SoEd in Bogotá (the capital of Colombia) has launched *immersion strategies* for public schools in the city. It would be interesting to learn more about the British Council´s agenda in this respect, the extent to which it takes the actual reality of teachers and students into account and how it contributes to ELT in Colombia.

The immersion program trend has taken over ELT: it is thought to be the best way to improve linguistic proficiency. It is popular but promotes exclusion, since it places Colombian teachers in the "not yet" zone. It limits the possibility of their using other methods and is based on a stereotyped idea of the role of the teacher in society.

The Significance of Professional Development

It is not only important but necessary to understand the impact, on the professional development of Colombian teachers, of language immersion programs based on the concept of bilingualism. It is equally important to show that those concepts have not resulted from a thorough study of their efficacy, and thus such policies, which lack rigor, perpetuate practices that ignore our own culture and language and pedagogical knowledge(s). It would likewise be interesting to reveal the hidden agendas of government policies which promote those LEIP, since, according to Zarate (2014) the State and certain NGOs and international bodies, foster a dominant, globalized discourse which reaches to the teaching of English.

As a corollary, one would have to investigate the key role of teachers in the construction of these programs, in terms of the latter´s objectives, methodology, cultural activities, use of native speakers and standards. Why do teachers participate in them, how do they see their relation with their colleagues and leaders, what do they feel about their students and their own experiences? We need to understand immersion programs as a place where a) teachers are expected to meet certain objectives and study how this affects the image their students and colleagues have of them and b) advances professional development, language skills, ideas, feelings and beliefs which can be put into practice, all of which lead to knowledge. These are the concerns which have driven my study of the subject and turned the construction of my own subjectivity into a struggle.

The fact that I was a leader of a colonial approach (LEIP) to ELT and am thus familiar with local English immersion programs has made me realize how important it is to raise awareness of the construction of teachers´ subjectivities, in order to help to do away with the erasure of one´s existence, validate local knowledge and expose the hierarchical social relations in ELT.

In view of the above situation of English immersion programs in Colombia and their relation to our socio-economic reality (since the target population are Colombian in-service teachers of English), my research seeks to answer the following question:

What do those teachers think about their participation in local English immersion programs?

Its objective is to analyze the stories they tell about their participation in LEIP.

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Chapter 4

English Teachers' Sites in the Diverse Lands of Peace

Yeraldine Aldana Gutiérrez

La guerra como Única ruta para la construcción de paz desaparece otras

War, as the only path towards peace-building, makes alternative ones disappear

(Anonymous, 2019)

Introduction

Peace-building and peace education: Each seems to respond to diverse ways of thinking about, feeling and resisting some phenomena in the world. Those phenomena in turn may also involve violent situations in a country like Colombia, where not only armed conflict but other types of violence (structural, indirect ones) may permeate society, including its educational environment. According to Hurie (2018), since 1948 Colombian schools have become scenarios for avoiding violence and working towards peace (Chaux et al., 2008), places where teachers respond to this challenge by finding many ways to shape their pedagogical initiatives on the basis of their experience of life. Personally, as a Colombian contributor to peace at schools who is also a woman, bilingual English teacher, *mestiza* and member of this doctoral program, I have found that *English language teachers contest peace-building frames (modern ones) through peace construction (local and alternative frames)*.

I will now elaborate on that statement by addressing its key and interconnected components. To do that, I explain how I used an *eclectic*

(Navarrete, 2009) and flexible path to *arrive at* that conclusion. In line with this metaphor of a journey, I divide what follows into sections which I call landscapes.

First, I discuss the phenomena of peace-building in ELT in relation to their frames. Then, I discuss the implicit violence of those frames. After that, I discuss how these teachers are contesting that violence, as they resist a modern, monolithic linear notion of peace-building. That leads to some potential possibilities for further research, followed by the general objective, shown on a consistency chart[10].

Landscape 1: The Dual Peace Town

Modern concepts of peace, as seen in the positions of the UNESCO, British Council (BC) and Colombian Ministry of Education (MEN) suggest that there is a dichotomous view of peace-building in ELT, peace as the opposite of war. Yet, there are other notions of peace, a subject which is not new (Harris, 2004, 2007). That rigid definition is a constant concern in situations where violence is regarded as a way to relate to others (Parga, 2011). Indeed, some proposals by teachers which adhere to the modern discourse of peace think of it as an opposition between war and peace. (Gebregeorgis, 2017). Therefore, using the English class to build peace would resemble teaching a *given* way of being, opposite to warlike phenomena.

Peace-building which endorses the war/peace duality may help to attain a desirable state in a modern society when there are predetermined universal values that promote *living well* in a *globalized* world (Modern projects, according to Escobar. Cited in Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel, 2007). That society would do away with conflict and direct violence (UNESCO, 2000, 2013, 2018). This structural approach in peace-building and peace education may be included in the canon of ELT.

Throughout this journey I was able to perceive a frame for peace-building in the Dual Peace Town, together with another frame in the form of peace education. Within it, I found a standardized and constraining technical approach towards English

10 The consistency chart was a tool that guided me in creating my Ph.D. dissertation. It included a statement of the problem, problematic situations and the objectives.

teachers (Kumaravadivelu, 2003), which may be represented by a *factory*. It reminded me of what may occur when strategies for peace-building and peace education in ELT have a structural framework: that of the *good practice*.

There precisely seems to be a mechanical consistency to the factory metaphor– and an instrumental connection between peace-building and ELT. As technicians, English teachers (Kumaravadivelu, 2003) might be the effective controllers of machines which produce over-generalized concepts of peace education. The *manufacturing* of an ideal rational peaceful subject as part of *a global "who*" seems to be the purpose of a sanitizing (Huergo, 2000) *project to create a global citizenship* (UNESCO, 2016). According to Huergo (2000), modernity undertakes this civilizing or cleansing effort to establish a certain way of life. Proposals, such as UNESCO's activity cards for teachers, guide for a transformative pedagogy and framework for teacher education explicitly employ the notion of *progress* to shape the work of teachers and students.

This concern for placing various social phenomena, including peace-building, within the framework of progress may reach Colombia. This appears in the National Development Plan´s (2010-2014) initiative for *labs of peace,* which aim to promote social progress and a respect for human rights in line with the modernist concept.

In peace-building, it may take the form of a technical activity where the emphasis is on procedure, *good practice* and the *product,* as in Sun's (2017) proposal to use graphic novels to improve reading skills. Even though Sun sees it as an extracurricular activity, it is regarded as a *good practice*. Another example is a study by Yousuf et al. (2010), who calls for future teachers to engage in "activities that develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to explore concepts of peace" (p. 53). Finally, the two editions of the UNESCO´s *framework of teacher education (2005, 2017), and others on global education*, have a similar stance: they define peace-building and peace education as a "response to direct violence" and a means to prevent "further violence" (UNESCO, 2017, p. 13) and propose that they be a compulsory part of the practical education of teachers. It seems that individual teachers share the same view of peace-building as hegemonic global institutions like the UNESCO. There are further examples of the structural approach to peace construction in the form of peace-building in ELT. Speaking in the language of *good practice*, Morton (2007) says that teachers need to effectively teach *essential skills* for peace education in the classroom.

These *essentializing* discourses about peace are linked to didactic materials or strategies based on what some teachers call a "common universal notion" (Ayşegül, 2017, p. 72). Drawing on the language of the market, peace-construction through *peace education* is described as an *effective must-be*. Parga (2011) has studied conflicts between students and ways to resolve them in a deprived area of Bogotá, and suggests it as another possibility for peace-building. Still, he focuses on improving EFL oral communication skills as a means to resolve conflicts. What Habermas (1972) calls instrumental rationality and marketing analogies may prevail over alternative methods of peace-building.

In fact, some teachers seem to acknowledge that playing the role of an instructor is part of their job and they must stress the importance of *social justice* (Ortega, 2019). Here, I notice a similarity to Parga's study (2011), since both have extra-linguistic objectives (social justice), but they still adhere to the traditional, hegemonic methodology of ELT, which rests on the principles that: i. English is primarily a discipline and linguistic code, and ii. Teaching their students, a mastery of communicative skills is the priority. In both cases, teachers are placed in the position of instructors. Even in peace-building, positioning differently from an instructor role may have a hidden cost.

English for peace as a hegemonic version like peace-building (Hurie, 2018) may make English teachers perpetuate positivist, objectifying and instrumental interests (Habermas, 1972). That is why priority is given to language and communicative skills rather than extra-linguistic aims. This is the policy of powerful institutions like the Ministry of Education (MEN), which has established an alliance with the British Council (BC) to improve various aspects of the teaching of English.

Not only do they design and implement the guidelines for ELT (see the British Council's *Peace and Beyond* conference or *Active Citizens* project), but also, they make peace-building and peace education an *obligation*[11]. This seems to turn peace construction in the form of peace-building and peace education into another means to exert their power over English teachers. Many teachers are afraid of what will happen to them if they do not follow those guidelines. I wondered about it myself when I heard the story of one teacher (Excerpt 1). Some teachers are reluctant to reject these canonical procedures, because of retaliations by those top-down forces. More attention

11 https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1621/article-87806.html

should be given to this imposition of peace-building on ELT in a country with diverse violent conflicts.

Excerpt 1

> After consulting the internet, I e-mailed and called the Ministry of Education office to discuss my project to construct peace with the children I teach. However, I felt kind of surprised and scared when they said that, with the change of administration, other agendas had become more important than peace. I then thought about the murders of social leaders in Colombia (JM, Personal communication, 2018)[12].

In this journey, the Dual Lands of Peace also symbolize the emotional dilemmas and constraints to do with peace-building in ELT caused by the exercise of power (Benesch, 2018). Indeed, the imposition of such guidelines can be thought of as a strategy to silence or pressure the English teacher, which, with the formal discourses on peace-building and peace education, amounts to a kind of structural (Harris, 2004; Kruger, 2012) or nonlinguistic violence (Curtis & Gomes de Matos, 2018), with strong emotional effects (Benesch, 2018).The above excerpt is an example of an emotional reaction which may restrict that teacher´s chance to use the teacher´s knowledge of peace construction, beyond peace-building and peace education.

As we continue the journey through the Dual Peace Town, we come across the White Forest. This represents peace-building and peace education as yet another subject, shaped by Western values, that is placed on the curriculum students must learn (Ayşegül, 2017; Kruger & Evans, 2018). Some publications about peace-building posit a Westernized subject who is rational, peaceful and needs to become a global citizen (UNESCO, 2013). This makes peace-building look like recipes and list of contents, which both teachers and students must follow in the classroom. It rests on an over-generalized, Whitened idea of peace rather than an attitude towards life adapted to different local contexts (Harris, 2004, 2007). Teachers' roles seem presented as monolithic and from a deficit approach to language where they need to be "models of peaceful and nonviolent behavior" (Kruger, 2012, p. 17). However, their voices seem to be unheard. Contrastively, there seems to be a tendency to privilege a Western conceptualization and practice of peace in educational settings.

The participation of the British Council in peace-building and peace education in Colombia has been seen in such projects as "Peace and

12 This is a translation of the original in Spanish

Beyond" (2018) or "Active Citizens" (2019). The United Nations and the BC as institutions with prestige and power in Colombia have led these projects and conferences. The "Peace and Beyond" conference brought "practitioners, academics, policymakers and young leaders" (2018, p. 3) together to discuss their proposals on *peace-building*. It took place on April 10th, 11th and 12th of 2018 in Belfast.

What struck my attention about this conference was that the only Colombian speaker was not an English teacher or educator but the ex-president Juan Manuel Santos. His speech relied on the BC´s approach and discourse, as seen in his repeated use of the words *peace-building, one, culture, experience and violence* (Figure 1), a language which suggests a modern White man´s view of peace-building. The frequent use of the word *one* in both Santos' speech and the editor's texts is shown in the lexicometry graphic below (Figure 1). Is it possible to talk about the emergence in ELT of another colonial discourse on peace-building? Although there were references to peace-building in Colombia at the conference, there were no Colombian English language teachers there: the only Colombian teacher taught social science.

Figure 1. The words of the editor and former president Santos

Editor's text **Santos' text**

(Source: Own)

There are different ways of interpreting the absence of English teachers at that event sponsored by two global organizations (the UN and the BC). One may be that it is a mode of objectification which turns students and teachers of English into the "desired" subjects of a defined area of study (Foucault, 1982) of post-conflict scenarios –the focus of my research. This

objectification resorts to dichotomies and individualizations which divide the field into separate disciplines in order to perpetuate monolithic understandings of reality, language teaching and language users (Guerrero-Nieto, 2008). This may provoke the stereotyped images people have of English teachers (Méndez, 2018) as persons who teach the language as a structure of their discipline (Baker, 2006), or "imperial people who do not care about the socio-cultural situations attached to their mother tongue" (Interview, English teacher, September 2018).

The White man´s canonical notion of peace seems to have become a universalizing discourse on the part of those who are chosen and legitimized by powerful economic and political institutions. English language teachers, particularly Colombian ones, seem to be placed on the periphery of peace-building and peace education. Does this represent a further attempt at a coloniality of power? Are certain economic interests responsible for peace-building in ELT, as shown by the focus on efficient methodologies (UNESCO, 2005, 2013)? Do certain approaches to peace-building imply that the establishment of hierarchical relationships between people in different parts of the world is yet another capitalist or neoliberal goal?

I would say that there does seem to be a colonial mechanism behind peace-building in ELT, promoted by powerful institutions and the teachers who are in thrall to them. I refer to a possible interest in recolonizing the school, in terms of what English teachers *should* or *must* understand and *do* when building peace. This discourse, which has an instrumentalizing approach to ELT, mainly emphasizes teaching practices, procedures and techniques. Guidelines like the UNESCO "Toolbox for education" (2013) set forth ideal conditions for solving conflicts through dialogue. Indeed, English imperialism (Philipson, 2000) may have a say in the employment of peace construction for this dominating purpose supported by hierarchical distributions of power. Castañeda-Peña (2018) asserts ELT has been the product of a power hierarchical system founded on linguistic difference, and I connect it to peace construction in ELT. Imperialism could be then present and constitute a dominating source of conceptualizations, teachers' profiles, strategies, teaching and learning objectives, among other decisions related to peace construction in language education.

The premise of the UNESCO is that human rights and democracy are inseparable in teaching peace and teachers should impart the values of non-violence, tolerance, openness to others and sharing (UNESCO, 2005, 2017).

Its recommendations are not only a way to control teachers and divide them into those who educate for peace and those who do not, but they also reduce peace-building and peace education, done in the manner the UNESCO prescribes.

Thus, the approach of the UNESCO and the BC to peace-building represents the White Forest in this journey metaphor, which is based on the structural assumptions of a coloniality of power (Castro-Gómez and Grosfoguel, 2007; Walsh, 2003). It turns English teachers into deficit subjects (UNESCO, 2005; Nelson & Appleby, 2015; Morton, 2007; Vargas, 2018; Haddix & Price, 2013) who need to be guided by the knowledge of others, ideally from the "the inner circle", which is the term Lund and Carr (2015) use for the dominant position of White men. When reviewing the literature on peace-building and other conferences like that of the UNESCO, I noticed that some statements about peace-building in ELT revealed the functional subjectivities (Duque et al., 2016) to the modern peace project. For example, some drew on the peace/war dichotomy (Sun, 2017; Arikan, 2009) which is one of the most prominent principles of universalizing modern peace and is found in formal documents too.

By contrast, I noticed several striking proposals that went beyond this concept of peace/war, in which war was one of the various types of violence (see Harris, 2004, 2007; Hurie, 2018; and Curtis and Gomes de Matos, 2018). My journey through a large area in the White Forest led me to a *bridge* towards another place: the *Multifaceted Lands of Peace*. This place had trees dressed in white, green, orange and brown all at once. They were of different sizes and some bore fruits. They symbolized emerging conditions which may allow teachers of English to resist the instrumental frameworks for peace-building and imply the possibility of alternative political positions and counter-conducts.

Landscape 2: The Multifaceted Lands of Peace

When entering the Multifaceted Lands of Peace, there is a white cover over certain colorful areas of trees and land that may symbolize a a *coloniality of power* –what Foucault (1970) would call a continuity – which is linked to a coloniality of knowing and being (Amador, 2019; de Sousa, 2010). The different colors of these lands represent the *rebel subjectivities* of English

teachers (Mejía, 2017) who resist the modern concept of peace-building. In other words, I refer to the other part of this problematization: English teachers who contest that concept. I will explain it as follows.

What do we know about peace-building in ELT? Could we know more? Certainly, everyday problems occur in people's lives and language plays an important role in overcoming them (Curtis & Gomes de Matos, 2018). Some investigators, like Nelson and Appleby (2015), believe that English language teachers also live in conflictive and difficult situations where violence is part of their realities. Indeed, teachers who make alternative proposals for peace-building are responding to the local violence and marginalization they have experienced (Nieto & Bickmore, 2016). One example was the 2017 ASOCOPI Congress, where the participants came up with proposals for peace-building that were not only based on the "how", but also the "what" and "why" of such initiatives. This suggests that their peace proposals are not just concerned with instructional strategies, but further dimensions which can hardly be understood from exclusively instrumental perspectives.

Yet, in my review of academic studies around this question, I found there was little research into such proposals and the few that there were only dealt with its technical or instrumental aspects. I heard one story which illustrates this from a teacher who attended a meeting organized by the school´s coordinator, where he was asked to explain his proposal for peace-building but given no chance to talk about his personal experiences, including his emotional ones.

This means that only focusing on the *how* of these proposals may ignore the wealth of their "why" and "what". This problematic situation seems still ignored in the ELT field. For example, Vargas (2018) used a didactic unit on social justice for ninth graders which was meant to explore their identities. While its materials and activities may have thrown light on the methodology of ELT, what deserves our attention corresponds to students' identities and understandings about social justice in the English class.

If the present study only considered the procedures the teachers followed when drafting their proposals on peace-building, without going beyond the instructional aspects, I would be reproducing the logic of objectifying English teachers and instrumentalizing their pedagogical innovations. In other words, an instrumental assumption is perpetuated when teachers are considered only as instructors who transmit a structure or a linguistic system in a peace-building frame (peace as a reified content), according to organizations, such as

the UNESCO. As a key to attaining social justice, cognitive justice (de Sousa, 2009, 2011) may require teachers to be treated as something more than the passive exponents of pre-established theories in ELT. When I looked at the peace-related proposals in teachers in 2017 (when there were the most), I placed myself in an epistemological tension (de Sousa, 2018) between finding teachers who were overly obedient subjects and teachers who positioned themselves as resistant educators.

From a review of two academic events in Colombia and 55 speeches and published studies, I explored the different ways in which peace-building in ELT is re-defined and experienced, namely, as: conflict resolution (e.g. Higuita & López, 2015); environmental awareness (e.g. Lara & Carvajal, 2018); global citizenship (e.g. Ayşegül, 2017; Calle-Díaz, 2017); human rights (e.g. Zembylas, 2011); and social justice (e.g. Ortega, 2019; Sierra, 2016). I celebrate and share these diverse ways of understanding the connection between peace and ELT that coexist with peace-building (e.g. Bickmore, 2004) and peace education (e.g. Martínez, 2016), evidences of the social changes which reshape education (Murcia-Peña & Murcia, 2019). Nevertheless, I am still indebted to those English teachers who are not recognized as such when it comes to participating in academic events or publishing articles in academic journals. With their work, we could identify the polyphony of peace construction in the sense of Bakhtin (Stewart & McClure, 2013), as referring to multiple voices (of English teachers) in a monolithic imagined world (Modern ELT and peace-building).

What understanding of peace-building in ELT is heard in the small voices of these English teachers? What kinds of resistance are expressed in those small voices? Here, there is another "*Not-yet*" which needs to be explored, which indicates a type of *coloniality of knowing* (Lander, 2000) and is supported in turn by a *coloniality of power* (the Dual Lands of Peace phenomena), one that perpetuates a certain social and, especially, epistemological order which determines *who can talk* about peace-building in accordance with the orthodox versions. English teachers who may be interested in challenging those standards seem to be re-placed in the "nonbeing zone", as proposed by Fanon (2010). This means they may disappear from the project towards the rethinking of colonial frames in peace-building.

Excerpt 2

> Interviewer: Why don't you share your pedagogical work in peace-building with the public at an academic event? It would be nice to have you there.
>
> English teacher: Well… The point is that I don't see myself going there. Once, a colleague mentioned that possibility, but I think people like her are more welcome in those scenarios than me. I don't have big things to talk about (MP, Interview, 2018[13]).

As each sociocultural setting implies a particular way of peace-building, many local understandings of it emerge (Yousuf et al., 2010; Kruger & Evans, 2018). When defining what can be discussed about peace-building in ELT, English teachers appear as victims of an ongoing *epistemide* (de Sousa, 2016) or *epistemic violence* (Camelo, 2017; Mignolo, 2000) which exemplifies a sort of *structural violence* (Harris, 2007). When taking teachers' epistemological positions and contributions away, the model of expert appears as represented by colonial institutions, such as UNESCO or the British Council these ones promote the type of knowledge teachers are expected These ones acquire and apply as "good practices" for the XXI century teacher (Munter, McKinley & Sarabia, 2012).

In general, English teachers *have been demanded to accept* certain, usually instrumental, perspectives on the methodology of ELT (Richards & Rodgers, 2014), which may constrain extra-linguistic issues, like *peace-building* and alternative ways to connect peace and ELT. Thus, ELT revolves around the notion of good practice and frameworks of expertise, which place teachers in a peripheral role (the coloniality of power and being, see Castro-Gómez & Grosfoquel, 2007). That is why investigators like Kumaravadivelu (1991, 2001, 2003) react to this instrumentalization by reminding us that teachers are also the creators of alternative knowledge to peace-building, based on their political acts and critical thinking (Kruger, 2012; Vasilopoulos et al., 2018).

When the experiences and understandings of peace construction teachers have are suppressed, in order to legitimize its modern version, peace-building emerges and acquires its monolithic nature. It would seem that teachers are only "allowed" to think when they present the homogenous view of peace-building in the classroom, regardless of the many different approaches to it, ones which form a "plurality of peace(s)" (Kruger & Evans, 2018, p. 3)

13 This is the translation of the original in Spanish

that contests the canonical versions seen in the statements and proposals of the dominant institutions. As educators with a body of local knowledge and ways of being (even emotional ones), English teachers who address peace-building alternatively seem to be ignored. For those reasons, *resistance* makes sense and deserves attention, because in the face of the opposition to their proposals, teachers have to contest hegemonic versions of peace-building and *rebel* (Mejía, 2017). In fact, this resistance(s) may entail re-signified experiences in peace-building based on the stances and experiences of those teachers, whose positions and roles are more relational than rational as they reclaim their own identity (Mejía, 2017; Kruger & Evans, 2018). Therefore, the question is not only the *what* or *how behind peace construction* in ELT, but the *from where* and *by whom*.

In my metaphor, the resignification of peace-building and the teachers who do it in ELT are represented by trees of diverse colors, which are not completely hidden by *the white* cover (Lund & Carr, 2015). This is because English teachers permanently affirm their differences (*we are here*) to challenge and undermine that which weakens their professional standing (Méndez, 2016, 2018), in peace-building. One English teacher I interviewed spoke of a *constitutive tension* (Barros, 2018) between the orthodox and alternative versions of peace-building (Excerpt 3). Even when certain versions of it are prescribed, peace-building is re-signified and varied in those teachers´ proposals.

Excerpt 3

> For me, peace depends on how you relate to Nature and your family. Sometimes, we think the school is the only place where people get educated, but it is not true. If we want to build or educate for peace, we need to think about projects which involve the community and children's parents. Peace is an interest of the whole community, and we need to work together for it. I feel like an educator who acknowledges everyday conflict, but I see myself as a co-constructor of peaceful solutions to them.

Along these lines, English teachers' experiences and derived understandings have not received much attention in studies of peace-building in ELT either. When I checked the articles published in national and international academic journals, and the speeches at events, 30% treated English teachers as research participants and even less as co-researchers, while the rest considered them as the implementers of pedagogical projects. When English teachers were the subject of these studies of peace-building, teachers participated from a

practical or instrumental orientation (Yousuf et al., 2010) as various sections of the UNESCO "Tool box" (2013) suggest. Besides, pre-service teachers receive more attention than in-service teachers in these studies. My review of this material confirms the existence of another problem, the neglect of in-service teachers´ experiences regarding peace-building. In my conversations with teachers about peace-building, I noticed they had complementary views of the alternative to the *absence of war* (Sun, 2017; Arikan, 2009). Thereby, we should "give credit" to those teachers' "different ways of understanding and transforming society" (de Sousa, 2016, p. 22) with their diverse and underexplored selves.

Indeed, as they work on peace-building in ELT, teachers find that different understandings of it emerge, which are linked to their emotional (Benesch, 2018) and spiritual experiences (Westwood, 2014). Alternatives to peace-building in ELT, which contest the orthodox views of it, are not necessarily a matter of encyclopedic knowledge but, rather, a question of feeling, or spirituality, arising from an inner peace. However, the latter possibilities seem to be neglected in ELT, at least, when it comes to the possibility of peace-building and particularly, by teachers in Colombia (a *not yet*). Although "the intellectual and social-emotional nature of teachers' work" (Bruce, 2013, p. 31) also underpins their proposals towards connecting peace and ELT, even in the form of peace-building and peace education, as Kruger and Evans point out (2018), studies of this subject seem to remove their emotional side. When it is discussed, this emotional dimension is related to students as an alternative to anxiety, stress and competition (Finch, 2004).

That imbalance between the cognitive and emotional sides of teachers (especially their feelings from their bodies) is the result of a rational modern discourse (de Sousa, 2009, 2011; Reagan, 2004; Mejía, 2017), which gives a higher status to cognitive processes than emotional ones, since the former is privileged by science. Emotions have traditionally been "considered as impediments to rational thought, and therefore need to be suppressed" (Benesch, 2018, p. 2). This may explain why there are few studies of these socio-affective dimensions of English teachers who build peace, even though they influence their experiences (Excerpts 1 and 4). A question thus emerges: what is the role of the coloniality of being in the English language teachers' bodies who serve as the models for peace-building in a rational frame?

Excerpt 4

> One of the strongest reasons why I decided to think of a peace proposal in the English class was a deep feeling of sadness combined with a worry about a very difficult situation in the neighborhood of the school. We constantly heard terrible news about juvenile violence, drugs use and forced prostitution, especially by certain students and lay people in situations of forced internal displacement. I thought: I can't change the future, but I can educate those who will, as Freire said, I guess (PL, Interview, 2018[14]).

In this fashion, I would like to connect the previous *not-yet* situation to my metaphor. There is another site in the Multifaceted Lands of Peace: the Peaceful Garden, which has wonderful flowers of different colors and sizes, along with hyper-realistic humanlike statues who seem to be watering the plants. For me, the students and pedagogical innovations of English teachers represent the flowers whose colorfulness appeals to those who see them. By contrast, the statues, which are usually gray, and seem to be doing something do not have real emotions and even less, spirituality: this lack is an additional but neglected facet of peace-building (Westwood, 2014). This represents how English teachers may appear, according to canonical versions of peace construction, such as peace-building.

In the Multifaceted Lands of Peace, these statues represent a cognitive ability or skill linked to an emotional experience, even though the mainstream does not believe that they *feel*. Do English teachers have emotional and spiritual feelings when building peace? If so, which ones? An English teacher I interviewed told me that she felt *guilty* and *outraged* when talking about her proposal, because it was based on her spiritual beliefs. Do these feelings have a say in social justice? According to Bruce (2013), Cumming-Potvin (2010) and Benesch (2018), they imply a political stance which calls for social justice and may be a way to realize peace in ELT.

Neglecting the emotional side of English teachers who have a crucial role in alternatives to peace-building (Nelson & Appleby, 2015) causes a difficult situation, since inner peace is a condition of it (Oxford et al., 2014). Students receive more attention than in-service teachers in the studies of this problem I reviewed, which neglect the emotions of teachers devoted to re-signify peace-building and their interactions in the classroom. This gap needs to be filled and stands as another "not yet" in peace-building in ELT, since

14 Original in English

not only thoughts but feelings are also part of inner peace (Kruger & Evans, 2018). In the statements and talks under review (like those of the UNESCO or BC), the emotional side (e.g. Excerpt 1) of English teachers is imagined of as a counterpart of their rational side (Benesch, 2018). Their feelings may be related to their spiritual side as well (Westwood, 2014), The UNESCO's Framework for teacher education and Constitution often refer to "*the mind*". In the modern world, cognition is a privileged capacity: what about the others? An English teacher from a school in a deprived district told me that when he implemented his proposal, his stress, worry and fear were so acute that he had to draw on his spiritual resources to cope with the situation. In the interview, he called himself a *spiritual being* and said it was crucial for his work as (in his own words) a *plurilingual peace educator*. This makes me wonder about the role of spirituality when English teachers try to enact or resist peace-building in the face of hostile technical approaches.

It is clear that the canonical policies of peace-building in ELT (as set forth by the UNESCO, Colombian Ministry of Education and BC) do not acknowledge this inner dimension of the modern global citizen. Alternative ways of peace-building by English teachers, especially in areas of conflict or poverty (Nelson & Appleby, 2015), are excluded from the canon or remain on the periphery. They thus lie in the zone of *non-being* (Fanon, 2010) and do not have room for alternative ways of *being* or *becoming*. The teacher, just mentioned, who referred to himself as "pluri-lingual peace educator", acted as a *cultural mediator of conflict* and *violence* in his school by teaching skills in *citizenship*. Although some fine shades of meaning of this teacher's self-perception are similar to the approach of the *Peace Classrooms Project* of the Universidad de Los Andes, there is a difference. The latter acknowledges the teachers as such, but English language teachers are not directly involved in designing its policies, which has been left to the private sector (Ramos, Nieto & Chaux, 2007; Chaux et al., 2017).

Above all, as teachers reaffirm their practices (Méndez, 2018), and contest the canonical versions of peace-building based on colonialities of power, an opportunity arises to study the matter from a South-South standpoint. More precisely, the many rebellious subjectivities of teachers, based on the experiences of "an-other" (Mignolo, 2000) with emotions and spiritual experiences, can be analyzed with decolonial and poststructuralist lens. In contexts where contemporary colonial mechanisms dominate peace-building, re-inventing it through ELT seems like a valuable project to embark on. In line with Mejía (2017) and de Sousa (2009, 2011), the question is not only

instrumental, but geopolitical, epistemological, ethical and ontological, since English language teachers as human beings seem to be excluded in instrumental peace-building proposals. English language teachers' bodies where other phenomena than only cognitive ones, such as emotional or spiritual could also contribute to alternatives to peace-building. Who is the English teacher who has a different approach to peace-building? Where is it coming from? These, the questions I seek to answer, are the general subject of my research and represent another landscape considering this discussion metaphor: The Sea of Research Possibilities and the start of another journey.

Main question: What do English teachers experience behind peace-building through their ELT proposals?

General objective: To co-understand English teachers' experiences behind peace construction through their ELT proposals.

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Part II. Decolonialism and Identities in ELT

Chapter 5

Reflections on the Relationship between (De) Colonialism(s) and Applied Linguistics in ELT

Harold Castañeda-Peña

Una vez en Barranquilla existió un hombre que dedicó su vida a estudiar el fenómeno de la sonrisa de la Gioconda.

Luego de muchos años de estudio e investigaciones, descubrió que Leonardo no pintó sobre el rostro de la mujer ninguna sonrisa. De su pincel surgió un rostro adusto con ojos del dulce color de las nubes del vino. Es el espectador quien al mirarla y quererla sonríe primero. Ella lo hace después.

(Jairo Anibal Niño, 1998)

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During the past five years, there has been a notable concern for decolonial studies in the *Doctorado Interinstitucional en Educación* program and the experiences of the students doing the major in ELT EDUCATION[15]. The interest in these studies raises new questions for colonial situations, which are currently reflected, it seems, in the study of Applied Linguistics in ELT in Colombia, or at least in Bogotá, as a city-region, a development that may give investigators of ELT food for thought. Personally, I very much appreciate these concerns, since they stimulate those who are engaged in the discipline. However, while I support the advance of this line of research, and hope it will thrive, I believe it is important to continue to explore local ELT issues which throw light on the Westernization that seems to characterize the assumptions of Applied Linguistics in ELT. Very briefly, this chapter discusses aspects of this problem

15 Visit http://die.udistrital.edu.co/enfasis/elt_education for further information. ELT stands for English Language Teaching and also refers to the education of language teachers

which investigators of ELT can expand on, with the aid of the decolonizing approach.

The first section of this chapter focuses on the history of the Westernization process. The second speaks of a recognizably Latin American contribution to post-colonialism. The third goes over some ideas related to Subaltern Studies. The final section points to some subjects that should be of interest to those who have a decolonizing approach to the place of Applied Linguistics in ELT. The whole chapter raises questions which are relevant to local research efforts and should prompt stimulating debates in this field.

I.

To illustrate my thoughts on these issues, I cite the above fable by Niño but with no intention to trivialize the task I have set myself. Instead, it is a good way to show how speaking about the term "Westernization" depends on the point of view of the speaker. In an essay on the Argentinian writer Dussel, Mignolo (1995) argues that 1) the philosophy of liberation is postmodern and largely ignores the impact of that liberation on the periphery 2) The notion of post-colonialism, understood as an intellectual recolonization, has more to do with Asia and Africa than Latin America and 3) the trans-national circulation of capital leads to a globalization of communications as well. If Dussel´s idea of liberation were applied to the study of Applied Linguistics in ELT, what would the results be? What does the philosophy of liberation mean for Colombian students and teachers of English, especially the latter? Another critical question is: what makes a discourse philosophical? Would the relationship between decolonialism and postcolonialism and Applied Linguistics in ELT simply be philosophical, when talking about European or "colonial" philosophy for example? According to some analysts, a postcolonial position "would hold that an intellectual emancipation would transgress the required rules and order of modernity". However, such anti-colonialist pamphleteering is not really philosophy. To paraphrase Dussel, "it would need to [be] transformed into new genres that not only lead intellectual emancipation along the paths of 'content' but also dissect the discursive formations (for example, philosophy), which consolidated modern thought" (p. 30). That is, does postcolonial thought need to be turned into or expressed in terms of philosophy? What is philosophical? This last question, I think, is very difficult to answer.

Without being a philosopher myself, I would dare to say that a discourse is philosophical when it structures a problem with a system of categories. The categorical system allows one to question a part of reality. A philosophical problem unmistakably arises in the face of the amazement that reality causes and we ask ourselves what something is, what the entity is. It might be said that, in the West, one thinks in this way. Decoloniality, however, precisely questions this way of thinking, hence the existence of "European philosophy" and "colonial philosophy". But I am not so sure that we can call the decolonial intellectual movement a collection of "anti-colonial pamphlets that are not yet philosophy". What would be the role of Applied Linguistics in ELT be in that discussion? Gadamer (2002, p. 23) claims that "philosophy and science were originally inextricably linked; both are the creation of the Greeks. These creations, which are gathered together under the generic title of philosophy, comprised the set of all theoretical knowledge. It is true that, since then, we have come to speak of the philosophy of East Asia or India, designating them with the same Greek word, but in reality, we are basically referring to our Western traditions of philosophy and science". I think that despite knowing this, we can fall into the trap of language. It is therefore imperative to look at the history of how some people turn others into subordinate. This could explain the upsurge of hegemonic practices. This is a task that I consider to be crucial to examine in Applied Linguistics in ELT.

The Latin American Group for Subaltern Studies asks us to reflect on this question, arguing that "the subaltern also acts to produce social effects that are visible [...] in these paradigms or the State policies and projects legitimized by them. It is the recognition of this active role of the subordinate, the way the subaltern alters, bends, and modifies strategies of learning, research, and understanding" (Latin American Group for Subaltern Studies, 1998, n.p.). Who is the subaltern in Applied Linguistics in ELT and how has the subaltern been constituted historically?

Analyzing the local agendas of research into ELT may also require us to consider Coronil´s (1999) point that "terms such as the West, center, First World, East, periphery and Third World are commonly used to classify and identify areas of the world. Although it is not always clear what these terms refer to, "terms such as the West, center, first world, East, periphery and third world are commonly used to classify and identify areas of the world. They are used as if there were a precise external reality to which they correspond, or at least have the effect of creating that illusion" (p. 22). For example, "The 'Third World', firmly anchored for many years in the 'periphery' –that is, in

Asia, Africa and Latin America— now seems to be moving towards the United States, where the term is applied not only to areas inhabited by immigrants from the original 'Third World', but also places inhabited by former national 'minorities' such as 'women of color' and 'vulnerable' ethnic and social groups. The phrase 'the capital of the Third World' is increasingly used to characterize Los Angeles" (Coronil, 1999, p. 23). In other words, if the West was traditionally Europe, the United States and "others", we can now see a "localization" of the English-speaking world in parts of the United States which have become politically important, even though they lack military power. The current COVID-19 pandemic may also be playing a role in this.

The geo-political balance in Latin America (including Latin Americans who live in the United States) has thus changed. Such apparent political balance is subjected to a process of invention with a dependent and subordinate character. How has Applied Linguistics in ELT responded to these changes, which also include the emergence of the "Black Lives Matter" movement sparked by the assassination of George Floyd and the death of many immigrants caused by the pandemic?

The United States has long regarded itself as an imperial center, going back to the Monroe Doctrine, which states, "The occasion has been judged proper for asserting, as a principle in which the rights and interests of the United States are involved, that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects of future colonization by any European powers…". But, the idea of the Occident, as opposed to the Orient, has traditionally excluded certain parts of Europe (Said, 1978). This binary approach also seems to have characterized the use of Applied Linguistics in ELT. How can this be challenged in Applied Linguistics? How to avoid the danger of falling into the same notion of Westernization, but under a different name?

Coronil (1999) thinks that "Occidentalism is not the reverse of Orientalism, but its condition of existence, its opaque side (as in a mirror). A simple reversal would be possible only in the context of symmetrical relationships between the Self and the Other, but who then would the Other be? In a context in which relations of equality prevailed, the difference would not be represented as Otherness. The study of how the Others represent the West is an interesting undertaking in itself, which could help to counteract the dominance that the West exercises over the images of difference that circulate publicly" (p. 26). I think this is a very interesting argument to explore with caution since

Coronil himself thinks that Occidentalism is constituted from representation practices that "1) divide the components of the world into isolated units; 2) disaggregate the story of their relationship; 3) convert the difference into a hierarchy; 4) naturalize those representations; and, therefore, 5) intervene, albeit unconsciously, in the reproduction of the current asymmetrical relations of power" (Coronil, 1999, p. 27).

Thus, it would useful to thoroughly review the employment of such representations in Applied Linguistics in ELT.

II.

Castro-Gómez (2005), a Colombian philosopher, explains the difference between coloniality and colonialism by linking the epistemological and economic aspects which formed the Western idea of knowledge and created the subordinate "who not only served to legitimize imperial power on an economic and political level, but also helped to create epistemological paradigms ... and the identities (personal and collective) of the colonizers and the colonized" (p. 20). This epistemological analysis might also throw light on the history of ELT EDUCATION in Colombia. It also seems clear that Orientalism and the modernity / coloniality debate in Latin America could share the criticism of Eurocentrism as an orientation. According to Castro-Gómez (2005), "Said's great merit was having seen that the discourses of the human sciences ... are sustained by a geopolitical machinery of knowledge / power that has declared the simultaneous existence of different 'voices' as 'illegitimate' cultural ways of producing knowledge" (pp. 26-27). But criticizing coloniality as such neglects "the analysis of its material constraints, that is, colonialism" in Latin America itself (Castro-Gómez, p. 39), when the material and political conditions in the East are different.

In other words, Applied Linguistics in ELT needs to write its own intellectual history. This means listening to the subaltern voice, leaving open the question of whether the subaltern has spoken or will speak (Spivak, 1988).

Dirlik (cited in Castro-Gómez, 2005, p. 33) argues that 1) "the narrative of capitalism" is not at the same time the "narrative of the history of Europe"; 2) denouncing exclusions at the local level "is not enough either": "the legitimizing ideology of the system" could be standardized and, 3) the idea

that postcolonialism may be co-opted by modernism (if it has not already been) for wanting to separate itself from the global material conditions where it finds itself "producing", thus becoming a totalizing pole at the same time. Seen in this way, "postcolonial theories, far from becoming a critical theory of capitalism, have become one of its best allies" (p. 35). Can Applied Linguistics in ELT avoid this? How and why?

Hence, we should look at contributions from Latin America itself.

1. Basing himself on Enrique Dussel (the first Dussel) Castro-Gómez (2005) argues that it is not fruitful to separate ourselves from the lifeworld and that "relationships between people cannot be seen as relationships between a rational subject and an object of knowledge" (p. 43). This leads to a totalization of other forms of knowledge and the monitoring of the "stages" you must go through to become "modern" and / or developed: one revolves around the conquering ego and another, the rational ego.

2. Drawing on the work of the Argentine semiotician Walter Mignolo, Castro-Gómez, notes the Christian/racist bias of the *Orbis Terrarum*, the first true modern Atlas (1570): "the sons of Shem populated Asia, those of Cam populated Africa and those of Japheth populated Europe" (p. 53), thus turning Europeans into the children of God and the others into barbarians. America became an extension of the territory of Japheth in order to justify the invasion and annihilation of its natives, since "only from Europe could the light of true knowledge about God come" (p. 55).

3. Castro-Gómez (2005) also draws on the work of Aníbal Quijano, a Peruvian sociologist and political theorist, especially the latter´s notion of the "coloniality of power" as a "specific structure of domination through which the native populations of America were subjected after 1492" (p. 58), that is a domination that was cognitive and spiritual at the same time (e.g., *La Encomienda*). This was strengthened by the privileges granted to those of "pure blood". "The coloniality of power also refers to a hegemonic type of knowledge production" (p. 63) which Castro-Gómez has called the hybris of ground zero.

Can Applied Linguistics in ELT confirm any of these ideas? What would be the right conditions for doing that?

Galceran (2016) helps us reflect on embodiment of the colonized, since we sometimes do not notice how the European discourses form an epistemological center that ignores specific historicities. Another question that Applied Linguistics in ELT might focus on is what those historicities are, in terms of the following: "if we listen to Foucault, since the middle of the eighteenth century this new punitive practice, focused on 'souls' and not on the body, comes into play, so that the restriction of movement, the pattern of time, the economy of gestures, even the obligation to work will be elements of the construction of a submissive subjectivity, locked in the 'docile bodies' of free human beings" (p. 238). [...] "This is something that Foucault ignores when putting together "the mad, the children, the schoolboys, the colonized", all of whom "are subject to a production apparatus and are controlled throughout their existence, ignoring their differences" (p. 243).

I am left with several questions: When we draw on the "decolonial turn" in Applied Linguistics in ELT: How can we avoid falling into an "intellectual colonialism"?: How can we promote further discussions about how to know ourselves in Latin America and better scrutinize our thought, to avoid being co-opted by this universalization?

III.

A basic premise of Subaltern Studies entails a very clear requirement: we must understand the locus of enunciation of the person who writes the story and remember that most who listen to his or her version do not participate in its creation, that is, pay attention to the voices which are silenced. Parallel to this, we must bear in mind that the nature of listening and of interpreting what is written and said are often ignored. Consider Niño's fable (1998) about the Mona Lisa. Analyzing the meaning of "subaltern" implies not only scrutinizing the locus of enunciation of the one who names but how his words are heard by others.

Said (2009) points out that the word 'subordinate' has both political and intellectual connotations. Its implicit opposite is, of course, 'dominant' or 'elite'" (p. 26). Gramsci (2000) likewise notes that "for a social elite, the elements of subaltern groups always have something barbaric and

pathological" (p. 175). Who are the barbarians, the madmen, the nonexistent, the subordinates in Applied Linguistics in ELT? And who are the "elites"? The relativity of this polarization of subordinate vs. powerful groups is revealed when we look at the geo-politics of peoples and disciplines. The trouble with a dichotomy which is so absolute is that it may exclude the "emergent" groups. In other words, I think that there is a danger of hegemony on both sides. It would be better to think in a more plural rather than a binary manner. It might seem advisable to think from, with, and for groups otherwise. As Said (2009) maintains, "a distinctive feature of this field of Subaltern Studies is rewriting the history of colonial India from the different and singular point of view of the masses, using unconventional or forgotten sources, such as popular memory, oral traditions or certain administrative documents not previously examined" (p. 26). What is the colonial history of Applied Linguistics in ELT? Who are its forgotten masses? This amounts to a rejection of unilateral history (Guha, n.d., p. 27) that rests on the "recognition of the coexistence and interaction of both political domains, that of the elite and that of the subordinate" (Guha, n.d., p. 31). For Chakrabarty "it is about how to think about the history of power at a time when capital and the governing institutions of modernity increasingly reach a global scale" (p. 13).

These ideas of Said, Guha and Chakrabarty could broaden the local research agendas in ELT and lead researchers to draw on subordinate sources of knowledge which have probably not been tapped so far. Although I see signs of self-reflective and challenging work in our discipline, in line with the Subaltern Studies of the 1980s Said (2009) refers to, I still wonder whether it is really the subaltern who speaks there. I would argue that modernism and coloniality continue to have a strong influence on Applied Linguistics in ELT, as Said, Guha and Spivak noted in their own fields and I therefore believe that a questioning of the current use of Applied Linguistics in ELT is necessary and should take the position of the subaltern more into account. It would enliven the discussion of these issues, always provided that the limitations of local government language programs and policies are overcome. It would entail raising the awareness (political and historical) of those of us who work in the discipline of Applied Linguistics in ELT in Latin America. For Gramsci (2000), it is necessary to study:

1. "the objective formation of subaltern social groups through the development and the transformations that take place in the world of economic production, their quantitative diffusion and their origin in

pre-existing social groups, of which they preserve for a certain time the mentality, ideology and goals;

2. their active or passive adherence to the dominant political formations, the attempts to influence the programs of these formations to impose their own demands and the consequences that such attempts have in determining processes of decomposition and renewal or new formation;
3. the birth of new parties of the dominant groups to maintain the consensus and control of the subaltern groups;
4. the formations proper to subordinate groups for claims of a restricted and partial nature; […]
5. 5. the formations that affirm integral autonomy, etc." (Gramsci, 2000, p. 182).

IV.

From the above discussion of local research agendas in ELT, some subjects for further study arise:

1. Analyzing the work of those who question Eurocentrism in our discipline. In other words, it is important be aware of the uncritical acceptance of traditional Eurocentrism.
2. Analyzing the assumption that Latin America is a peripheral part of Eurocentric culture, its place in Subaltern Studies and its relation to Applied Linguistics in ELT.
3. The possibility of cross-disciplinary studies of Applied Linguistics in ELT which would combine anthropology, sociology, literature and especially pedagogy.
4. Analyzing how the dominance of elite thinkers in Applied Linguistics in ELT reveals an internal colonialism.
5. Finding out which groups are the current subordinates in Applied Linguistics in ELT.

6. Analyzing the concept of knowledge in Applied Linguistics in ELT and its hegemonic political aspects.

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Chapter 6

The Influence of EFL Policies on the Work of Teachers in a Public Primary School

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Abstract

In this chapter, I discuss how my experiences as a student, teacher and coordinator led me to inquire into the way that ELT policies influence the work of teachers in public schools. This study focuses on a public primary school in the Ciudad Bolívar District (Bogotá, Colombia), where I work and discusses my attempts, as a primary school administrator, to adapt those policies to the primary section of my school and analyze the relation between education and bilingualism in my school. First, I describe my school and the surrounding community and speak of the standpoint on ELT of the students, teachers, parents, and administrators. Then, I give an account of the policies that made the English language a mandatory subject, and some of the ELT programs in Bogotá. At the end, I present the questions and the objectives of this study of ELT policies.

Introduction

This is a personal study of how the people at my school think, feel, behave and make decisions in the field of English Language Teaching (henceforth ELT) policies. To do so, we need to untangle the reasoning behind the policies (Popkewitz, 1998), which aim at a "social transformation by meeting quality standards which will thus make Colombia the most highly educated country

in Latin America by 2025" (Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN), 2015, p. 2 –my translation), despite the characteristics of different schools.

The first section, *Charter schools and traditional public schools*, discusses the school where I have been the coordinator of the primary section, the contrast between the administration of such schools and other public institutions, and what our students and their parents and our teachers and administrators feel about this situation. The emergence of different kinds of public schools causes inequalities. A traditional public school like mine does not have enough resources or specialized teachers (arts, music, English) in the primary section, as charters schools potentially do. Thus, parents prefer to send their children to charter schools. The second section is called *School diversity and monoculture teaching: a paradox* and describes the community of my school: teachers, administrators and families from different parts of Colombia and lately, a few from Venezuela. The third section, *Teachers at school versus English teaching*, speaks of one of my concerns as a curriculum administrator –ELT-- and some teachers' perceptions of the role of mandatory English in their lives. The following section, *ELT policies in primary schools here and there*, provides a short account of studies of mandatory English in public primary schools done in Colombia and other countries. The last section reviews ELT policies in public primary schools in Bogotá (the capital of Colombia) and some of the corresponding programs, which have been implemented since 2012, when I became a coordinator. Finally, I present the aims of my research.

Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools-

In Colombia three models of schools operate. One is the public school, which is financed and managed entirely by the State. Another model is the private one, which is sustained by charging each student. The third one is the model of public schools under concession, or what I call charter schools, along this document. Any student may enroll at the school where I work, regardless of his or her religion, race, gender, academic abilities, family situation, etc. There is another type of school in Bogotá: they are known as "*Colegios en concesión*"[16] or charter schools. The Center for Education Reform in the United States (2019) describes them as follows:

16 *Colegios en Concesión* "are built and equipped by the municipal administration, and then the city transfers their administration to private agents". (Contraloría de Bogotá, 2004, p. 5 –my translation)

> Charter schools are public schools that provide unique educational services to students, or deliver services in ways that the traditional public schools do not [...] Charters survive — and succeed — because they operate on the principles of choice, accountability and autonomy not readily found in traditional public schools (paragraph 8).

However, Wells, Lopez, Scott, and Holme (1999) have claimed that "Once a charter is granted, either by a local school board, a state board of education, or another entity, the schools operate with much less oversight regulation than traditional public schools. In exchange for their freedom they are, in theory, supposed to make the goals stated in their charters. If they fail to do so, they can lose their charter" (p. 174). Many parents believe that a charter school is the first and best option for their children because the students receive breakfast, refreshments and lunch; there is an extended school day (from 7am to 3pm;); the building has a music room with instruments, a dance class, well-equipped laboratories, and computer rooms; there are also sports facilities or agreements with external sports centers. Furthermore, there is a widespread belief that their students do better on State exams (the *Pruebas Saber 11* in Colombia). Wells et al (1999) also note that these schools operate on a marketing principle and compete with each other to attract students: "even in low-income neighborhoods, charter schools tend to serve students who are better off in terms of having parents who are actively engaged in their education" (p. 175). Both, schools and students compete. Schools to get students, and students to get into the charter schools. This means that charter schools can follow a very strict procedure for selecting their students. For example, in a traditional public school if a parent does not follow a summons to speak to a teacher or attend a parents´ meeting, there is little that administration can do: as a last resort and only if it believes that a child is at risk, it can threaten to report the problem to the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (*Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar* -ICBF[17]) but the parents in question usually ignore the threat, because they know that the bureaucratic procedures are cumbersome and at worst, they will only receive a warning. The opposite happens in charter schools because the parents know that if they are irresponsible, their children will lose their place in the school. Recently, the Bogotá Secretariat of Education opened a new charter school in the city and many parents were eager to have their children admitted to the school.

A secretary in my school, whose child was in a private school, struggled to enroll him in that charter school. When I asked her why she was so insistent on that, she spoke of the ´kind of students´ who attend the charter school,

17 The ICBF is a government agency, which protects children and adolescents, and guarantees their rights.

who, in her opinion, are well-behaved, clean and belong to families who are better off than those who send their children to public schools, along with the benefits of responsible and specialized teachers who, in addition, will not go out on a strike. She also liked the very strict coordinators, the wholesome food, resources like musical instruments, the 7 a.m to 2 p.m schedule and the fact that it is free, among other reasons. Additionally, "the limited financial resources of working-class parents place constraints on their ability to enroll their children in the kind of extra-curricular activities in which middle-class children often engage and from which middle-class parents expect an educational dividend" (Lareau, 2002 in Giroux & Schmidt, 2004, p. 217). In other words, there is not any fair competition between charter schools and traditional public schools; parents by far prefer the former. If they do not find a place in a charter school for their children, they just resign themselves.

Along the same lines, the school where I work has facilities like a library, a computer classroom with thirty-five computers and other well-equipped classrooms with two data projectors. For example, each room has a TV set with an Internet connection. From my point of view, the main branch of the school has resources that teachers can use when they need them. In this way, Popkewitz (1998) says, "some groups use the resources of schools to their advantage while others do not" (p. 2). Are we (teachers/students/parents/coordinators) taking advantage of the resources we have to teach our subjects, including English? The school has also tried to organize extracurricular activities, like swimming lessons, chess classes, gymnastics, dance classes and a band. However, due to the way it would have shortened the lunch break and a shortage of rooms, the only activity that has survived is a chess class. Twice a week, children from the morning shift are taught how to play chess by an expert employed by the Secretaría de Educación del Distrito (henceforth SED (the Bogotá District Secretariat of Education), through an agreement with a family compensation fund[18].

The music teacher who directs the band only enrolls students from the fifth to eleventh grades, whereas second graders were included in the past. However, due to the distance between Branch A and Branch B, only students from the A branch are able to participate in these activities, because it takes about fifteen minutes to walk from one branch to the other and means that the students would have to cross a congested street that has no traffic light. That is why parents do not give allow their children to go to the main branch on their own.

18 Family Compensation Funds are private, non-profit entities which provide health and education services.

To sum up, in public schools under concession or charter schools, the buildings belong to the State, but the public funds are administered by religious communities, foundations, or family compensation funds. Then, charter schools are free to select their staff and students according to their own criteria, make their own rules and administer the school. In the opinion of the Center of Education Reform (2019)

> A charter school creates better educational opportunities for all students, because it uses the dynamics of consumer opportunity and provider competition to drive service quality. This principle can be found anywhere you look, from cars to colleges, but it is largely absent in our public school system and the poor results are evident (paragraph 3).

By contrast, Giroux (2012) claims that charter schools are the tools of a business culture that seeks to discredit public schools. He calls on teachers and teachers' unions to act as public intellectuals who train informed citizens and champion a democratic society.

This educational market, represented by charter schools, receives funding from the State in order to provide them with new and well-equipped buildings; specialized teachers including English teachers in primary schools; an extended school day that keeps students in a safe place, very far from the streets; and at least two meals (lunch and refreshments). A Colombian magazine reports that "It is also interesting to see how the level of school violence has dropped and how the number of teen pregnancies has fallen significantly" (*Revista Dinero*, 2009, p.11). In addition to those markers, the success of charter schools is measured by their students' scores on State exams, the number of students who are admitted to universities and the nutritional levels of their students (Alcaldía de Bogotá-SED 2018, p.48). The privileges enjoyed by charter schools seem to be a mechanism the State uses to ignore and discriminate against the students of traditional public schools. They do not exist, so they do not deserve specialized English teachers, for example.

In short, charter schools are public institutions under concession administered by private bodies, which have a good reputation due to their students' high scores on State exams, and amicable relationship with the school's community. In other words, public schools and charter schools compete on unequal terms. The next section describes the community of my school and its involvement in its educational dynamics and practices.

School Diversity and Monoculture Teaching: a Paradox

The school is located in the Ciudad Bolívar district in the south of Bogotá, far from the city center (Tollefson, 1991). The families there either earn a minimum wage or work as street vendors or informal recyclers. Its inhabitants, who are mostly *mestizos*, have different religious, political beliefs and backgrounds. Many of them have fled from their former homes in different parts of the country because of the current violence in Colombia. Some are indigenous, who no longer speak their native languages, and others are recent refugees from Venezuela, seeking “better opportunities”: most miss the warmth of the lands they came from. The questions: Are we (teachers) aware of this rich panorama? Do we understand the variety of identities of the children who attend our school? Do we know who our pupils are? Are their subjectivities invisible? Sousa (2007) calls this problem the clash between “the monoculture of modern science and the ecology of knowledge. It is an ecology because it is based on the recognition of the plurality of heterogeneous bodies of knowledge and on the sustained and dynamic interconnection between them without compromising their autonomy” (p. 66). Sousa’s ideas lead to further questions: Do we recognize that plurality? Do we value that cultural richness? Do we take knowledge of our students’ families to our schools? Or do we just “deny the voices, experiences, and histories through which students give meaning to the world and in doing so, often reduce learning to the dynamics of transmission and imposition” as noted by Giroux and Simon (1988, p. 10).

Similarly, Maturana (2001) warns teachers “to not devalue our children based on what they do not know; we value their knowledge. Let’s guide our children towards doing something that has to do with their daily world and invite them to look at what they do” (p. 17 - my translation). To me, this means that our classes would be more interesting if we were taken into account the diverse worlds of our students. However, competition, “as a human phenomenon which rests on the negation of the other” (Maturana, 2001, p. 6 – my translation), has infiltrated education, since schools are now measured in accordance with the scores of their students on State exams. If the school is not ranked among the top hundred by the MEN, it is in the ‘not yet zone’- the school does not exist.

Our school is not on that list; we got ‘poor’ marks in mathematics and language (Spanish) on the Saber 11 tests and because of that, MEN and SED included our institution in a programcalled *Leer es volar*, aimed at improving the reading skills of third graders. What I can acknowledge is that MEN looked

for academics from Brazil who have been schoolteachers, and have worked with a similar population to ours. Giroux and Schmidt (2004) believe that "the greatest threat to young people does not come from lowered standards, the absence of privatized choice schemes or the lack of rigid testing measures". (p. 224). But, rather, that "society refuses to view children as a social investment, which condemns 12 million children to live in poverty and reduces critical learning to massive testing programs" (Giroux and Schmidt, 2004, p. 224). As a result, children are not getting what they really need to 'survive' in this complex society, and schools that aim only at obtaining good marks on standardized tests do not encourage social responsibility or democratic citizenship. Is this not a paradox?

Teachers at School versus English teaching

In my school's primary section, there are no licensed English language teachers. Some of them hate English. Others see this subject as an obstacle to continue their postgraduate studies, because one of the requirements to enter to study a postgraduate degree is to have the English B1 certification, in addition, most of them do not have any command of English. However, they are obliged to teach two weekly hours of English to their pupils. In fact, I agree with Clavijo (2016) when she says that this "decision seems to be based on a limited vision that learning another language is learning an isolated and decontextualized vocabulary or a matter of including English in the curriculum instead of having well-qualified English teachers." (p. 7). Guerrero (2018) notes that "Law 115 posed an enormous challenge to elementary school teachers because they were not prepared for this task" (p.123). I, as the coordinator, have seen situations where I wished that our staff were not forced to teach English. For example, once, when I entered a classroom, I noticed that the date was wrongly written on the blackboard, so I spoke to the teacher in private and suggested a correction, but he replied that he was teaching the cardinal or "normal" numbers, not the ordinal numbers, which are used to indicate dates. In addition to such mistakes, words are mispronounced and both students and teachers are frustrated by the poor results. But what matters more to me is to see teachers making their students unhappy.

These incidents reminded me of the painful experience I had when I studying English during my first undergraduate semesters at my university. I felt ignored by a teacher who did not pay attention to the students who did not speak

English fluently, and we had to listen to long conversations between her and our classmates from private bilingual schools. Even worse, a teacher sometimes laughed at me when I mispronounced a word or failed to express myself well during the oral exams. Going beyond that, Clavijo (2016) worries about Teaching English as a Foreign Language policies – TEFL-- because they place "elementary school teachers in an awkward and unethical professional position" (p. 7). Which teachers are going to teach English? How can they handle English classes if they are not adequately prepared? What worlds are they going to convey to their students? Which TEFL policies do they follow? What do they discard and why? These questions may help us to understand the dilemma of such teachers.

Along the same lines, Méndez (2018) points out that the "English teacher, as a subject, has been objectified to fulfill the requirements of policies, […]-or to explain the failure to reach the State's goals and even the lack of success of a bilingual program" (p. 203). I have noticed that most of the teachers do not want to teach first grade because that is when students have to learn how to read and write in Spanish, which is "a very demanding" (Guzmán, 2019) and time-consuming task which requires a lot of preparation. Guzmán stresses that the most qualified teachers should be in the first grades of school because this a crucial stage in children's development. I strongly agree that these years are the pillars of education. The problem clearly gets worse when English has to be taught to first graders. I thought that this situation only happened in the school where I work, but during meetings with the coordinators of other schools in Bogotá I found that this often happens. Thus, input from the coordinators of primary schools could help us to understand and, it is to be hoped, solve this problem. It would be useful to find out what we (teachers/coordinators) think of this situation and what students feel about their English classes. We would also need to ask ourselves why is English taught in primary schools.

For Maturana (2001), education needs

> to recover that fundamental harmony that does not destroy, that does not exploit, that does not abuse, that does not pretend to dominate the natural world, but seeks to accept and respect it, so that human well-being occurs interacts with the well-being of Nature. To achieve this, we must learn to look and listen without fear and let others live in harmony, without subjection (p.16).

The problem the teachers at my school face is that they are obliged to teach English but have not been trained to do it. In short, it is time to change ELT policies in Colombia.

ELT Policies in Primary Schools Here and There

In order to throw more light on ELT policies in Colombian primary schools, Table 1 lists a number of countries where English classes are also mandatory

Table 1. English as a Mandatory School Subject in Primary

Year	Country	Some characteristics
1898 1917 1949	Puerto Rico	The policies on ELT have been shaped by the ideologies of three political Parties: the *Popular Democrático* (pro-commonwealth); *Nuevo Progresista* (PNP, pro-statehood), and *Independentista Puertorriqueño*, especially their attitudes towards the United States. 1898-1917: classes in English only; 1917-1949: English – Spanish: 1949 to the present: classes in Spanish with English as a separate subject, (Maldonado-Valentin, 2016).
1944	Costa Rica	With the aim of promoting economic development, English has been a compulsory subject in primary schools since 1944, and in 1949 for secondary schools as well. (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017).
1994 2013	Colombia	The teaching of a foreign language began in 1994. English has been a compulsory subject since 2013, under Law 1651, (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017).
1996 2009	Chile	It is mandatory to teach English from the fifth grade onwards since 1996. Some schools have started to teach English voluntarily from the first grade onwards since 2013 (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017). The State aims to make Chile a bilingual country (Barahona, 2016).
1997	Turkey	Under Act 4306, English has been compulsory from the fourth grade onwards since 1997 (Görsev İnceçay, 2012).
2001 2003	Taiwan	English has been mandatory from the fifth grade onwards since 2001. In 2003, English became compulsory from the third grade onwards. The main aim is to position the country in the global economy (Wen-Chuan Lin, 2015).

Year	Country	Some characteristics
2003	Panama	Under Law 2, English has been a compulsory subject in public and private primary and secondary schools since 2003 (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017).
2006	Argentina	Under Law 26, English has been compulsory from the fourth grade onwards since 2006, due to the strong influence on Argentina of the United States and England. (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017).
2009 2012 2016	Uruguay	In 2009, schools were ordered to teach a foreign language. Since 2012, English has been taught in urban schools from the fourth grade onwards. In 2016, schools had to choose between Portuguese and English. Portuguese is taught in three bilingual districts out of total of nineteen (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017).
2011	Mexico	Under Agreement 592, English has been a compulsory subject from pre-school to the ninth grade since 2011. (Ramírez-Romero & Sayer, 2016; Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017).
2011	Japan	The Ministry of Education made English a mandatory school subject in primary school. Fourth and fifth graders have English classes once a week (Ng, Patrick, 2016).
2014	Peru	Under Resolution 2060, a foreign language has been a compulsory subject in primary schools since 2014, but each province can choose the language (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017).
2014	Ecuador	Under Agreement 0052-14, English has been a compulsory subject since 2014. The policy began to be implemented in the *Sierra* (mountain range) region between 2016 and 2017 and in the coastal (*Costa*) region between 2017 and 2018 (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017).
2016	Canada - Quebec	English, as a foreign language, is mandatory from the first and second grades onwards. However, the French-speaking population want French to be taught in public schools, in order to conserve their culture (Fallon & Rublik, 2011).
2018	Brazil	After much debate, English began to be a compulsory subject in 2017, under Law 13415, and the policy was implemented in 2018 (Almeida, 2016).

In Puerto Rico and Costa Rica, the establishment of the compulsory teaching of English in primary schools was owed to political and/or economic motives, especially the need to strengthen their economic relationship with the USA in the mid-1990´s. By contrast, culture has been a more important factor in Peru, Canada, Ecuador and Brazil. In Uruguay, the choice of the foreign language depends on the interests of each district. By way of comparison, Table 2 shows the situation in Colombia, specifically its national policies, the sectorial plans or norms, and the implementation of such programs.

Table 2. ELT Policies in Colombia and Bogotá

National Policies	Programs of the mayoralty	Ways of implementation
President: César Gaviria (1990-1994) **Political Party**: Liberal **Political Program:** "The Peaceful Revolution" **Educational program:** *Plan de apertura educativa* 1991-1994 **Law 1994** Article 21: Objective: teaching a foreign language in primary schools. Article 23 (7) A foreign language as a mandatory subject. *Most schools chose English **President:** Andrés Pastrana (1998-2002) **Political Party:** Nueva Fuerza Democrática **Political Program:** *"Cambio para construir la paz"* **Educational Program:** *"Educación, Cultura y Formación para el Trabajo*	Memorandum of Association 2001: Making Bogotá a bilingual region. Voluntary Agreement 2003: "A Bilingual Bogotá and Cundinamarca in ten years". SED Bogotá and British Council Agreement 2004 – 2019.	Introducing English as a foreign language in public primary and secondary schools

<table>
<tr><th>National Policies</th><th>Programs of the mayoralty</th><th>Ways of implementation</th></tr>
<tr><td>President: Álvaro Uribe (2002-2010)

Political Party: Primero Colombia

Political Program: Seguridad Democrática-Hacía un Estado Comunitario

Educational Program: La Revolución Educativa

National Bilingualism Program 2005- 2008</td><td>Sectorial Education Plan 2004 -2008

Bogotá: a great School

Agreement 253, 2006: “Bilingual Bogota”, Bogotá Municipal Council.</td><td>Program 8: Strengthening a second language.

Three bilingual schools in District 9.

Language Resource Centers-CRI -- for preschool and primary school teachers with no previous knowledge of English</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Basic Standards of Foreign Language Competence English: 2006

These standards are based on the Common European Framework of Reference – CEFR.

Level A1 for students in the first and third grades.

Level A2 for students in the fourth and seventh grades.</td><td>Sectorial Education Plan 2008 – 2012

Quality Education for a Bogotá Positiva</td><td>Use of the “English Discovery” program.

Teachers who have reached level B2 can teach primary school teachers

.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sectorial Education Plan 2012 – 2016 Bogotá Humana</td><td>Language centers.
Extended school day.</td></tr>
</table>

Source: Own

National Policies	Programs of the mayoralty	Ways of implementation
President: Juan Manuel Santos (2010-2018) **Political Party:** Partido Social de Unidad Nacional **Political Program:** *Solidaridad, Emprendimiento y Paz* **Educational Program:** *"Colombia, la mejor educada en el 2025"* **Law of Bilingualism** **1651** **2013** **National Education Plan 2006 – 2016** Objective 1 and goal 1: Guidelines for the teaching of English from preschool to the eleventh grade. **Bilingual Colombia** **2014 - 2018** One of the strategies is to promote the learning of English, especially in the fourth and fifth grades. **Suggested Curriculum for English 2016** **Derechos básicos de aprendizaje: Inglés** **Transition to the Fifth Grade** **The "Bunny" Bonita Collection,** aimed at children between the ages of four and eight years is a collection of videos, posters, and pedagogical guides in PDF meant to develop communicative skills in English.	(Sectorial Education Plan 2016 – 2020 "Bogotá: Better for Everyone Bogotá: Mejor para Todos)	Second Municipal Language Plan "Converging Grounds" is the name of an extracurricular multimedia strategy for teaching English and its cultural aspects. Language centers. Spelling Bee contest.

Source: Own

Chapter V of the National Development Plan, 1990 1994, offered grants to low-income students who wish to enroll in private schools with a proven high quality and effectiveness. In chapter VI, the National Council of Economic and Social Policy approved this program on March 19, 1999, with some recommendations. First, it called on the Ministry of Education to create a "zero" grade (the first grade of preschool level) and integrate public primary and secondary schools (p.3-4). In other words, the "Opening Plan" of the Gaviria administration sought to reduce the cost of education.

I have worked in two public schools which went through this integration, the small branch does not have neither a secretary nor a library and their staffs have to move between the different branches, in accordance with the needs of the students or teachers. Table 2 presents some of the programs and educational policies in Colombia and Bogotá. "Neoliberalism frames the purpose of education in terms of investments made in human capital. What students should learn and the value of education have to do with their possibilities of future earnings" (Hastings, 2019, p.1). Andrés Pastrana's educational program supported work training for students, by teaching vocational skills to the tenth and eleventh graders. Law 115 of 1994 and Law 1651 of 2013 contain norms for the teaching of a foreign language. The former does not specify a language while the latter chooses English. Following the principle that "language is an important means for doing things" (Wetherell, Taylor, and Yates, 2001, p.7), the Colombian Bilingualism Law makes English the priority foreign language.

Some of the reasons which the "Basic Standards of Foreign Language Competence" give to learn English are based on Neo-Liberal ideas: it will enable students to win grants to study abroad and get better jobs (MEN, 2006, p.9). These ideas include: a "pedagogical approach focused on employability, funding cuts, the push for private and charter schools, school-business partnerships, and the promotion of standardized testing" (Lund, 2015, p.270). As Table 2 show, the policies to teach English in public primary schools began in 2004 with the Sectorial Education Plans, based on an agreement between the SED and British Council, an example of how the educational system "is increasingly subject to neoliberal governance, as […] district schools are replaced by charter schools, and school resources, such as curriculum, testing, and even the training of teachers, are provided by private companies" (Hastings, 2019: p.1).

If you, as a teacher, do not reach the required level of proficiency, you do not exist. (E.g., primary school teachers must have a minimum level of A2 in English because their level cannot be lower than that of their students). Those standards set forth what students should know. Level A1 is for students in the first and third grades, and Level A2 for those in the fourth and seventh grades. (MEN, 2016, p.6.)

My Experience of ELT Policies in Primary Schools in Bogotá

Is the Colombian State really interested in improving ELT? According to one analyst, it is doubtful: "the country has more than three million people internally displaced by the violence of left-wing guerrilla forces, right-wing paramilitaries and drugs mafias. In these circumstances, the development of bilingualism is not a priority for the education system" (de Mejia, 2009, p. 110). For the MEN, on the other hand, "schooling is a permanent process of cultural, social and personal formation which regards people in an integral way: their dignity, rights, and duties". What does it mean to have the "most highly educated country"? Are standards a way to 'transform' teaching practices? Is the State promoting inequality when it requires some public schools in Bogotá to become bilingual?

English is a mandatory subject from first grade onwards, even if there are not enough resources or qualified teachers. According to Mejía (2009), "this leads to the rather paradoxical situation where the standards for English are applied to Grade 1, yet, for the most part, opportunities to improve their competence are restricted to teachers in Grades 6-11" (p. 111), that is, secondary school teachers are the main beneficiaries of State programs to strengthen their knowledge of English, as I was, when, as a secondary school teacher, I was able to take different courses, sponsored by the MEN and SED, that enabled me to obtain the "In-service Certificate in English Language Teaching" (ICELT model). Between 2001 and 2012, I taught English in two secondary schools, one in the San Cristóbal District, and the other in Engativá, and I participated in most of the Teachers Development Programs (TDP). A review of career may illustrate some of the points I have made.

1. In 2005, I participated in an ELT program for public primary school teachers in San Cristóbal, run by a public university. We were required to create a project to use the Resource Center for English, known as the *CRI*[19] in Spanish. Classes were held on Saturday from eight to midday, the teachers were assigned classes in accordance with their proficiency and they worked on the project during the week. In 2010 the *CRI* was finally installed in our school in 2010 but I had moved to another school by then, but so far as I know, the teachers there have taken advantage of it.

2. I attended the "Open Learning Teacher Development" program in 2006, which had three modules for the Teaching Knowledge Test (the course was run by the British Council). Afterwards, I passed the three TKT examinations, held by the University of Cambridge (ESOL). These examinations certify that teachers really know how to teach English. Nowadays, I believe, they do not only take into account teachers' university degrees (I ready had a Master's in Applied Linguistics), but also their professional experience.

3. I took a preparation course for the First English Certificate, aimed at an examination in 2007 (at a public university). When, on the first day, the teacher asked us why we were there, I replied that I wanted to be transferred from my current school to another one, which required the certification and stressed that I felt 'forced' to. Happily, I made some beloved friends there, and I got an A (C1) on the exam. The certification has been very useful, and it enabled me to be admitted to a doctoral program. I enrolled in the PFPD Methodology and Resource Center in 2008 (at a private university), where I learned how to manage computers and multimedia. So long as we followed the prescribed formats.

4. I enrolled in a postgraduate course at a private university, 2010-2011, where we students created a project to suit our needs: in my case, one in which my seventh grade students made their own books, read them aloud, and recorded their voices. The students were pleased and IBM acknowledged our project by donating a computer and thirty-one headphones to the school.

19 The CRI provides story books, dictionaries, grammars, textbooks, multimedia resources, CDs, a video beam, and special furnishings.

5. I participated in the "English for Teaching 1" program and the "CPO Cascade" project, in 2012 (run by the British Council and a private company). The aim was that we (English language teachers) would replicate the course at some public schools. Most of us refused to, because they paid us very little and we had to find teachers and students. I have since learned that it is well paid nowadays.

In the public school where I now work, primary level teachers have not yet received ELT courses, so far as I know. In other words, the MEN, which is the national education authority, shifts its responsibility for decisions about ELT policies from primary schools to the SED, which is the municipal authority, and to the schools themselves. Consequently, some public schools offer one hour per week of English in the primary level, while others do not teach English at all: it is up to each school to decide.

Guerrero (2010) writes that

> Governments and their policy makers should adopt a situated approach to the design and implementation of their policies. As has been widely shown, inequality only leads to more inequality and if governments, especially in the Third World, want to overcome poverty, they need to guarantee all of their citizens the opportunity to receive a decent education. (p. 176).

Table 3 (Adapted from the Revista Enfoque, 2018) lists the sixteen schools in Bogotà which follow the *Modelo Educativo Bilingue*-MEB (Bilingual Educational Model), which is collaborative effort of the British Council and the SED. From my point of view, this project unjustly excludes the teaching of another foreign language. There is not enough information about the criteria for choosing these schools, but at least two are charter schools, and there are districts that do not have BEM. Why weren´t schools from nine other districts chosen?

Table 3. Public Schools in Bogotá with the Bilingual Educational Model

Name of the Public School	Name of the District
Saludcoop Norte	Usaquén
Venecia	Tunjuelito

Bosanova and Debora Arango Pérez	Bosa
San José de Castilla	Kennedy
La Felicidad, Antonio Van Uden, and Carlo Federici	Fontibón
Instituto Técnico Industrial Francisco José de Caldas and San José Norte	Engativá
Veintiún Ángeles and Aníbal Fernández de Soto	Suba
Escuela Normal Superior Distrital María Montessori	Antonio Nariño
Integrada La Candelaria	La Candelaria
República EE.UU de América	Rafael Uribe Uribe
Cundinamarca	Ciudad Bolívar

Establishing language centers in public schools is another SED strategy: they cater to students who want to learn English or French in their spare time. The teachers are mostly Colombians who belong to the official staff and have a B2 certification but there are also native English speakers who must have an A2 level of Spanish, and teaching experience. There are two kinds of centers: one operates during weekdays and the other, only on Saturdays. Each course lasts four semesters. Students who attend weekday classes have to complete 200 hours of classes, while the ones who take classes on Saturday have to complete 240 hours. Each group has a maximum of 25 students. Some classes are taught by native speakers and the activities include games, songs and dances.

Some Colombian teachers complain that the MEN regards native-English speakers as "a matter of quality which guarantees students access to the original or best source of the English language and culture; and it is a response to the alleged insufficient proficiency of non-native speakers of English" (Gonzalez & Llurda, 2016, p.98). Table 4 lists the schools in Bogotá which have language centers.

Table 4. Language Centers in Bogotá Public Schools

Name of the School	Name of the District
Aquileo Parra	Usaquén
Manuelita Sáenz	San Cristóbal
Paulo Freire	Usme
Venecia	Tunjuelito
Luis López de Mesa	Bosa
Nicolás Esguerra Nuevo Kennedy	Kennedy
Néstor Forero Alcalá Jorge Gaitán Cortés Nidia Quintero de Turbay	Engativá
Álvaro Gómez Hurtado Nueva Colombia	Suba
República de Panamá	Barrios Unidos
Liceo Nacional Antonia Santos	Los Mártires
Antonio José de Sucre José Manuel Restrepo José Joaquín Casas	Puente Aranda
Liceo Femenino Mercedes Nariño Clemencia de Caicedo	Rafael Uribe Uribe
Rodrigo Lara Bonilla El paraíso Manuela Beltrán	Ciudad Bolívar

Source: Adapted from the magazine Palabra Maestra 2014

Again, four districts do not have schools with language centers. In addition, all public primary schools can have '*profesores de apoyo*'[20], support teachers; some choose English language teachers for that role and most teach two hours a week per group. However, as I am writing during the transition from

20 Support teachers are employed by the SED and they teach English, technology, arts or physical education.

one administration to another, this policy may change. Finally, although the above situation has been widely discussed for several decades by now, little has been said so far about how ELT policies affect schools on a daily basis. We might liken ELT in public primary schools in Bogotá to a broken bridge. On one side, we find the State, with its illusions and impositions, and on the other, the people who struggle to implement ELT policies in their own way and try not to fall into the water.

This Agenda

I am convinced that schools should be places where children are happy to learn every day. This is what Giroux & Simon (1988) call popular culture. To conclude: this study may help us (both teachers and myself) to understand what is happening in our school when we teach English; and throw light on certain feelings, values and acts which will contribute to the well-being of our community. It has been based on the school where I work and our experiences there, a subject which intrigues me and brings up the following questions:

- What do teachers' stories reveal about ELT in a public primary school where there is not a specialized English teacher?
- What do teachers think about the ELT policies in our school? / What power do teachers have to decide on the handling of ELT policies?
- What have we learned while implementing ELT policies?

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Chapter 7

Teaching Across Cultures: The Negotiation and Reconstruction of Hybrid Teacher Identities in Colombia

Yi-Fen Cecilia Liu

Abstract

This chapter problematizes the issues and challenges transnational language teachers have faced. It discusses how they redefined and rebuilt their identities as teachers as they adapted to the unfamiliar setting of Colombia, where their current reality interacts with and sometimes contradicts their former ideas, values, and beliefs about education. In addition, it aims to understand how this negotiation with local beliefs and customs has led them to construct their hybrid identities.

Introduction

This chapter aims to show the challenges faced by a small group of transnational teachers of English as a Foreign Language (ELF) in Colombia. It also employs the concept of the neglected periphery to examine the current situation and development of the English Language Teaching (ELT) sector on the international and local levels. In addition, the chapter discusses how these transnational language teachers deal with cultural conflicts in their work and establish their hybrid identities. In the first part of the chapter, I will review

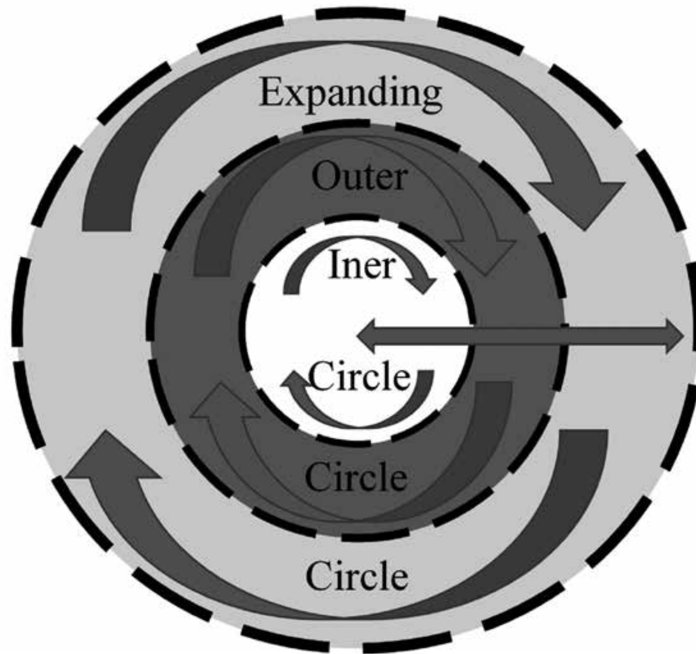
certain theories, studies, and epistemologies of English Language Teacher Identity (ELTI) in relation to the globalization of the use of English.

In the second part, I discuss issues to do with education and identity faced by transnational teachers, which intertwines my personal views with my own transnational teaching experiences. The final section describes my research, and its implications for transnational teaching practices in the era of globalization and future studies of LTI.

Modern Exile – International ELF Teachers in a Global Context

The spread of English as an international lingua franca (ELF) has enabled English language teachers to move freely in today's globalized world. In addition, bilingual/multilingual English users are claiming ownership of the English language as they have outnumbered monolingual English speakers and become a powerful force in the English language teaching industry (Canagarajah, 1999; Cook, 1999; Graddol, 2003; Kumaravadivelu, 2016, Medgyes, 1992; Llurda, 2005; Norton, 1997). As a result, the physical and territorial boundaries of the three concentric circles proposed by Kachru (1997) have been blurred. In figure 1, I added the dotted lines to indicate the blurred boundaries of the three English-speaking circles caused by migration and globalization; and the arrows in figure 1 show the flow of ELF teachers from their homelands to the three circled countries. For example: American teachers in Colombia, South African teachers in England; and Colombian teachers in China.

Fig.1 *International mobility in ELT, adapted from Kachru's (1992) Concentric Circle Model*



As the premier international lingua franca, (Jenkins, 2007), English has created an increasing worldwide demand for English language teachers, in Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America. Conversely, many academics from non-English-speaking countries (the expanding circle) who specialize in ELT now teach in universities in the English-speaking world (the inner circle).

To name just a few, Ahmar Mahboob born in Pakistan, is currently an Associate Professor at the Department of Linguistics at the University of Sydney. Suresh Canagarajah, who is Sri Lankan by birth, has been a member of the faculty of Pennsylvania State University since 2007. Phan Le Ha is originally from Vietnam, was an Associate Professor at Monash University, Australia and is now at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, USA.

The massive global flow of EFL teachers has made their identities more complex. Said's (1993) concept of intellectual exile may be useful for understanding this phenomenon. He analyzed how exile was perceived in

different ages. In pre-modern times, the exiled person was seen as the saddest permanent outcast; in the twentieth century, exile was the most dreadful punishment for whole communities or peoples, due to uncontrollable forces like wars, political upheavals, famines, and diseases. I would argue that in the post-modern era, voluntary exile has turned into an advantageous option or even an exclusive privilege for certain intellectuals. As Said explains, an intellectual may "work out an accommodation with a new or emerging dominant power. Or, on the contrary, an intellectual may remain outside of the mainstream, refusing to make the adjustment" (p. 116). In the same vein, in his framework in *Orientalism* (1995), he points out that like "Palestinians or the new Muslim immigrants in continental Europe, whose presence complicates the presumed homogeneity", teachers who migrate to foreign countries might be "a source of non-acculturation, and volatility and instability rather than adjustment" (p. 116), challenging the monolithic approach to ELT in those countries.

Elaborating on Said, Jacobsen (2012) notes that:

> English teachers generally choose their exile; when in exile and surrounded by the unfamiliar, they are faced with the choice of living in a cocoon of comfortable ideas brought from home or breaking with these familiar ways (p. 458).

I have spent 13 of my 20 years as an English language teacher in foreign countries. Every experience of teaching abroad is a journey of self-discovery. Such journeys help me to redefine who I am as a teacher. Confronting otherness when I teach in foreign countries has forced me to reexamine my role as a teacher. I would like to use my own experience as a way to discover whether other teachers have shared my feelings about being an intellectual exile in the field of ELF: it may be a fertile source for analyzing the negotiation of a hybrid identity, a neglected subject in LTI that is relevant to others who have had the same experience.

Transnational Teachers in the Colombian ELT

I taught Freshman English for non-English majors in the Foreign Languages and Literature Department of a private university in Taiwan for 7 years. Out of 21 full-time faculty members, at least 7 were foreign teachers from

America or Europe. There are many foreign teachers there. In addition, all the meetings, and emails were in English, not Chinese, so that both local and foreign teachers could participate. Here in Colombia, I have worked at two Universities: at the Science of Education Faculty in the former and the Language Center in the latter. There are very few foreign teachers in both. At the university where I now teach, there are only one full- time and two part-time foreign English teachers out of a full-time staff of 38: there is also one foreign language assistant affiliated to the British Council. Due to the small number of foreigners, our meetings and emails are mostly in Spanish: the foreign teachers often feel excluded.

Migración Colombia, a branch of the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Relations (2017), reported that Over 3 million foreigners entered the country in 2017. According to this report, the majority of individuals entering Colombian territory are from English-speaking countries as well as Spanish-speaking countries. There is no information on how many of those foreigners came here to teach English, but from what I have observed, their number is on the rise. This is line with Mejía's (2005), *Bilingual education in Colombia: Towards an integrated perspective,* who points out that, in the interest of liberalizing the economy, the government has authorized 30% of teachers, not English language teachers in Colombia to be foreigners. It is part of a wider State policy to adapt the country to a globalized world. A further example is the Ministry of Education´s *Plan Nacional de Bilingüismo* (PNB 2004 – 2019), which aims to increase the teaching of English at all levels, so that "Colombian citizens will be able to communicate through English at internationally comparable standards. This will help to insert the country into the processes of universal communication, the global economy and cultural openness" (as cited in Hélot & De Mejía, 2008, P111).

This policy for spreading the knowledge of English (both the language and culture), which follows some of the guidelines of the *Plan Distrital de Segunda Lengua,* the "The Model for the Implementation of An English Fellowship Programme" (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2016) and the "Common European Framework of References for Languages", also extends to public agencies like the Bogotá Secretariat of Education (Secretaría de Educación Distrital - SED), the National Learning Service (Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje --SENA), and the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism" (Ministerio de Comercio, Industria y Turismo) and includes teacher-training programs and English classes for students and the citizenry at large. Colombia also administers foreign language assistantship programs through the British

Council and the Fulbright Foundation, which brings teachers from Anglophone countries like the United Kingdom and the United States to work as assistants in ELF classes at Colombian universities.

The above public and institutional policies respond to the country´s wish to engage in intercultural exchanges and prepare its citizens for a globalized market. Thus, Colombian schools and universities are establishing more and more exchange programs with their foreign counterparts, hiring more and more foreign teachers and trying to improve their international rankings.

However, this foreigner-friendly policy ignores such factors as maladaptation, cultural shock, intercultural misunderstandings and feelings of exclusion, all of which may a have a strong impact on transnational teachers.

The Invisible in-between Identities

The identity of EFL teachers suffers from a clear-cut dichotomy: non-native versus native speakers or local versus foreign ones. Jacobsen (2012) says that "the dichotomy was originally constructed by teachers from the metropole who, when faced with the unfamiliar, drew a distinction between themselves and their surroundings" (p. 459). This resulted from their inability to adapt to life in the new setting, which was mirrored in their teaching. He gave two examples of EFL teachers, Ruth Hayhoe & David Cook, who successfully adjusted to the challenging social, political and educational environment in mainland China & Hong Kong and overcame the breach between Chinese and non-Chinese teachers, as well as the one between native and non-native speakers. Introducing innovations which were suitable for the educational and socio-cultural circumstances of China during the 1960s-70s. Jacobsen's analysis of David Crook's autobiography also sheds light on the way transnational teachers rebuilt their identities. When you teach English in Colombia, you can easily be caught up in the discourses of the resistant of white native speakerism, local scholars yield for the validation and recognition of "localness" – to value locally generated knowledge and social practices. The Colombian ELT profession defends local knowledge and customs (Galvis, 2014; Guerrero, 2018; Macias, 2010; González, 2009). Furthermore, the binary categorization of teachers based on a single trait of theirs, like race, nationality or being a native speaker – ignores those who are "others" and have a different identity.

How about the in-betweens? Teachers who are non-white, non-local? Take myself, for example, a Taiwanese English teacher working in Colombia. I am sure there are other teachers like me whose existence is neglected by the dichotomous discourse which ignores our existence and specific identity as a teacher.

Said speaks of this invisibility as “the state of in-between-ness [which] can become a rigid ideological position itself, a sort of dwelling whose falseness is covered over time and to which one can all too easily become accustomed” (p. 120). However, he also calls on us to “move away from the centralizing authorities toward the margins, where you can see things that have never traveled beyond the conventional and the comfortable” (p. 120). Jacobsen (2013) complements Said’s theory with the notion of intellectual detachment” (p. 445), which means that you should get away from the familiar and immerse yourself in the ‘unfamiliar’, as experienced by the intellectual in exile (transnational teachers), who can then develop a critical stance, from the ‘outsider´s´ perspective, by becoming intellectually detached from his / her native and adopted countries.

David Crook “developed a critical perspective on both societies and yet never entirely belonged to either” (p. 459), which is in accordance with Said’s definition of exile “The exile exists in the mediate state, neither completely at one with the new setting nor fully disencumbered of the old, beset with a half involvement and a half detachment”. Because of this ‘in-between-ness identity’, he was able to transform himself by detaching himself from orthodoxy and building a new hybrid identity based on a critical understanding of himself as well as his observation and analysis of the local circumstances as time passed. His inspiring story demonstrates how foreign teachers can transcend the dichotomy between the native and non-native speaker and the foreign and the local.

Linguicism Reflected in the Inequality of EFL Teachers

A common experience shared by foreign teachers is linguicism. I used to think non-native English-speaking teachers were the only victims of this linguistic discrimination until I recently read an article by Kahn (2018) about her experiences as an English teacher in Bogotá. Kahn is an American woman of Guyanese decedent with dark skin, curly black hair and a petite figure.

In Colombia, people sometimes mistook her for a '*costeña*', a woman from the Caribbean coast. Because she does not fit the stereotyped image of a white American, her 'authenticity' as a native speaker and the 'legitimacy' of her American accent were questioned by her undergraduate students at a Bilingual Education program at a private university.

Her case shows that students and even pre-service English teachers have stereotyped ideas about the identities of NEST (Gomez & Guerrero, 2018) and have posited that mainstream attitude toward the standard American accent, completely unaware of its variety of regional accents. Khan (2018) voiced her concerns in her recent study of both formal (universities) and informal venues (café-bars), which showed that Colombian students have pre-conceived ideas which strengthen the racialization of English teaching and privileges white NES.

Once I overheard a remark about my NNEST identity

by a student just before our class: "I really miss the teacher I had last year, he's from America. Learning English is hard enough, let alone with a Chinese teacher" (Memoir, April 11, 2017). It happened because the student thought I did not understand Spanish, as I have never used it in class. It struck me that the majority of EFL students do not seem to be aware of the fact that not all native speakers of English are well educated and highly literate. Colombia still seems to be influenced by a colonial mentality; one can easily see its effects in ELT (Cárdenas, 2006; Moncada 2007; Guerrero, 2009). Khan (2018) says we need to break the vicious circle where English teachers and students echo the dominant racial ideology, by recognizing the multifaceted nature of the English language and Anglophone cultures; and doing away with this colonial idea of a single and fixed type of English teacher, which amounts to an "identity theft" (Castañeda-Peña, 2018).

Studies of this problem from the Global South (Castañeda-Peña, 2018; Gonzalez, 2009; Guerrero, 2008; Khan, 2018, Macías, 2010) strongly criticize this preference for "white" and "native" English language teachers. Public ELT policies in Colombia have succumbed to this imperialistic approach, for example, by favoring the British Council´s shaping of the country´s ill-defined concept of bilingualism (Gonzalez, 2009).

Just as in colonial times, such impositions are contemptuous of local knowledge and beliefs, as they apply foreign standards to local ELT. Though apparently well-meaning, such policies have done more harm than good by

adopting inner circle ELT models like the "Common European Framework", regardless of whether they do or do not fit the local linguistic, cultural and social circumstances. As a matter of fact, Gonzalez (2009) has pointed out that there are at least five problematic issues in this respect, ranging from the abrupt adoption of such guidelines by local ELT institutions to the contempt for local knowledge.

These policies have also brought about a need to have 'model speakers' of the highly 'desired' target language, i.e., British or American English. As a result, as Gonzalez (2009) explains, regional varieties of English (that spoken in the Caribbean, for example) have a lower rank and are not usually taught or acknowledged. Language teachers from the Global South and other peripheries should unmask the stereotypes of the Global North and defend the relevance of their own practices to local contexts (Canagarajah, 2012).

Nevertheless, transnational teachers are caught up in the conflict between local practices and public policies. Do they choose to take the stance of the 'insider' or the 'outsider'? Attempting to strike a balance will require negotiation and the creation of a hybrid identity. As transnational teachers go through the transition from one sociocultural context to another and confront the different objectives of and approaches to ELT in each country, they must deal with challenges to their identities.

Professional Transition and Identity Repositioning

Monereo (2017) points out that recent studies have focused on the identity repositioning that occurs when professionals make a transition from teaching to research or from university posts to ones in other fields or from one cultural context to another. These transitions imply a discontinuity in the work and role of a teacher, which forces the teacher to 'revise' or 'rebuild' aspects of his or her identity as his or her thoughts and emotions are challenged by the changes.

In retrospect, I see that I have gone through three radical transitions in my professional life, moving from teaching non-English major students at a private university in my native country Taiwan, to teaching English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) in Australia, to teaching BA in English Language Education in Colombia. These major changes have

had a huge impact on my identity repositioning at personal, interpersonal, and institutional levels. Monereo (2017) notes that:

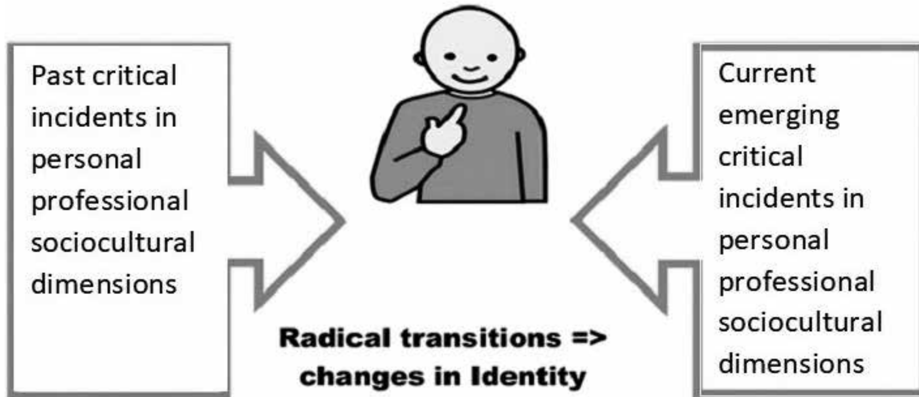
> Radical life changes or transitions, either in a personal, professional or social situation, often affect identity. The reasons seem obvious, there is a move from a known, stable and controlled situation to one characterized by uncertainty and risk, in which individuals have to show that they possess the necessary competences to confront whatever problems may appear (p. 5).

In Taiwan, English is taught as a foreign language, a compulsory subject from primary to higher education. In that regard, it is similar to Colombia. However, the B.A. in English, Applied Linguistics, or English Language Teaching in Taiwan are mainly taught by professors with a Ph.D. who publish studies in academic journals.

Thus, in my first teaching job in Colombia, I felt underqualified as a supervisor of theses and practicum courses, until I learned that most of my colleagues in B.A. program did not have doctorates. That made me realize that academic standards and requirements vary, in accordance with the political, economic and social conditions of each country. To adopt to my new post, I had to quickly learn by doing the unfamiliar tasks and roles assigned to me. This reminds me what Said (1993) says about the positive side of exile, which includes "the pleasure of being surprised, of never taking anything for granted, of learning to make do in circumstances of shaky instability that could confound or terrify other people" (p. 121). On the personal level, a life-changing moment was the birth of my daughter six months after I settled in Colombia, when I had to quickly learn to cope with motherhood in an unfamiliar environment. Similarly, my social environment changed from a Chinese-speaking Confucius Heritage Culture (CHC) in Taiwan, to a multi-racial English-speaking one in Australia, and then to a Spanish-speaking culture, with a colonial heritage, in Colombia. The many changes in my life have had a huge effect on my identity and my repositioning as a language teacher.

Inspired by my own experiences, I would like my doctoral research to explore the experiences of other international teachers in Colombia and analyze how the milestones in their personal and professional lives have affected their identities as teachers, as shown in figure 2.

Fig. 2. *Identity repositioning in relation to critical incidents, on three levels*



Reconstructing Teacher Identities in a Foreign Context

Even in a familiar setting, teaching is a challenging profession and more so in a foreign country. As Jacobsen (2012) points out: "teachers working in their own native country face issues which can be significantly different from those faced by the same teachers in less familiar settings abroad, and the experiences of these teachers on short-term stays can be quite different from those for whom the locale becomes familiar over time" (p. 447). In the post-modern era, more and more teachers and other professionals are working in a multicultural environment. However, this makes the question of a teacher´s identity more complex and causes cultural conflicts, since people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds have different beliefs, values, and attitudes towards life. Teaching is a socially constructed practice; therefore, it is sensitive to the specific context. When teachers and students from different cultures work together in the classroom, they behave differently and have different expectations about their respective roles and misunderstandings may easily occur (Zhao, 2007). When they do, how can they work together and learn from each other? Whose notion of the teacher-student relationship should we adopt in the classroom? Can we find a middle ground? Can we accept the differences and embrace diversity in the classroom?

A teacher working in a foreign context does not only face the problem of 'otherness' in his or her professional life, but in the teacher´s daily life as well. Therefore, teachers who move from one country to another normally

have to go through a process of adaptation (William, 2007) on three levels: the internal (I), external (how others see me) and community ones.

One becomes a "beginner" or feels like one in the new circumstances, and this beginner´s status opens up the possibility of a different career, or an 'unconventional' lifestyle (Rilke cited in Said, 1993). Clarke (2009) argues that the identity of a language teacher is not only pedagogical but also political; self-defining is done through an antagonistic process of inclusion and exclusion, in which contrasts are made between being included and being an excluded "other". Lacasa et el (2005) discusses the construction of identity in terms of the combination of 'insideness' and 'outsideness'. The former refers to personal perspectives, the latter to social, historical, and cultural factors. When they work in a foreign country, teachers must create a sense of themselves in the face of unfamiliar interlocutors.

I have found that the attitudes of students in Taiwan and Colombia stand at opposite ends of the spectrum and I therefore suffered from a cultural shock when I had to deal with certain aspects of my students´ behavior in the latter: some of them find it hard to adapt to my personal style as a teacher, which is understandable, since what is regarded as a social norm in one society may be regarded as insane in another.

Speaking of the concept of "insanity" Foucault (1982) insists that you first have to determine what a society means by "sanity". In the same manner, being a teacher in South America might lie on the opposite side of the spectrum from being a teacher in countries with a Confucian tradition, like China, Japan and Korea.

I remember how a fellow student in a doctorate seminar told me that "During a training course with a senior visiting professor from Korea, we were very shocked to see him scolding our teacher in front of the class. She, a junior Korean professor, burst into tears" (class discussion, March 27, 2019). I should explain that in the abovementioned countries, it is not uncommon for a teacher to scold a student, in front of the class for an unsatisfactory performance. The victim may wind up crying but he or she will be remembering the embarrassing incident and work hard to avoid another one. I went through the same experience in Taiwan myself. There is an old Chinese saying "愛之深，責之切" (Ài zhī shēn, zé zhī qiè), which literally means "Love well, whip well." It is one of the core Confucian beliefs and applied in families and schools in countries with a Confucian tradition. However, as teaching and

learning are context sensitive, I realized that it is thought to be “extremely rude” and “unacceptable” in Colombia. And in my experience, some students seem to be overly sensitive to criticism and they take it personally. I even had students telling me that “here, it is disrespectful to openly criticize a student in front of the class, it is regarded as a personal attack and insult” (informal talk, May 13, 2016). The above is an example of the “unresolved” conflicts between my previous teaching context and my current one in Colombia.

Reshaping Teachers’ Professional Identities in the Post-Modern Age

Said´s comparison (1993) of an intellectual in exile to “a shipwrecked person who learns to live in a certain sense with the land, not on it” (p. 121) can be applied to a transnational teacher´s identity, which transcends geographical boundaries. We are living in a globalized world; however, a teacher´s identity is still often defined by his or her nationality and ethnicity (Khan 2018; Kubota & Lin 2009). I can recall an academic event where my fellow American teacher and I gave a presentation about cultural shock we experienced teaching EFL at a private university in Colombia. After the conference, some of my colleagues remarked, “We understand that Asian cultures are very different from ours, so teachers behave in a different manner, but we don’t think Americans are that different from us, they’re kind of similar” (conversation, November 4, 2018). As a result, the criticisms my American colleague made of Colombian students were more resented than mine were. I guess that some of those colleagues had studied or lived in the United States and thus did not see a big difference between the two countries in classroom behavior. By contrast, very few had been to Asia and knew very little about Asian cultures, so they assumed there was a strong contrast between Asia and Latin America.

It is an example of how geographical, linguistic, and ethnic differences are a determining factor in identity. Thus, it is not surprising that pre-service teachers often view their identity in fixed terms (Kumaravadivelu 2012; Mugford, Sughrua & Lopez Gopar, 2015) and this tends to be true of in-service teachers as well.

As Said (2000) says, “Exiles cross borders and break down barriers of thought and experience” (p. 185). Despite the fact that both my American colleagues

and I have taught in different foreign countries, still, our teacher identities are seen in terms of narrow national, ethnic or cultural categories. As Said (1993) notes, “the exile sees things in terms of both what has been left behind and what is actually here and now: he or she has a double perspective, never seeing things in isolation” (p. 121). Mugford, Sughrua & Lopez Gopar’s (2015) study urges teachers to question whether “the consideration of multiple identities would more accurately reflect classroom realities, because trainee teachers often see their identity in terms of fixed ethnic, gender and geographical categories” (p.10). However, I believe that not every teacher has multiple identities to be “considered”: they need to be built in the course of a long and sometimes trying experience of exile.

Identities are determined by the context, including institutional, political and social factors (Schatzki,2002; Van Lier, 2004). Capitalism and consumerism have ‘commercialized’ education and changed people’s attitudes towards it, which in turn has created ever more complex conditions for teachers and made them feel ‘deskilled’ (Gao, 2016). The traditional virtues of education have been deeply instilled in countries with a Confucian heritage, like Taiwan, Korea, and Vietnam. However, by the turn of the 21st century the impact of modernization, Westernization and globalization on education was evident.

The imposition of those standards has changed socio-cultural conditions for education, which in turn has confused the identity of teachers and challenged their authority. The power of stake-holders like parents and institutions has upset the traditional relationship between teachers and students (Codd, 2005; Gao, 2008; Kelchtermans, 2005; Troman, 2000). Education has become more ‘business-centered’ and ‘service- oriented’ in some countries than in others. As a teacher from a CHC country, it is frustrating to see how education is being driven by commercialism in Colombia and has changed the conduct of teachers and the teacher-student relationship far more than in Asia. I was very shocked when a colleague in Colombia told me that “I failed a student for having missed too many classes. However, she just told me that I can’t fail her because her parents pay for my salary”. I could not believe what I heard: under the rules of my native country, students would receive a warning or even be expelled from university for offending their professors with such a disrespectful comment. My colleague further explained that:

"Some of the teachers at our institute are turning a blind eye to the underachievement of students; the reason why they are lenient about it is that the students' evaluation of their work can affect the renewal of their contract or even jeopardize their job" (conversation in the teachers´ lounge, May 30th, 2018).

Even though such evaluations of a teacher´s effectiveness have been criticized as biased (Marsh & Overall,1980), many private universities use them as a determining factor when hiring their staff. That colleague´s remark helped me to understand a student of mine who said: "teacher, you're stricter and much more demanding than Colombian teachers. Colombian teachers indulge us more!" (conversation, April 23, 2018). The word the student used was "*consentir*", which means "to spoil, indulge or tolerate". The comment projected a comparison on how teachers should perform their role or tasks as most of them have never been abroad or in contact with foreign teachers or students from different cultures in academic setting, hence, they make judgments on teacher's role and identity based on their world view. I guess the student was trying to tell me that I had to be more flexible and understanding of their behavior. In the same vein, since I come from a highly disciplined society in Asia where teachers are strong authority figures, it made me more aware of the power struggle in the Colombian teacher-student relationship. Students in private universities in Colombia seem to think that they have the right to negotiate their grades with teachers.

> "I went to a public university, where the academic culture was rigid; the teacher wouldn't allow me to enter the class when I was late. And there was no make-up exam if you failed a subject. Now I'm teaching at a private university where students seem to think they are the clients and have the right to negotiate deadlines, absences or even their grades. I feel that teachers have an additional role: to provide a satisfactory
>
> customer service and thus obtain a good evaluation of their work, which is rather sad: it shouldn't be like that!" (conversation in teachers lounge, April 24, 2018).

In the private school sector, where the students´ retention rate is the top priority, it is not uncommon for students to complain about their teachers to the area coordinator or even the principal in Colombia. A fellow language teacher from Taiwan told me about a colleague of hers who was criticized by the principal in front of the students in the private school where she works.

She felt it was a blow to the teacher's self-esteem and authority, "From a very early age, we were taught to respect our teachers and their doctrines (尊师重道Zūn shī zhòng dào), which is the core value of Confucianism and is instilled in our minds. Hence, students would normally reflect on their wrongdoing rather than complain about the teacher, because they know school directors always support their teachers" (telephone conversation, 19 of April, 2019).

Such incidents make us wonder if teachers around the world will soon have an additional role, as a 'client service provider', in line with the global trend of a consumer-oriented education. Society is changing rapidly and so is education. As a result, teachers are dealing with far more complex situations at work.

Engaging in Reflective Practice to Gain New Insights on Language Teacher Identities

Professional identity is essentially about how individuals enact roles in different settings (Richards, 2008; Farrell, 2016). Therefore, there has never existed benchmark standards to clearly define or measure teacher professional identity (Varghese et al., 2005). Farrell (2016) also stresses the importance of being a 'reflective language teacher´ in order to continue to construct one´s identity. Oda (2016) confirms Farrell's remark by pointing out that reflection has become a keyword in recent teacher identity research. Without reflective practices, it is impossible for teachers to articulate the 'self' (Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop, 2004). After some reflective practice myself, I realized, in retrospect, that I have carried the same expectations about my students' academic behavior and performance I had in Taiwan and Australia to Colombia, and it was time to adjust to my new context. As when you make space for new information in a USB full of old files, I have two options: to increase the USB´s capacity by broadening my worldview or delete the old files. Unfortunately, the latter has not been feasible, as some of the values of our native culture are too deeply rooted inside us. Therefore, to fit into my new teaching context, I will have to fuse the academic cultures of my past and present ones. The following is Jacobsen (2012)'s comment on Said's defense of the intellectual exile:

> The fact that exiles never belong entirely to either the new or the old society frees them from the powers of control exerted by the orthodoxy on either side and to develop a position from which they may criticize both, the position of intellectual detachment of the exile. (p. 458).

This chapter is the result of my reflections on the problems of identity faced by transnational teachers. Teacher identity has been increasingly dealt with in different disciplines during the past five years, like psychology, sociology and education (Stenberg *et al*., 2014, as cited in Hong, Green & Lowery, 2017). Among those done so far, there are many on the identity development of pre-service teachers (Allen & Wright, 2014; Stenberg *et al*., 2014; Smagorinsky *et al*., 2004; Trent, 2018), but few on that of in-service teachers. I cannot help wondering whether the formation of a teacher´s identity ends when he or she obtains a license to teach.

In my view, the development of a teacher´s identity is an ongoing process, shaped by the teacher´s professional experience and interaction with different agents. Thus, we in-service teachers need to revise our professional role, "reshape our experiences" and "find a meaning in them" (Barkhuizen, 2016, p. 4). As Oda (2016) says, good teachers are able to "use their past experiences as resources for their further development as teachers" (p. 225). Last but not least, there are plenty of articles about sojourners, especially students who study abroad and their adjustments to a foreign environment (Castañeda & Zirger, 2011; Çiftçi & Karaman, 2018; Schartner, 2016). But what about teachers who work abroad? Don't they too have to make self-adjustments in a foreign context? However, studies on how teachers who work abroad reconstruct their identities remain scarce.

Since educational policies and the attitudes of students vary from country to country, this opens up a fertile field for research. Hence, I hope my research will help to fill the gap. This study seeks to answer the following question:

How do the transnational EFL teachers' identities get negotiated, transformed, and /or hybridized in educational contexts in Colombia?

Objectives:

- To identify the challenges these transnational teachers face when they move from a post in another country to one in Colombia.

- To explore the interaction between these teachers' native identities and Colombian educational customs
- To understand the problems of identity these teachers face when they adjust to the academic culture of Colombia.

De Costa and Norton suggest (2018) that there is a need to carry out deeper analysis to explore how teachers´ identities have evolved in the wake of globalization. It would help us to better understand how transnational teachers reconstruct their hybrid identities by reflecting on their past experiences in order to deal with their future in transnational settings, a topic which has received little academic attention so far.

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Chapter 8

The Experiences of a Transgender Student in an Initial English Language Teacher Education Program

Pedro Adolfo Cabrejo Ruiz

"It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept and celebrate those differences".

Audre Lorde (1994)

Abstract

This chapter is mainly focused on what is happening, in universities, with the teaching of gender to pre-service teachers, specifically transgender issues. Universities are hyper-regulated institutions which seem to practice an invisible censorship when it comes to the pursuit of knowledge and the choice of topics for teaching and research. The education of pre-service teachers in Colombia does not take gender diversity and especially transgender persons into account. This monolithic idea of what "The English teacher" is supposed to be is an evident problem in the education of teachers, a field which is "de-gendered", in that it not only denies the existence of "genders" in the classroom but transgender "individuals" as well. This chapter discusses attitudes towards transgenderism in teaching, specifically in the education of pre-service teachers and draws on some previous studies of ELT teachers' and students' perceptions of transgenderism. It also looks at aspects of the experiences of transgender teachers and students which have been ignored

in previous studies and may throw light on how to deal with transphobia and strengthen the identity of pre-service transgender teachers.

Introduction

This chapter seeks to fill in the gaps in our understanding of the education of pre-service transgender teachers, since, as Butler (2002) notes, "some teachers close to media intellectuals remain deaf and blind to the views of students and minorities, exercising a power of interference in which the teacher ignores their capabilities" (p.43). In my view, this applies to trainee ELT teachers. The voices of those who are transgender persons have not been heard so far, in terms of who they are and who they will become professionally.

This chapter also highlights the diversity of future transgender English language teachers who study at a public university in Bogotá, Colombia, who are apparently invisible in a curriculum, marked by a de-gender ideology, which functions as a colonial mechanism to impose the dominant notions of "Being", "Knowledge" and "Power" (Lugones, 2003).

The first section of this chapter discusses the rigidity of the education of future ELT teachers, due to the colonization of "BEING" by mechanisms which exclude gender affiliations which are not heteronormative. The meager studies of this problem mean that we need to think about restructuring orthodox teacher-training methods and break the canon of heteronormative universalism imposed by the colonial perspective (Anzaldúa, 1987).

The second section explains how discourses about (de)gendered identities in the education of English language teachers have become standardized in education programs. According to Meyer (2019), transformative pedagogy implies a break with the mistaken notion of "KNOWLEDGE" held by colonialism, which in an inherent way, has imposed "the normal / abnormal duality" and placed those subjects who do not fit into the definition of normal in a new category of non-normal. Once this polarization of reality is accepted and filters into the imaginaries of society, it follows that the category of heterosexual is defined as good, normal and natural, while the category of transgender is called bad, abnormal and denatured. The first enjoy benefits and a recognized status, while the second is stigmatized and sanctioned.

The third section highlights the diversity of gender and the denial of transgender identities. It shows how the “POWER” imposed by colonialism on gender (Castro-Gómez, 2002) has often been employed and is reflected in the binary opposition between the normality of hetero practices and the “abnormality” of transgender ones and the way colonialism favors the former. This perception needs to be challenged, not by reconstructing the subjects in the abnormal category but creating a new political imaginary in which people of diverse genders are fitted into “normal categories” (Wiegman, 2002).

This chapter intends to decipher what local knowledge says about the position of transgenderism in the education of ELT teachers, specifically, in the Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas in Bogotá. It is written from a de-colonial perspective, which provides a theoretical foundation for its arguments. This perspective, in turn, rests on three main typologies of coloniality: the coloniality of power, coloniality of knowledge and coloniality of being, which are related to three problematic situations; “Pedagogical rigidity in the initial education of English language teachers”, “Standardized (de)gendered identities in the initial education of English language teachers” and “Gender diversity and the denial of transgender identities”.

Pedagogical Rigidity in the Initial Education of English Language Teachers

To get a better understanding of the misconceptions of the gendered being, which of course include transgendered beings, we turn to Curran, who asks us to avoid the natural evidence for identity categories and denaturalize the binary divisions of gender, like man / woman or homo / hetero imposed by different ideologies like colonialism. His study of how teachers conceive of and transmit their attitudes towards gender reveals the nature of pedagogical rigidity and concludes that young transsexual persons are a group at risk, with a series of special needs; transgenderism is regarded as a threat to their classmates; and a teacher´s acceptance of transgender students may encourage their classmates to be more tolerant (Curran, 2002, p.21).

Colonial mechanisms have especially influenced “Being” and the promotion of heteronormativity has been a feature of “pedagogical rigidity”. Given the meager studies of this issue, we need to think about re-structuring this

standardized pedagogy and question the dualistic canon of heteronormative universalism, in line with Britzman´s suggestion that "Transformative pedagogy could elicit ethical reactions that would be able to overturn the arguments from origin and fundamentalism and deny submission" (2002, p.37).

In addition, Britzman (2002) notes the way in which normality becomes an imperceptible factor in the classroom, but that pedagogy itself can make students aware of its limitations (p.33). In other words, the challenge is to show the falsity of the idea of the other as a suspicious, dangerous, threatening or infectious subject. Elaborating on Britzman, Mérida (2002) says that: "the classroom can be transformed into a space that favors social change if the teacher combines an analysis of the authoritarian nature of orthodox ideas with a daily questioning of normative heterosexuality".

A transformative pedagogy which questions normality and attacks the dominant structures would allow for the opening up of alternative spaces of identification and the enjoyment of new desires (Britzman, 2002, p. 200). He also wonders about the extent to which some people can be different yet perceived as normal at the same time. This question points, in fact, to the perverse nature of the monolithic view of gender. Inclusion offers a kinder view of otherness. Bearing in mind the new definitions of gender diversity, the academy can impact influencing the new constructions in the social and intellectual fields, all in all in terms of avoiding the victimization of transgender subjects (Wiegman, 2002, p.74).

We need to deconstruct the conventional gender categories, and the logic behind them: otherwise, they remain traps of identity. According to Foucault (1977), the historical and social production about gender is fundamentally related to social control. The same man-woman binomial excludes other possibilities and definitively denies the constructive nature of gender; social institutions like universities and schools are structured according to this logic. Thus, the definitions of social organizations are based on this binary assumption, (p.28).

Normalized (De)Gendered Identities in Initial Language Teacher education Investigating contemporary colonial situations

Educational documents rooted in male-centered ideologies.

Heteronormativity involves so many practices that at this moment a world where this compendium of hegemonic norms is not dominant is unimaginable: these policies are opposed to the idea of normality. Transsexual subjects do not want to be normal, do not want to be subject to the dynamics of good and correct, not even in the category of heterosexual, which is another evidence of the monolithic character of institutions (Berlant and Warner, 2002, p.34).

This study was done at the Universidad Distrital Francisco Jose de Caldas, a public university in Bogotá Colombia, South America, specifically the LLEEI program (Professional teaching program with emphasis in English) of its Faculty of Education. I analyzed its "Initial Conditions" statement, which summarizes the program's aims and approach, including the profile of future language teachers; and the general guidelines and procedures for obtaining a diploma in ELT.

Its syllabuses cover the following subjects: "*Epistemología y Pedagogía* / Epistemology & Pedagogy"; "*Perspectivas pedagógicas en la formación docente* / Pedagogical perspectives on the education of teachers"; "*Desarrollo Psicosocial del Niño y el Joven*" / The Psychosocial development of children and youngsters"; "*Ser, Sujeto y Multiculturalidad* / Being, the Subject & Multiculturality" and "Language, Society & Cultural Identity".

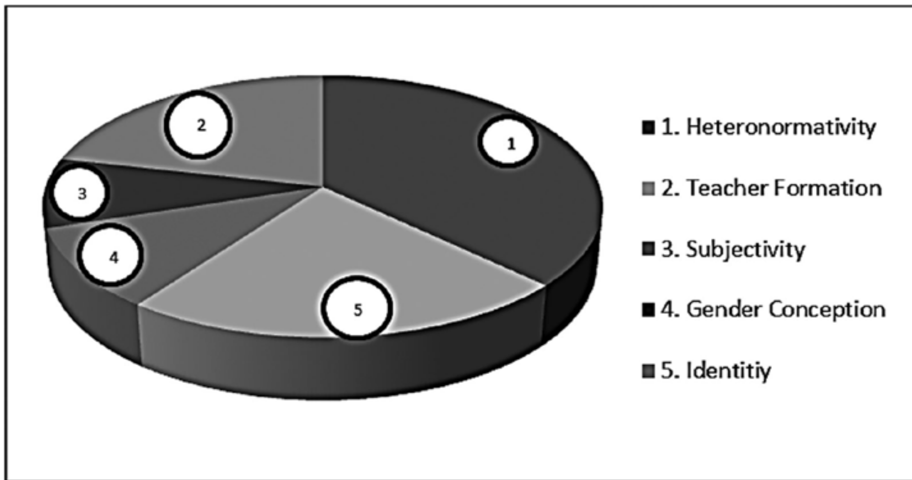
To analyze the documents, I found color coding to be a helpful tool, since, according to Dwayer and Moore, it "helps learners to organize information into useful patterns which enable the learners to interpret and adjust to the environment" (1995. p.6). The information was then adjusted to the categories found in previous studies of this subject: *Education of Teachers,* Adriana González, 2006; *Heteronormativity*, Lugones, 2003; *Gender Conceptions,* Meyer, 2018; *Subjectivity*, Foucault, 1977; *Identity*, Díaz Maggioli, 2004.

As first step, I analyzed the statement of "Initial Conditions" because it discusses personality, individuality and teaching procedures. I then selected those parts of syllabuses which deal with the subjectivity of the teaching process, the ones mentioned above. The overall purpose was to determine

if there were references to the inclusion of transgender students in the ELT courses. The analysis confirmed that “Initial Conditions” presents canonical ideas about gender: gender variability is not acknowledged in any of its principles and it is clear that students are regarded as de-gendered. Besides, the document does not offer any alternative to the dichotomous cisgender* idea of male and female teachers.

Figure 1 explains the findings obtained on the light of the categories proposed teacher formation, heteronormativity's, gender conceptions, subjectivity, identity, related to the aspects analyzed in the initial conditions document.

Figure 1. Categories of analysis in the “Initial Conditions” document.



Source: Own

At first sight this exercise allowed me to affirm that the document “Initial Conditions” presents canonical ideas about gender, not gender variability is evidenced, the learners are dis gendered, the document does not show academic spaces for any other alternative than the dichotomy cisgender conception of male and female teachers.

On the other hand, Figure 2 shows how the categories teacher formation, heteronormativity's, gender conceptions, subjectivity, identity were found in the syllabuses;

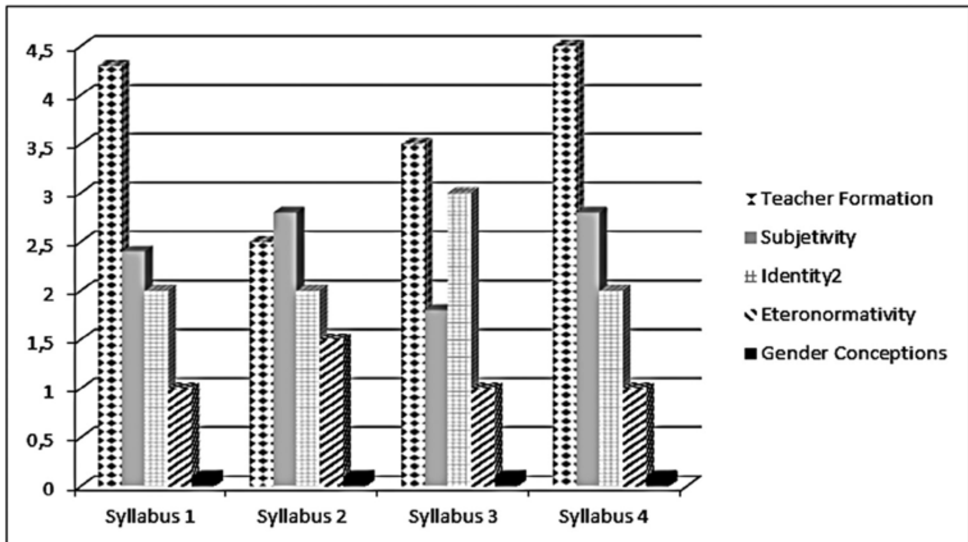
Syllabus 1“Epistemoligía y Pedagogía”

Syllabus 2 “Perspectivas pedagógicas en la formación docente”

Syllabus 3“Desarrollo Psicosocial del Niño y el Joven”

Syllabus 4 “Ser, Sujeto y Multiculturalidad”

Figure 2. Syllabuses analyzed.



Source: Own

In all the syllabuses the most prominent category was teacher formation, all are engaged with this purpose, followed by subjectivity, in the syllabuses two - “Perspectivas pedagógicas en la formación docente” and four - “Ser, Sujeto y Multiculturalidad” the category Subjectivity was found in the same intensity.

The syllabus three - “Desarrollo Psicosocial del Niño y el Joven” shows as the big component in its elaboration the category identity, also evident sharing the same level on the syllabus one, two and four. The category heteromativity was evident in the entire four syllabus but in a lower scale, and finally the conception any kind of gender, rated the lowest scale in this analysis. The most prominent category was “teacher formation”, it is evident in all the courses, followed by “subjectivity”, which is prominent in courses two and four.

In third place was "identity", which had an equal importance in courses one, two and four. The second most important category in course three is "identity", as in courses one, two and four. The category "heteronormativity" is mentioned in all four, but to a lesser extent and finally, "any kind of gender variability" (homosexual, gay, transgender) is not mentioned in any.

From this, I conclude that there is no place for transgender students in the University, they do not exist. Thus, I hope this study will help to make transgender students of ELT more visible and encourage teachers to be more inclusive. It has also clarified the objective of my future work, which would be an inquiry into the subject of "*Identidad(es) Poder e Inequidad*" in the field of the teaching of EFL.

This exercise as well showed that all of the documents define the participant in the B. Ed language program as "*El Estudiante* / The male student" or "*Los Estudiantes*", that is, as masculine but not of another gender, like female or transgender. Thus it seems evident that approach follows heteronormative principles, which suggests that the academic community is blind to the existence of other kinds of subjects.

According to Gore, (2000, p. 234) this normalization of gender is a constant feature of pedagogy, the subjects are expected to follow certain norms and are denounced when they don´t. The guiding principle of the norms is "heterosexual only" and this extends to the field of ELT.

This raises the question: when did it happen? when did it become an accepted rule in our lives? To answer it, I investigated the history of this normalization, going back to accounts of transgenderism in some pre-Hispanic cultures, among other phenomena which historians have neglected and are forgotten today, in the period after colonialism.

In *Historia de la Cultura Material en la América Equinoccial* (Patiño, 1993, volume VII "Erotic life & Hygienic customs"), a character called *El Narrador*" (the narrator) records the things he saw at the time of the Spanish conquest. The following passage caught my attention:

> In America, homosexuality existed in different degrees, from tribes who only occasionally practiced it, like the Cumanagotos, Chibchas, Quimbayas, to others where it was tolerated and even institutionalized, in the Panamanian isthmus, the Caribbean coast, the northern coast of Peru cost and the northern coast of Ecuador (p.172).

From the above, it is possible to infer that in America the perception of gender differed from the binary conception we currently have. Also, lesbianism was tolerated before the colonial period, as seen in the following excerpt: "*Denominaban patagüia al lesbianismo, y a las que lo practicaban les decían patagüilani, "aplanchadoras"*. Dávila-Bolaños, (1974, p.173).

Such accounts show that there were at least four gender variables in pre-Columbian America. It was colonialism which imposed the concept of binary sexuality. This is an example of what Schatzki says: "the history of discourses has always been used, among other things, to justify and maintain the social order" (2001, p.13). Such documents show how gender variability has been banished from our current society.

Due to the binary conception of gender, transgender students have been excluded from the current educational context. We cannot deny that most of us grow up knowing what our gender is. I strongly believe that one of the main problems transgender students face is the lack of knowledge about gender and the fear it causes in "US", those who are teaching future transgender language teachers.

Biological discourses

Intersexuality casts doubt on the binary division of gender into man and woman. But the heteronormative matrix, backed by the authority of medicine, is responsible for maintaining these criteria of normality. If an individual does not fit into this dichotomy, the person is excluded. Thus, by a drastic surgical intervention, the gender of the individual is reassigned. "The fact that this system, which guards the boundaries between the masculine and feminine categories, has existed for so long without arousing criticism or scrutiny from any side indicates the extreme discomfort that sexual ambiguity arouses in our culture". Chery Chase (2005)

On the other hand, some studies argue that our ideas about gender may be wrong, for example, one by Dr. Ivanka Savic, who points out that:

> There are two sexual chromosomes one is called X and the other is called Y, generally women have two chromosomes XX and men have one Y and one X, but a small percentage of babies are born with that

> chromosomes arranged otherwise, as much as I know about sexual biology, least I think there are more than two genders (2015. P 23).

By nature, every person, tends to show (consciously or not) an attitude towards gender. This has become so important in our current society that it has even influenced classroom activities. As Atthill, C. (2009) says: “Gender is not an issue of women or men; it is an issue of people. ´Femininity´ does not exist in isolation from ´Masculinity´.”

The power of one person determines the power of another. Gender relations are neither “natural” nor given, they are constructed to make unequal relations seem “natural”, and can only be naturalized under the pressure of socialization. Thus, it is clear there is a pressure on boys and girls to live in accordance with the established “norms” of masculinity and femininity.

The body reflects this double perspective: on one hand, it is a space for the imposition of power and on the other, it is a space for resistance. The subject of resistance enters into pedagogy; this resistance necessarily involves rethinking the place of our bodies in social settings (McLaren, 1997). For McLaren, the body is understood as a space of struggle. We are bodily marked to be different from the rest, to face conflict. Others do not always appreciate our bodies and this causes different reactions and contradictions. Our bodies are not monolithic: they are open to different interpretations.

Human sexuality is too complex to be limited to two words: “it is not because some people find attractive, but because so many people find it abhorrent” (Harris, quoted by Xavier Lizarraga, 2003, p. 197). We may find an answer in what Derrida calls “the absolute otherness” of being, where the others are seen as totally external, totally separated, totally others and when that happens, phobias are born Morris, (2005).

Recognizing each other is something we take for granted every day, but this may work in a different way for some people. According to Ariston (2018), many transgender people do not identify with the body they were born with: they nevertheless seem to have no other option. Thus, transgender people look into the mirror every morning and feel uncomfortable because they clearly recognize the image, but do not feel that this image represents their personhood.

The essence of transgender identity is the struggle to recognize that personhood when they look at their own body. My search for articles, books

and publications about gender variability and/or transgenderism in Colombian educational institutions showed almost nonexistent results. Transgenderism is still a myth in our country; we do not have enough information about it.

Political and academic discourses

One of the few studies of this issue I did find was done by the UNESCO (cited by Jacobs, 1996) called *Enfoque e identidades de género* (Gender approaches and identities), which concludes that: "gender inequality is more than a taboo, it is a real fact not only in societies but especially in the field of education, where it takes many forms, depending on the context. Gender inequality affects not only girls and boys, and women and men alike, but LGBTQ students are often even more disadvantaged" (UNESCO, 2017).

Although the municipal government of Bogotá has issued some policies about this problem, like "*Legislación y derechos de lesbianas, gays, bisexuals y transgeneristas en Colombia* (Legislation and the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender persons in Colombia, 2005); a policy which grants them social benefits, specifically health coverage, there is no mention of the situation of transgender persons in educational institutions.

The Colombian General Education Law "ratifies the obligatory nature of sex education as a transversal project and defines it as a process of permanent, personal, cultural and social education based on an integral concept of the human being". Nevertheless, it perpetuates the binary notion of gender as either male or female. Ley General de Educación (Ley 115 de 1994).

As an example of this discrimination, a television news program reported the case of a transgender primary school teacher in Bogotá who dressed as a woman at her school (the gender identity she chose) and was immediately relegated to work in an office in the basement of the headquarters of the Ministry of Education. In her own words; "I was regarded as abnormal, as a monster".

If that happened with an adult, it is easy to imagine the difficulties teachers of transgender student's face when they see the anguish those students feel in schools and universities. As Grossman (2005) reminds us "females and males

have different educational outcomes and fulfill different gender-specific roles both in school and in society at large" (p.42)

Gender Diversity and the Denial of Transgender Identities

Purposes of my research and initial ideas

During my experience as teacher, I have found similar cases: for example, some young transsexual students who were misunderstood because of their gender identity, felt despair and sometimes dropped out. So, I have a strong interest in studying their problems. I think that all teachers who are concerned about their students feel helpless in these situations.

The work of the poetess Audre Lord is important for this study, because of the way she politicizes her experience as a Black lesbian. For me, while not a teacher herself, she is an exemplary educator, as exemplified by her famous remark that "the personal is political ", that is, hers is a pedagogy based on poetry. She believes that poetry has therapeutic powers and touches places which other genres cannot reach: intimate ones, those of silences, thanks to the power of words. While Foucault regards the body as a space for domination, control and oppression, Lorde situated it in the emotions (Lorde. 1984).

Unlike most mortals, Lorde is afraid of silence; she is not afraid of the words of others, but of their mutism. Black and lesbian in a racist society, she prefers to talk and be insulted to resigning herself to the silence of the oppressed. Lorde calls on us to think about our relationships with others who are afraid and regarded as aliens. We must recognize them in our interior: in this way, we search for inner peace and are no longer silenced by the structures of power. Her approach is similar to Foucault's idea of "the technologies of the self" or what Azun Pié (2017) calls the process of distancing oneself from an imposed identity.

The problem is that there are very few models of gender which challenge the current "dual one". We need models which ease the pressure of this binary approach and will lead to a state of infinite expansion for migratory sexualities which are permeable and fluid. Corrective pedagogies have constantly insisted on normalizing the abnormal. My idea is to build models on the pillars of

understanding and tolerance and explore the experiences and imaginaries of people who are "different".

A fundamental part of my proposal is to do a rigorous and in-depth study of trainee teachers´ narratives about transgender students. It would be a guiding light not only for in-service transgender teachers but all teachers who see, in "difference", a possibility to create a healthier learning environment. It will seek to unravel what local knowledge says about transgenderism. With this, I hope to contribute to the education of ELT, so that this profession will be more inclusive and open the way for new proposals.

These new proposals should involve a three-way approach to sexual identities which rejects the dichotomous approach of modernity, on the understanding that sexualities form a polyhedral reality that can hardly be circumscribed by the orthodox dichotomous models, which have a heterosexist position, based on the patriarchal misogynist and phallus-centric system of the traditional family, in Eve Kosofsky's words:

> However, we must be wary of new models which merely copy the traditional ones, because sexuality would continue to follow the same parameters and transsexuality would be nothing more than the opposite of heterosexuality and maintain the same heterosexist matrix, (1998, p.20).

Conclusions

It is remarkable to see how all of the documents about the diploma courses for future teachers at the Universidad Distrital Francisco Jose de Caldas refer to the students in the masculine case, either in singular or plural, not other gender ones, like female and much less, transgender.

Therefore, it is evident that the statements follow heteronormative principles. The problem is clear here: if the guidelines of the program do not include other gender variables, it is understandable that teachers and the school community will be blind to the existence of other kinds of subjects.

Thus, our study concludes that research into the approach to gender variability in teacher education programs in Colombia is of vital importance. All the good intentions of the programs will be in vain if we do not consider

the difficult situation of transgender persons who are educated to be or already are teachers and their friends and the community in general. We need to consolidate the work of transgender trainee teachers and address their educational needs. This will help to make transgender students and teachers of EFL more visible and advance in their profession.

My personal experience of teaching pre-service transgender teachers has guided the main question and objectives of my research:

Research Question

"What are the learning experiences of a transgender student in an initial language teacher education program and how are those expriences undestrstood?"

General Objective

- To comprehend the personal learning experiences of a Transgender student in an initial teacher's education program.

Specific Objectives

- To identify the learning experiences of a future transgender language teacher enrolled at a language education program at a state university in Bogotá (Colombia)
- To characterize the experiences identified above.
- To interpret how the learning experiences of this transgender student have shaped her life story and social practices as a future English language teacher.

After achieving the aforementioned objectives, I will develop an educational proposal (short on-line course) based on transgender identity and experience, even though personal learning experiences belong to the individual, it is possible to extrapolate these experiences as part of a course content based the "understanding" as a pillar to foster the future transgende teachers visibility in academic scenarios. This on-line course will be available for any educator, in-service teacher or person interested in learning about transgender identities.

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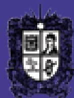
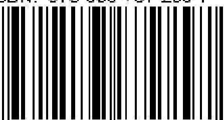


The chapters in this book describe studies that resist modernity and coloniality in the field of English as a world, foreign, additional, second language, English as a language existing in contexts where it functions as a lingua franca – or maybe not quite. They focus on the teaching-learning of English in Colombia, where it is not an official language nor it is a must for intranational communication. In this book, the PhD students (and professors) at Doctorado Interinstitucional en Educación problematize the impacts of teaching-learning English to the subjectivities of *non-native* teachers and learners of English, considering regional policies for English teacher education that seem to emulate practices from the global north without much, if any, regard to local contexts. Some of them also struggle against the centrality of research methods and quality criteria set up by the global north, refusing to abide by their rules and thus making it explicit the violence inherent in established practices in the ELT field, whose research protocols, scientific methods, norms and characteristics of academic writing hide their situatedness and project themselves as purportedly global, international quality control systems.

It is high time we started a south-south dialogue in Latin America about our praxes as teachers of English. This book is an important step in that direction.

Clarissa Menezes Jordão
Federal University of Parana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