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ELT Local Research Agendas III

Carmen Helena Guerrero-Nieto

Editor

UNIVERSIDAD DISTRITAL
FRANCISCO JOSÉ DE CALDAS

Doctorado
Interinstitucional
en Educación **DIE**

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Intellectual work requires discipline, time, investment, struggles, pain, insecurity, fear. To all the authors who overcame the difficulties of producing a text and accompany me in the writing of this book goes all my gratitude and recognition.

Contenido

Foreword

Theresa Catalano*

In 2019, I had the pleasure of being a keynote speaker for the XXV Symposium on Research in Applied Linguistics at the Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas. At the symposium, I was able to attend presentations by students of the Doctorado Interinstitucional en Educación, particularly of its English Language Teaching (ELT) major, which is based on two lines of research: Second Language Teacher Education and EFL Identity(s): Power and Inequity. I was immediately impressed by the quality of the students, their ambitious research agendas, and their penchant for critical research. As such, it is heartening to see that they are continuing the work of problematizing the field of ELT from a glocal, critical, and/or decolonial perspective in this volume, *ELT Local Research Agendas III*. Like volumes I and II, this book provides an outlet for doctoral students (and professors) in this program to display their work, model intellectual conversations among them —as well as innovative research approaches—, and inspire others to pursue related topics, approaches, and ideas. For example, in the first chapter, three professors from the program use a collaborative ethnography approach to dialogue with each other about their own work and what it has meant to them

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to take up a decolonial path in their research and teaching activities. Chapter 2 problematizes language policies, native speakerism in Colombia, and the way teachers work to find practical solutions to unfair or impractical policies, as well as to resist them in productive ways. Chapter 3 looks at the broader issue of creating more inclusive schools that recognize the diversity of Colombia's classrooms today and studies how non-Colombian traditional heritage students negotiate aspects of gender, race, class, and nationality in the context of English language classrooms. In Chapters 4 and 5, the authors examine EFL textbooks and the way problematic ideologies are incorporated as instruments of acculturation and colonialism, and lead a discussion of what it means to be critical and to have a critical identity as an English language teacher in Colombia. Finally, Chapter 6 explores the phenomenon of bilingualism in science programs in Colombia, asking crucial questions about the value of the pedagogical and epistemological bases of these kinds of content and language integrated learning, and the kind of preparation teachers need to be successful in these programs.

What all the chapters have in common —and what I find most beneficial— is that they place value on a critical stance; in this case, "critical" means to question, to challenge the way things are, to reject things as the *status quo* and, instead, to want more and strive for better. This type of reflective exercise will not only assist in improving education and research in this doctoral program but, if shared widely, can influence others to take up similar work in other countries facing some of the same issues. Being critical, in the way I have understood it from this volume, means to be aware that we do not have to accept unfair practices, such as native speakerism or similar unjust language policies, discrimination against Indigenous students, or neoliberal ideologies that fail to embed the local students´ best interests in English textbooks. It also means taking the time to commit to intellectual exercises such as this book, in which professors and students reflexively dialogue together about their own positionality and what it means to be "critical" in a field such as ELT in Colombia.

I would like to note that all the issues I mentioned above could be applied to most of the countries in which I have carried out research; Colombia is not alone in dealing with these issues. For example, in my own research I have studied how Indigenous languages of students in bilingual programs in the United States have been largely ignored, neglected, or even erased in the students´ schooling experiences. What I appreciate most about this volume is that the authors are not afraid to turn the lens inward on a context that they know best and are most equipped to make an impact through their teacher education programs and the close contact they have with local teachers in these programs. I applaud the editors and authors for continuing to take up this challenging work and for taking the time to share it

with the public. I am also confident that readers will enjoy hearing about the highly original and well-intentioned work that students and professors in this program are doing in the interest of making English language education (and education in general) in Colombia more inclusive, equitable, and just.

Presentation

Carmen Helena Guerrero-Nieto

Editor

Continuing with the conversation series on the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) Education, we started this volume, *ELT Local Research Agendas III*, with the third cohort of the major in ELT Education, of the Doctorado Interinstitucional en Educación (DIE-UD) of the Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas. This volume brings the voices of the third cohort along with the voices of their teachers. The book we present on this occasion to the academic community is the result of engaging dialogues, reflections, and discussions we have held during this cohort´s first year of studies.

The book encompasses the interest that has guided our academic work in this line of research (ELT Education), which has been approached to from a South epistemological perspective. The seminars have been nurtured with a variety of literature that span topics ranging from activist-related to those of a philosophical nature. Both our languages, Spanish and English, have been welcome in the readings as well as in the conversations held in class. The variety of topics fulfill specific purposes in each moment of the formation of doctoral students and, overall, they paint a picture of a decolonial stance that we have sought to bring to this program.

As such, in each one of the chapters the reader will find the locus of enunciation of the author/s as individuals, teachers, and researchers, which is the starting point for unfolding their research agendas. Each chapter uses a decolonial lens to explore and problematize a topic of current relevance in ELT, be it epistemicide, whiteness, or coloniality of being, among others. I am sure that the chapters in this book will enrich our efforts to continue building local epistemologies that inform the field. Finally, the ideas expressed by the authors might serve as food for thought among the academic community and hopefully make, in the long run, our profession richer and more epistemologically situated.

Chapter 1.
"Tangled up Together": Our Journey Towards Decolonial Research as an Educational Project*

Carmen Helena Guerrero-Nieto

Pilar Méndez-Rivera

Harold Castañeda-Peña

Summary

This chapter accounts for three researchers´ stories from the School of Sciences and Education of th1e Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas. Although the teachers come from three research traditions —gender studies, discourses, and practices from an archeological viewpoint, and the critical analysis of discourse—, their stories intersect along the way and engage in an alternative research and educational perspective on the field of English Teacher Education in Colombia. Their paths meet when Harold Castañeda-Peña invites Pilar Méndez-Rivera and Carmen Helena Guerrero-Nieto to join him and develop a major in English Language Teaching (ELT[1]) in the Doctorado Interinstitucional en Educación at the Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas. This chapter briefly introduces the ELT doctoral major and includes a group of short autoethnographies written by the authors.

The intersection of the stories brings together a collaborative autoethnography that shows what it has meant for the authors to undertake, as researchers

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1 ELT (English Language Teaching) is the teaching of the English language that includes not only instructing, but also educating teachers in the area.

and tutors, a decolonial path in research and doctoral education. Our learning, unlearning, and relearning processes in a new and uncertain paradigm that has implied, among other things, a series of deep epistemological reflections, aimed at building a personal and collective coherent discourse.

Introduction

The fundamental purpose of the Doctorado Interinstitucional en Educación at the Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas is to

> Contribute to the consolidation of a school of the highest educational, pedagogical, and didactic thought in the interinstitutional, national, and international spheres. This also aims to reinforce researchers' education from an individual and collective perspective within the educational and pedagogical field. These researchers are to build up the capacity to influence the sociopolitical and educational transformation of communities and regions, consolidating, at the same time, national and international groups and networks of trans/interdisciplinary research programs in educational topics. These groups are expected to integrate different universities in the country and the region. (DIE, 2017, p. 25) (own translation)

The doctoral major degree has five educational majors: the most recent, ELT Education, was created in 2016 and is aimed at English language teachers' education. This major is based on two lines of research: the first is Second Language Teacher Education and aims to prepare, qualify, and raise awareness of second language teaching professionals to understand and transform teaching practices by investigating the phenomena that impact these professionals´ initial and continued education. The second is EFL[2] Identity(s): Power and Inequity, and seeks to analyze, study, and understand the interface of English learning experiences with identity, power, and inequity in a diversity of socio-cultural contexts, both inside and outside the ELT classroom.

At a general level, the doctoral major, as part of an institutional program, offers educational research processes, as illustrated in Figure 1.

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2   EFL means "English as a foreign language".

Figure 1. Doctoral educational process
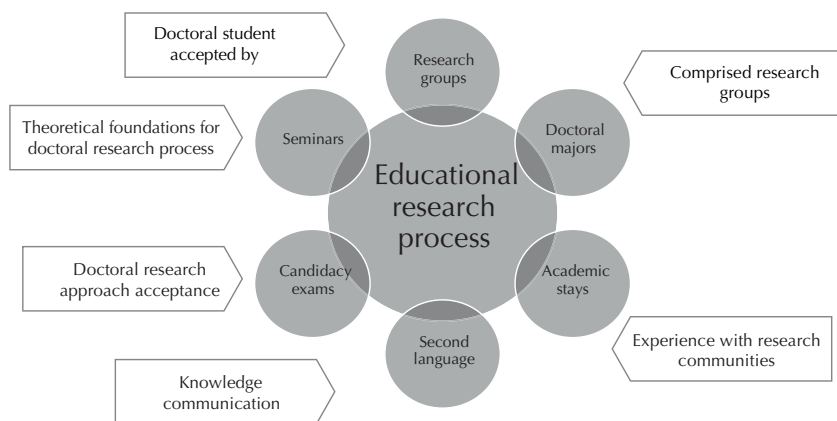
Source: DIE (2017, p. 27).

Teacher-students join a research group that supports the ELT Education major. By being part of short academic stays, students choose to have internships to become familiar with academic communities in Latin American and European countries. They present candidacy examinations based on the publication of articles and book chapters within the major's internal editorial program. They also attend other majors' seminars, which are Emphasis, Education and Pedagogy, and Research; the first two host national and international guests. To date, the ELT Education major has incorporated three cohorts in 2016, 2018, and 2020.

This formal introduction of the program is complemented with an epistemological position from the South. Such assumption allows teachers and students of the program to find fractures in the field of applied linguistics to English teaching and teachers education, despite the presence of domains in the critical perspective. Therefore, in this brief autoethnography, and as professors of the ELT Education major who were involved with the intellectual complicity of most of the students we have welcomed —and who have welcomed us—, we captured this collective experience. We want, then, to show how an academic tapestry begins to weave itself, not only from our own experiences, but also from our belonging to the new ELT Education major within the doctoral program.

My Transition from the Critical to the Decolonial Thought: A Road still under Construction (Carmen Helena Guerrero -Nieto)

One of the aspects that attracted me to the decolonial turn was the possibility it gave me to discover the researcher´s positionality. This meant establishing, from the beginning, the point from where one speaks as a researcher to set the necessary borders and understandings that are relevant to comprehend what, how, and why something is said. I want to start, then, by talking about my researcher positionality, where I come from, and where my epistemological and political positions arise.

I was born in a town in Colombia; I could say it was "a small city", but I think it would sound pretentious to say so. I do not think that many of what we call "cities" in Colombia are, in fact, cities. This fact, in my opinion, contributes to making critical aspects of our society invisible, which, from this point of view, is largely rural. I attended public schools to complete my primary and high school studies in pre-neoliberal times. This kind of education allowed me to receive quality education, regardless of my parents' economic capacity; not being able to access education due to economic problems is a reality that many people in the country must face. My pre and postgraduate university studies also took place in public schools. I received my undergraduate and master´s degrees in Colombia and my doctorate degree in the United States.

I have developed my professional career mainly in public schools. This enormous privilege makes me very happy, as it has allowed me to be where I am today and to achieve what I have built so far in professional and personal terms. This is why I believe in and defend public school education and promote it as a social setting where cognitive justice can be created (de Sousa, 2009).

I am the daughter of parents who did not finish their primary education. However, such a circumstance did not prevent them from developing knowledge independently. My mother, for example, loves to read and keep updated on several topics, and she is also a political activist in virtual and non-virtual social networks. As for my father, since his retirement he has spent his life taking photography courses or taking classes in art-related subjects. Both are a great inspiration to me because they have fueled their intellectual freedom despite the harsh economic conditions they lived in for a long time. I grew up surrounded by my maternal uncles and aunts, who had revolutionary ideas from an early age; they believed in social justice. Their actions were always consistent with those beliefs: listening to and seeing them committed to those ideals influenced my ways of seeing the world and interacting with it and in it. I think that my decision

to become a teacher was not only influenced by this environment: it has also been enriched throughout my professional career by multiple actors and events that have led me to a borderland position, that is, one that is constantly coming and going from the certainties to the uncertainties of knowledge and research in ELT education.

After presenting my positionality and placing my family background within a social justice perspective, I would like to skip my story for a moment to describe my first research project (carried out after my Master's thesis work), in which I recognize some decolonial traces. It is worth mentioning that the ELT field has been relatively colonized[3]: we can think, for example, of the varieties of the English language that we as citizens must speak and the cultural experiences that we must have. Therefore, the "must be" of field research was focused on the instruments, testing methods, techniques, and strategies to teach more and better English. Arguably, our field has been isolated from the social problems of our environment for a long time. That said, I decided, along with a very dear colleague and with whom I have developed research work, to carry out a research project in critical pedagogy. We were inspired by Paulo Freire and authors such as Henry Giroux, Michael Apple, Ira Shor, Joan Wink, and Peter McLaren, among others.

What we were looking for in this project was to see if there was any possibility to "translate" some principles of critical pedagogy into ELT pedagogy. The aim was to challenge the traditional forms of English teaching in school contexts, and, thus, delve into other possibilities of being and existing as English language teachers. The participants in the research project were students of a Bachelor's degree in basic education who were majoring in English and conducting their teaching practices in the city´s public schools. In the end, they responded to the challenge with very innovative proposals where the English language was analyzed not as the object of study, but as a tool to mediate with the world (Guerrero-Nieto, 2007) and re-signify it with their school-students.

A few years later, when I started my doctoral work, I re-encountered critical discourse analysis. By the time I went to the United States to start my doctorate studies, the implementation of what was called the National Bilingualism Program (NBP) in Colombia had begun. Thanks to my participation as teacher at a public university and as a member of the Colombian Association of Teachers of English (ASOCOPI), I had the opportunity to participate in academic discussions

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3   For the idea of ELT as a colonized field I draw, first, on Pennycook's work in the book *English and the discourses of colonialism* (1998), and later on the reflections and conversations we have held in the doctoral program, where we bring to the center of our epistemological reflexivity the fact that the field has been constituted from and by the global North (teaching practices, contents, methods, etc.).

on the subject. I decided to carry out a critical discourse analysis of one of the documents produced by the Ministry of National Education for the NBP program. Though I must confess that conducting this study was a painful process, since the chosen methodology led me to scrutinize and learn about my country's harsh realities concerning inequality, violence, linguicism, and poverty, among many other things, it also exacerbated the social sensitivities that had inhabited my skin and my conscience since I was a child.

I wanted to address three topics in my doctoral dissertation. The first was related to the meaning of "bilingualism" in the context of the NBP program. Until then, whenever bilingualism was discussed in Colombia, it meant only Spanish and any other language, whether Indigenous or modern. However, from that program on, this meaning of bilingualism was reduced to merely speaking Spanish and English, as a demonstration that English was constituted as an element of symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1991) and reified as the language of being, knowledge, and power (by that time I used similar categories, but I was not aware that I was already entering decolonial lands). The second topic I explored in my doctoral work was the place of Indigenous languages in the program and the way they were addressed in the document. Sadly, the main finding was the carelessness with which Indigenous languages and other minority languages spoken in Colombia had been treated since colonial times. Lastly, the third topic was the way teachers were represented in official discourses. The results showed that teachers were negatively constructed and were even made invisible in several instances.

My doctoral work's findings paved the way for other subsequent research studies, where I was mainly interested in several topics related to English language teachers and teaching. In these studies, me and my fellow researchers sought to establish the relationships between educational policies and teachers from a bottom-up perspective; in other words, we used a research lens that focused on teachers and bilingual policies to understand how the former appropriated, adapted, or resisted the latter.

Along this path, some authors began to inspire me. We would locate them in what is currently called the "Global South" but who are in the geographic North. One of these authors was Alastair Pennycook (1998), who has become a critical and *avant-garde* voice in the field of applied linguistics. In his book *English and the Discourses of Colonialism*, he narrates the influence he received from Walter Mignolo and Lynn Mario de Sousa after an academic stay in Brazil. This is paradoxical because, in our colonized field, it was in a talk by an Australian author that I heard about the topic of coloniality for the first time and not through Latin American theorists, who have been building the so-called "decolonial turn" for

about 30 years (the same happened to me with Freire's teachings, which came to me first in English in a doctoral course in the United States).

It was in this context of intellectual challenge where our paths crossed: Harold's, Pilar's, and mine. For me, it was the chance to find a way of understanding the world, an understanding that would allow me to name what I had already noticed in my research on the critical paradigm, something that was still in a gray area in my mind, as I had no way to put a name on it. In this transition from the critical to the decolonial I have understood that it is not enough for a researcher to have an open agenda and to explicitly take sides with those who lack the power; instead, we must go further and begin to dismantle the power relations that place us as those who know and control everything. This kind of power also places us in a role in which we are expected to offer unilateral interpretations of reality, without taking into consideration how our participants make sense of the world.

Being part of this decolonial project in the Doctorado Interinstitucional en Educación, and particularly in the ELT Education major, has posed significant epistemological challenges for us as researchers, mentors, and doctoral students. It might seem contradictory to be part of an ELT community while problematizing it, but this is precisely the value of this path. The spread of English and all matters associated to its teaching has allowed us, as English teacher-educators and as academics —body and geopolitically located in the global South— to claim ownership of a profession that is a central part of our identities and to have a say in how things are done, have been done, and could be done. This short trajectory has represented a change of skin for everyone; we learn while we do. Arguably, although this decolonial bet is still under construction, we are proud to be part of this process, mainly in what is related to ELT.

Autoethnographic Commentary: Rescuing the Teacher's Struggle, a Historical and Decolonial Lens (Pilar Méndez-Rivera)

As an educator who goes beyond ELT, thinking of myself constituted an epistemological and strategic framework to access teachers' particular history in Colombia. This is also a path to identify myself with the somewhat alien and distant struggles of teachers of English in my country. My doctoral thesis, published in the book *Sujeto maestro en Colombia, luchas y resistencias* (Méndez -Rivera, 2017), allowed me to return to past times to understand the present —a typical movement of the field of archeology (Foucault, 2005). This doctoral program made it possible to recognize a series of struggles that are currently being problematized,

making evident what it means for Colombian educators to be teachers at the level of subjectivity. This also meant the ability to comprehend the struggles and resistance that are not always victorious in raising the teaching profession's status. This program also raised a discomfort I had as I dared to leave the ELT field and move into a general one, that of education. I did not perceive the limits imposed by applied linguistics as a discipline and the English language limits; instead, it meant daring to divest myself of disciplinary forms and, instead, to learn from other disciplines and epistemes.

When I received the invitation to participate in the ELT Education major of the Doctorado Interinstitucional en Educación at the Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, I considered in my mind the idea of making my colleagues, and the field itself, feel uncomfortable. This thought emerged in my mind as I thought of the importance of teachers´ struggles and the weight of their actions throughout history as binding elements to review how English teachers think of themselves in the context of education. It was an emplacement exercise that proposed an approach to situations from the *fold* (Deleuze & Guattari, 2008) to warn about other possibilities, especially in the epistemologies of the South, which is geographically close to the field of ELT in Colombia, but epistemologically distant.

Some years later, I reviewed the dataset file[4] that was built to inquire about the impact of the bilingualism project in Colombia and the ways of seeing and thinking about the English language teacher. Revisiting the data in detail brought up a series of alienating subjection mechanisms or ways of exercising power over teachers (Foucault, 1982) that objectify/control teachers to the tenor of some language levels and structures that are easily identified in the reform discourses of English. However, even within the entrepreneur´s machinery that dominates contemporary times, English language teachers resist these logics and entrench themselves in communities and projects that raise their status as educators. This has allowed them to show that sometimes the act of resistance operates within the same system: it relies on their same tactics, but instead, these are resignified. One example of this can be traced in the ways some ELT journals opened spaces for pre-service teachers, schoolteachers, and emergent scholars to publish their reflections and research work in indexed journals. Although the publication system values citation indexes, the ways in which Colombian journals are merging publication and citations practices entail a politics of knowledge production of community recognition.

As a result, the book *English Teacher: subjetividad y enseñanza del Inglés en Colombia* (Méndez *et al*., 2020) leaves a series of fissures and cracks that help to

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4   Published in the book *English Teacher: Subjetividad y enseñanza del inglés en Colombia* (Méndez *et al*., 2020).

understand the need to investigate these modern nature struggles, as is the case of struggles within programmed identity and hierarchy in a field. Finding out about such struggles could shed light on colonial practices that have been naturalized and promoted by modernist, universalist, and liberal discourses. In short, this allowed us authors to affirm that what happens to English language educators today, whether due to their active or passive role during these struggles, demands the power of a critical-decolonial project. Harold Castañeda-Peña, Carmen Helena Guerrero-Nieto, and I, Pilar Méndez-Rivera, have committed to this project.

We think of the educational project that is carried out in the ELT Education major of the Doctorado Interinstitucional en Educación as a political project (Freire, 1993) built with others and not only for others. This allows us to revisit the discourses and practices that bother us and that we experience as teachers and students, as individuals that feel, think, suffer, laugh, cry, and enjoy. The serendipity of our conversations in class invites us to problematize knowledge as situated and embodied, both historically and geopolitically determined (Grosfoguel, 2011); this encourages us to think from our realities and experiences. In fact, appreciating what each of our doctoral students in the doctoral program brings with them is part of a heuristic work resulting from shared reflections that are subjected to criticism and humanized understanding.

From my positionality as a woman, mother, teacher, and academic, who graduated from a public university in the night shift, I have always believed in the importance and role of education in human beings. However, I am aware that educational institutions have historically had a transcendental role in neutralizing these human conditions (being a woman, mother, mestiza, black, etc.), using them to maintain the system´s constraints. This brings forward an epistemological endeavor that claims to highlight the struggles, pains, sufferings, and wounds we fight as individuals, which would mean building another subjectivity in a world of a colonizing nature. In short, the major in ELT Education seeks to make visible the forms that English language teachers have established as places to resist discourses and domination practices. I believe that as members of educational institutions, our commitment pursues this feeling and this thought.

Autoethnographic Commentary: Gender in Dispute, The Missing Piece. From Here I Continue the Journey! (Harold Castañeda-Peña)

As an academic-researcher, one of the most critical activities for me was the Gender, Language, and Identity elective course that I used to teach at the undergraduate level in a private higher education institution. In line with Harris

& Watson-Vandiver (2020), this pedagogical practice made me understand that educational environments rooted in critical discourse can provide information on how societies are gender and race-structured. It also led me to share several cohorts of a diploma course with preschool teachers who taught English through pedagogies based on artistic expression and to become the author of materials for such schooling level. In these two contexts, gender was present throughout varied discursive manifestations.

Before the publication of the book *Masculinities and Femininities Go to Preschool: Positioning Gender in Discourse* (Peña, 2009*)*, I spoke with several feminists on the topic of the epistemological trap of universal determinism and post-structural relativism (Francis, 2001). In such a theoretical conversation, I opted for understanding the concept of gender as multiplicity. LeMaster *et al.* (2019) would say that,

> To conceptualize gender as a galaxy is to consider not only the multiplicity of gender subjectivity (the hundreds of billions of galaxies/gender potentialities), but also the contextual potentiality in theorizing gender subjectivity (the billions to trillions of stars within a single galaxy/contextual gender performances and choices). (p. 353)

Based on such multiplicity, I understood how gendered identities unceasingly fluctuate in their discursive constructions based on daily interactions in the classroom (Castañeda-Peña, 2010). However, I was still questioning the practical achievement of following this line of inquiry within the field of Applied Linguistics to English language teaching and within the education and professional development of educators. Something was still missing.

Some years after the book´s publication and after giving advice to undergraduate degree projects and master´s and doctoral dissertations about gender, learning English as a foreign language, and teacher education (Castañeda-Peña, 2021), I was given the opportunity to draft a proposal of a major in ELT Education for the Doctorado Interinstitucional en Educación at the Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, with the help of José Aldemar Álvarez (Universidad del Valle) and Luis Fernando Gómez (Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, who passed away). After the approval, Pilar Méndez-Rivera and Carmen Helena Guerrero-Nieto joined the team and shared with me the same ideas that haunted my mind. I identify with Hooks (1994) when she claims that "understanding and appreciating our different locations has been a necessary framework for the building of professional and political solidarity between us, as well as for creating a space of emotional trust where intimacy and regard for one another can be nourished" (p. 132). This has been a significant learning in the epistemological path that I have traveled in my

professional life and its unstable paths. The lesson I received from the recent work with my colleagues is that "To engage in dialogue is one of the simplest ways we can begin as teachers, scholars, and critical thinkers to cross boundaries, the barriers that may or may not be erected by race, gender, class, professional standing, and a host of other differences" (Hooks, 1994, p. 130).

I believe that a part of the missing piece I was looking for was mentioned in the paragraphs above. I found myself in the framework of professional interactions where I could feel vulnerable and find therapeutic value (Ellis & Bochner, 2000) beyond teaching and research; however, these were kindly integrated into me. I had been educated in post-structuralist feminisms in which, borrowing the words of Rhedding-Jones (1997), I exposed to the gaze of others my inner thoughts, my struggles, and my tears. Yet, universal narratives still flowed through me, emerging from a heteronormative matrix. This seemed inevitable.

Nevertheless, and similar to Wiesner's (2018) experience, I have been making "a continuous effort to use reflexivity, as the main tool was therefore necessary for me to be able to trace my complicated positionality in the field" (p. 343). Following my concern for the decolonial turn and after taking a course on decolonial feminisms, I began to interact with new questions. I also started to recognize fractures in the feminist theory prevalent in the literature.

Certainly, my positionality is that of a person who cares about healthy learning environments for language students and teachers who possess non-normative sexualities and gender identities. I try to get closer to their lived experiences to understand pain and opportunities in educational contexts of language learning and teaching that have been deafened and blinded by identity deprivation mechanisms. I share with Lugones (2008) the criticism of the heterosexual male voice that dominates a share of the decolonial theories. Following Mendoza´s work (2020), I believe that it is not about such localized decolonization, but about "decolonization [being] trans" (p. 57). It is from here that my twisty journey continues!

Crossroads

Carmen Helena

Argentinian writer Julio Cortázar was once asked if he believed in magic, and he said that he did not believe in it as something that happened sporadically; instead, he thought that everything was magic and that he saw magic everywhere and all the time. Me too, as Cortázar, see my world inhabited by magic. To think that Harold, Pilar, and I come from such distant epistemological places and that we did not have the slightest chance of meeting one another, and yet, we are

here today, walking together this path that we are discovering, inventing, and reinventing together. Even though our paths cross in many ways and at various points, I can see that our shared path reside in us: an epistemological and social rebellion led us to think about the field of ELT Education from other angles and to propose other ways of being and existing as teachers of English and as researchers.

Pilar

Thinking, researching, writing, and feeling with others have a robust power to help people unlearn how to live in our centrality and understand our unique vision, limits, and biases as English language teachers. By reading what my colleagues have written, I have learned to recognize the complexity involved in thinking about ourselves together and our shared conditions as English language teachers and educators. At the same time, I have relearned the ways our differences and research interests enable us to map the paths. This is interesting for the ELT field and our own lives.

Harold

The act of crossing to "get tangled up" has allowed us to cultivate ways of meeting, getting lost, and meeting again as insubordinate subjects who try to reveal the subject and our denied, forgotten, or deprived discourses from various traditions. I think that teaching and learning English still requires a deep dive into those kinds of explorations. The exploration gives us the possibility, as in the *transitare* of the Latin language, to traverse and fracture, to go from one place to another, with an ethical sense of understanding the human subject's condition. Transiting does not go in a straight line, and the horizon is not a fixed point. Instead, it is about intersections that are continually entangled in a profuse and endless action.

Conclusions

As authors, this autoethnographic writing exercise allows us to give confidence to this research approach and use our own experiences to criticize and analyze directly the meanings acquired by the constitution of academic communities with epistemological affinities and tensions in the framework of the doctoral education of teachers of English. This exercise also repositions the pedagogical task at this level of education, not as a curricular imposition, but as a possibility of meeting to learn, both together and voluntarily, through the conjunction of epistemological reflexivity exercises. In this context, learning means unlearning

to relearn. As teachers, we have learned that research is not a monolithic, unidirectional finished practice, and the new research approach has led us, in turn, to unlearn, to leave aside the aseptic nature of research, and to relearn that our social responsibility as researchers goes beyond denouncing inequality to act and change the conditions that provoke it.

The fortunate crossing of our paths in this educational, investigative, and intellectual project has allowed us to give real meaning to the various meanings of "community", enabling us to see, read, listen to, and write to each other from our enunciative strategies. All these actions combine our convergences and divergences, in an attempt to exist decolonially as beings.

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Chapter 2.
Trajectories of Language Policies Appropriation in a Municipality of Cundinamarca

Andrea Milena Gallo-Lozano

Abstract

In the implementation process of language policies, we find a long path where agents from the macro, meso, and micro levels determine their experiences, therefore, helping or obstructing the process. These situations respond to a set of colonial mechanisms of globalization and whiteness where language policies are framed. Macro-level agents impose policies for economic reasons, forgetting the meso and micro-level agents' participation. This causes language policies to lack context and to have a strong foreign dependency, thereby neglecting other languages and local knowledges. Hence, teachers become invisible and participate in the process as technicians or even booksellers. In a municipality where most people belong to low social-economic strata, questions arise about the ways in which language policies have been appropriated by different actors of the educational system (teachers, students, publishers, parents, coordinators, principals, and administrative officers) and the ways they trace their trajectories through time.

Keywords: language policies, stakeholders, levels in language policies, implementation processes.

Roots of the Research

I am a Doctoral student at the Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas in Bogotá (Colombia). I also hold a Master's degree in Communication-Education from the same university and a Bachelor's degree in Spanish and Foreign

Languages from the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional (Colombia). I had the opportunity to conduct studies in Proficiency of English at Aptech Institute in New Delhi (India) and Leeds University (United Kingdom), and I also studied French at Sorbonne Université (France) and Val-de-Marne University in Paris, and Bilingualism at Université Sorbonne Nouvelle. I worked at Universidad Pedagógica Nacional as a French teacher for the pre-service teachers' program and as a language teacher (English and French) at Universidad La Gran Colombia and Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas.

I have taught in four public schools: one in Wakefield (England), where I worked a Spanish assistant for a year, and in three schools in Cundinamarca (Colombia) that belong to the municipality of Soacha´s Education Office (Secretaría de Educación), where I have worked as an English teacher for fifteen years. My profession, my working experience, the experience of living abroad, and the context where I live and work nowadays lead me to ask myself about how language policies have been accepted and appropriated by different stakeholders of the educational system and how they can help trace a path of English teaching in a municipality of Cundinamarca.

To start tracing those trajectories, it is necessary to understand that language policies have been designed and implemented over time in different countries to intensify economic relations or to reinforce power practices through the use of colonial procedures. However, with time, language policies have gained importance around the world from the moment UNESCO started to refer as "multilingual" to a person who uses his mother language (the national language) and, at least, one foreign language. Bearing in mind this, UNESCO asks governments "to identify the main lines of a language education system that adapts to the country, but also facilitates international communication and also preserves the inalienable linguistic and cultural legacy of all people to humanity"[5] (cited in Reyes *et al.*, 2011, p. 173). Similarly, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) believes that "because English is the most used language in economic transactions, it is a factor of competitiveness that can be decisive for starting businesses"[6] (cited in Reyes *et al.*, 2011, p.173). OCDE also recognizes that "a *lingua franca* increases cooperation and economic co-dependence, but cautions that this should not be done by undermining cultural and linguistic

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5   "[…] identificar las líneas principales de un sistema de Educación en lenguas que se adapte al país pero que también facilite la comunicación internacional y preserve igualmente el inalienable legado lingüístico y cultural de cada pueblo a la humanidad" (translated by the author).

6   "[…] estima que por ser el inglés la lengua más usada en las transacciones económicas es un factor de competitividad que puede ser determinante para iniciar negocios" (translated by the author).

diversity"[7] (cited in Reyes *et al*., 2011, p.174). On the other hand, though the European Council supports "plurilingualism", they do not agree with the idea that students should obtain a native proficiency in a foreign language because they believe it is not necessary, since the idea is that a person may be able communicate clearly in different languages. In this way, governments can intensify student mobility in Europe through social and economic collaboration, and can also avoid prejudices and discrimination (cited in Reyes *et al*., 2011, p. 174).

The international language policies promoted by international institutions such as UNESCO, OCDE and the European Council motivated the race between countries around the world to start the arduous work of creating their own language policies to become globally recognized. The macro structure is activated through institutions like the IDB (Interamerican Development Bank), the IMF (International Monetary Fund), and the OEI (Organization of Ibero American States). This is the reason many studies affirm that educational and language policies respond to economic interests. Shohamy (2009), for example, explains that "they [linguistic policies] are driven by wishes and aspirations, by political and economic aspirations" (p. 47). In the Colombian context, Guerrero & Quintero (2016) state that "Colombian educational policies do not seek in any way to benefit teachers and students, but to advance economic agendas, improve the country´s competitiveness and its location in the global market"[8] (p.14).

We cannot forget that language policies are power practices where policy makers impose their beliefs and their ideologies, reinforcing political and individual control. As Shohamy says, "It is clear by now that LP is not neutral as it represents a significant tool for political power and manipulations" (2009, p. 21). In fact, language policies incorporate ideology, ecology, and management (Spolky, 2004, cited in Shohamy, 2009), and some policy mechanisms exist "which refer to tools that serve as mediators between ideology and practice and create *de facto* policies" (Shohamy, 2009, p. 11). Examples of those mechanisms are laws, rules, regulations, language education policies, language tests, and the absence of teachers; all of them intensify the colonial mechanism that supports globalization.

Many studies from countries around the world coincide with the idea that teachers are not included in language policy planning processes, even if they, in

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7   "[…] reconoce que una lengua franca incrementa la cooperación y co-dependencia económica, pero advierte que esto no debe llevarse a cabo menoscabando la diversidad cultural y lingüística" (translated by the author).

8   "Las políticas educativas colombianas no buscan de ninguna manera beneficiar a docentes y estudiantes, sino avanzar en agendas económicas, mejorar la competitividad del país y su ubicación en el mercado global" (translated by the author).

the end, are the ones who are in charge of their implementation (Shohamy, 2009, p. 55). The teachers' expertise and their academic and pedagogical knowledge are underevaluated, as Guerrero & Quintero (2016) believe:

> In the first, about invisible teachers, it is shown how, even though Colombian teachers are professionals who graduated from a university, they are not seen as such by policy makers. Despite the fact that teachers are summoned by government agencies to inform them about the actions taken, they are not consulted about the feasibility, necessity, content, etc., of a new policy, their expertise and knowledge are not considered for such purpose[9] (p. 37)

Bearing in mind that teachers are kept aside from language policy planning, they end up becoming 'technicians' and clerks who follow rules and standards. Their local knowledge is devaluated and neglected; consequently, teachers become invisible (Guerrero-Nieto, 2010).

Furthermore, language education policies do not consider the context where they will be applied. For instance, countries like China, Japan, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Taiwan, as well as the regions of Hong Kong and Korea, implemented language policies without noticing that most of the teachers lacked the proficiency in the foreign language or even the pedagogical knowledge to teach it: "Teacher education and the English language skills of teachers in public-sector institutions are inadequate" (Nunan, 2003, p. 606). Policy makers do not pay attention to the students' reality in terms of resources and cultural, language, or geographical diversity, thereby fostering inequality between them: "Considerable inequity exists in terms of access to effective English language instruction. In China, for instance, this manifests itself in the haves versus the have-nots and city versus rural divides" (Nunan, 2003, p. 605). The same situation happens in Brazil: "Despite the fact that policies have been transformed theoretically and discursively, in practice the teacher continues to have only a 'board, saliva, and chalk' to implement these changes"[10] (Pagliarini & Assis-Peterson, 2008, cited in Montoya, 2013).

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9 "En la primera, de los maestros invisibilizados, se muestra cómo, a pesar de que los maestros colombianos son profesionales que se gradúan de una universidad, no son vistos como tales por los formuladores de políticas. A pesar de que los maestros son convocados por los organismos gubernamentales para informarles sobre las acciones tomadas, estos no son consultados sobre la viabilidad, necesidad, contenidos, etc., de una nueva política, y mucho menos son considerados su experticia y conocimiento para tal propósito" (translated by the author).

10 "[…] a pesar de que las políticas se han transformado teórica y discursivamente, en la práctica el profesor sigue contando únicamente con "tablero, saliva y tiza" para implementar esos cambios" (translated by the author).

Unfortunately, language policies come from other countries. Europe, for example, has the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which includes a description of competence levels. This framework is applied in Colombia in curriculum learning material, methodology, tests, and standards, but it is key to bear in mind that it was created in a different context, whereas in Colombia "Teachers must deal with juvenile crimes, gangs, members of guerrilla and paramilitary groups, drug dealers, young parents, displaced children, mentally challenged children, and others like this"[11] (Guerrero & Quintero, 2016, p. 55).

Under the excuse that teachers lack a high level of English and that there is a need to obtain better results with language policies, governments decide to implement native-speakerism as a strategy to implement foreign language teaching, which perpetuates foreign dependency and the colonial mechanism of whiteness as a control system, drives social classism, and affects local identity. For instance, in the Asia-Pacific Region, governments think that "Investment in elementary foreign language education may well be worth it, but only if the teachers are native or native-like speakers and well trained in the needs of younger learners" (Marinova-Todd *et al.*, 2000, cited in Nunan, 2003, p. 607).

This situation is also lived in Latin American countries like Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, and Colombia, where the idea of bringing native speakers to the country carries with it the idea of the superiority of the English language, fostering an "imperialist" model through imported teachers' training, methodologies, textbooks, material, and certifications, which, in the end, become a lucrative business for educational institutions with global reach like the British Council (Le Gal, 2018). For example, in Colombia, "the Colombian Ministry of Education declared that having native speakers of English as teachers in public education 'will be vital to achieve President Santos's target of making Colombia the most educated country in the region in 2015" (El Tiempo, January 20th 2015, in González & Llurda, 2017, p. 98). Likewise, in Mexico, "If it is necessary to bring teachers from other places to substitute them, even from countries with better educational levels, there should be no doubts" (El Universal, April 17th 2013, in González & Llurda, 2017, p. 98).

Until now we have been discussing the macro-level, which includes the role played by international organizations, government and education offices, as well the micro-level, which include the teachers and their daily struggles. However, these are not the only agents involved in the implementation of linguistic

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11 "[…] los profesores deben hacer frente a crímenes juveniles, pandillas, miembros de grupos guerrilleros y paramilitares, distribuidores de drogas, jóvenes padres, niños desplazados, niños con problemas mentales y otros por el estilo" (translated by the author).

policies. In fact, we can also find parents and students in the micro-level, and coordinators, principals, and administrative officers in the meso-level. Despite the research tendencies described above, little is known about the "other" agents involved in language policy and their roles. This issue will be addressed in the next section.

Tracing Trajectories in a Municipality of Cundinamarca

The situations described above are lived in a municipality of Cundinamarca (Colombia), where the present research took place. This municipality has undergone dramatic changes during the last 30 years in terms of social, economic, cultural, urban, and educational development due to varied reasons: the amount of people who arrive daily from other Colombian cities or even from other neighbor countries like Venezuela and Ecuador, the low levels of economic resources received by the central government, and the widespread culture of corruption in both the public and private sectors.

The municipality´s Education Office (Secretaría de Educación) oversees 23 public schools distributed in the urban area, of which only one is in the rural area. Throughout the years, educational and language policies have been applied in the municipality in accordance with national requirements, but sadly the results have not always been adequate due to various aspects.

As is the case of the country, language policies in the municipality have been applied according to Kaplan's top-down model. In this model, language policies are created by the Government and the Ministry of Education at the macro-level, which are later interpreted and implemented by the local Education offices, principals, and coordinators at the meso-level, and, finally, implemented and appropriated by school teachers, students, and parents. During this process, many failures occur which are probably invisible in current literature on the historicity of English Language Teaching. Therefore, I will analyze the information that I found on language policies and the situations lived by the municipality in its process of language policy appropriation.

In the first place, language policies have a lack of continuity in Colombia. In fact, there is no visible difference between the National Bilingualism Program (NBP), the Colombia Very Well program (CVW) and the Colombia Bilingue program (CB): "There are no clear distinctions between the NBP, CVW, and CB either" (Bonilla & Tejada, 2016, p. 11). Apparently, some years ago the municipality started a process whose attention was focused on English teaching: teachers received training and took exams without a clear view about the programs and their objectives. In fact, some teachers state that many programs and activities were started, but they did not finish them or were cancelled. It seems that those

activities and programs were improvised or were only a set of tasks to be accomplished by administrative officers of the Education Office. In a general review of language policies in Colombia we found that "the constant changes have affected the continuity, consistency, and articulation of the strategies, resulting in a slow work pace and a feeling of low-achievement and frustration" (Gómez, 2017, p. 148). Unfortunately, the documents supporting such programs and activities in the municipality are not known by teachers, which means there is a lack of administrative information on the subject.

With the start of an active English teaching field in the country, all stakeholders who take part in language policy implementation (macro, meso, and micro levels) started to talk about bilingualism without knowing exactly what it meant. In the municipality, the term "bilingualism" came to mean the "intensification of English teaching" rather than having the skills to talk in two different languages and to use both correctly in different places and situations; teachers were, for example, asked to create a bilingual project to celebrate an English Day in which the English language was imposed and took a privileged position over other languages or topics. In fact, today most people in Colombia associate the term "bilingualism" with the use of English only in the classroom (Gómez, 2017, p. 149; Le Gal, 2018).

With the bilingualism project, teachers were asked to implement the curriculum based on documents like the Basic Standards of Competences in Foreign Languages, the Learning Basic Rights on English, and the Common European Framework. However, research has found that these language policies are uncontextualized to the Colombian reality: "[…] language policies originate from policy makers whose decisions about policies are driven by ideologies, politics, economics, all important dimensions, but they lack a sense of reality" (Shohamy, 2009, p. 46). The same situation happens in different countries: "In Mexico, the same thing happens with respect to the teaching of English as with Indigenous languages, language policy is more symbolic than substantive"[12] (Terborg & García, 2006, cited in Reyes et al., 2012, p. 186). For instance, someone who wants to work as an English teacher in the Colombian municipality needs to be aware that school groups are composed by 45 or even 55 students who come from low or very low socio-economic strata and that their families, with low academic backgrounds, come from other Colombian cities after facing violence issues and displacement, making English the last thing that they want to learn.

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12 "En México, respecto de la enseñanza del inglés sucede lo mismo que con las lenguas indígenas, la política lingüística es más simbólica que sustantiva" (translated by the author).

Despite this, the municipality teachers try most of the time to find solutions and ways to resist language policies in a positive way. Teachers are creative, active agents who negotiate with external pressures and can enact policies in creative ways (Cruz, 2018). These teachers try to contextualize their pedagogical practices by creating new material and promoting activities that showcase their expertise and social sensitivity. Unfortunately, most of them fail to keep a written account of their experiences; if they do, the information stays with them and is not shared with other teachers, which causes teachers and their experiences to stay in the shadow. There is the case, for example, of a bilingual public-school program created by a math teacher. This experience was excellent because the students were able to obtain high levels of proficiency in English; regrettably, the program received no help from the administrative officers and the program was forced to finish. It would be significant to explore in the near future this invisible and local knowledge on English Language Teaching and give it the voice it deserves.

According to Cruz (2018), the Colombian rural sector has been historically neglected and has been characterzed by poor education, a deficient health system, economic marginalization, lack of work and study opportunities, lack of public funding, and government misrecognition. Therefore, policy makers have little awareness of the challenges faced by the rural context. In the municipality, language students and teachers feel they have been forgotten, which is why teachers work hard to adapt language policies creatively to their students´ learning processes.

Secondly, considering that different agents take part in language policy implementation, we must go from language policy analysis to agents' analysis. Whereas in the first section I discussed the macro-level agents, in this section I will refer to the meso-level and micro-level agents. It is important to emphasize that all agents are important and that all of them have distinct functions to guarantee the process´ success. Among the meso-level agents we find administrative officers, principals, and coordinators; sadly, there is little information in the available literature about their role in language policy implementation. These agents are in charge of managing the economic, social, and educational resources, as well as facilitating the communication process along the way to improve the implementation of language policies. However, it is important to recognize that

> […] part of the success of the PBB implementation depends not only on the decisions and actions of the SED and the managers, but also on the effort, interest, support and work of all members of the community in order to understand, assume and commit to the reasons and purposes that justify the

implementation of pilot projects of bilingualism or intensification of English[13] (Bermúdez *et al.*, 2014, p.158).

Sadly, this recommendation is difficult to implement because many times those agents have limited hope on the projects or assume that they are temporary. They may also lack the knowledge to conduct the implementation process, or even to propose the projects based on their personal interests (Bermúdez *et al.*, 2014). In the municipality it is difficult to determine how these agents are implementing the language policies and the ways these have been appropriated because, as of today, there is no information about those processes.

Thirdly and lastly, in the micro-level agents we can find teachers, parents, and students. Since I have already described the struggles faced by teachers in language policy implementation, I will expand the discussion to include students because they are, ultimately, the reason behind the English Language Teaching profession and, of course, language policies. As Montoya (2013) explains, "Policies and institutional planning end up influencing the attitudes that students express towards languages"[14] (Ndlangamandla, 2010, cited in Montoya, 2013, p. 244). This is why it is important to explore how language policies have impacted students' lives, because, in the end, they determine the students' attitudes towards their native language and the foreign languages they are learning. Unfortunately, once again, there is a lack of information on the impact of language policies in students' lives.

As for the parents´ participation, I believe it is essential to understand how they help in language policy implementation. They can shape the path through their attitudes and ideologies and, therefore, help students and teachers achieve their objectives in foreign language learning and teaching. Regrettably, the parents' role on language policy planning is non-existent, at least in Colombia; their participation is claimed by the teachers but, sadly, they lack the knowledge to take part in it (Flaborea *et al.*, 2013). Nowadays, it is difficult to identify parents' participation in the municipality and the way they have appropriated language policies due to a lack of information on the subject.

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13 "Es de vital importancia reconocer que parte del éxito de la implementación del PBB depende no sólo de las decisiones y acciones de la SED y de los directivos, sino también del esfuerzo, el interés, el apoyo y el trabajo de todos los miembros de la comunidad educativa por entender, asumir y comprometerse con las razones y los propósitos que justifican la implementación de proyectos piloto de bilingüismo o intensificación del inglés" (translated by the author).

14 "Las políticas y la planeación institucional terminan incidiendo en las actitudes que los estudiantes expresan hacia las lenguas" (translated by the author).

All these situations respond to the colonial mechanism of globalization and whiteness. Since English language is imposed for business matters around the world, it is seen as more important than the native language, and governments, in their quest to become globally recognized and improve the country´s economy, assign a higher importance to the English language and the imported teaching materials and methodologies, thereby neglecting local knowledge and language and forcing teachers to implement language policies without the proper context and needed resources; in short, fostering imperialism. Although UNESCO's objective is to facilitate international communication between countries without harming cultural and linguistic heritages, sadly countries are abandoning their local diversity to comply with foreign economical guidelines, which denies micro-level agents' participation and makes them invisible in the process.

Teachers in the municipality of Cundinamarca are forced to follow language policies to respond to economic agendas imposed by the Education Office without the required monetary resources, pedagogical and technological material, and teacher training. Unfortunately, this situation is present not only in the municipality, but in different cities and municipalities in the country. Few literature has been found on the experiences of stakeholders in language policy implementation in Colombia, the ways they are impacted by language policies, and the actions they have carried out in their implementation within a specific context.

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Chapter 3.
The Negotiation of Heritage and Masculinity in the EFL Classroom: The Case of an Ecuadorian Boy

Catherine Benavides-Buitrago

Abstract

A more visible cultural diversity is apparent in Colombia today as many children from different heritages have arrived at Colombian schools in the past years. However, most of the time they are asked to act and behave in accordance with the school's prevailing monoculture. This is an example of contemporary epistemicide, as not only their culture, but also their identities, are being exterminated, and are also being asked to follow a pre-established opposite-binary concept of what it means to be a man or a woman; in other words, their heritage, beliefs, and customs are being erased to train them as controlled subjects. Therefore, it is imperative to explore the way in which all children are included in the school community, since cultural diversity is valuable in the school context.

Keywords: interculturality, critical interculturality, intersectionality, EFL classroom, social identities.

My Locus of Enunciation

I am an English language teacher who graduated in 2008 from the program in Spanish and English Teaching of the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional. My thesis topic was the use of topics of the students´ context to develop communicative skills; these topics included working with cartoon or movie characters, for instance. During this time, I learned the importance of working with students' daily life situations, which helped me very much when doing my Master´s degree in Applied Linguistics to TEFL at Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas,

which I began in 2014. There I reinforced my ideas about creating lessons based on students' contexts, but during my Master´s I discovered the importance of including social issues when creating lessons for students.

That was the moment when I started paying attention to what was happening around me and my students, who studied in a public school. At that time, I decided to work with social identities and gender issues because I realized the richness of my students' discourses when talking about current situations of their daily lives. When they brought to the classroom the experiences from their personal contexts or their relatives´, they felt confident when giving their opinions, claiming their rights to be who they wanted to be, and going against preestablished stereotypes in respectful ways.

After finishing the graduate program, I continued reflecting on the way in which the knowledge and experience gained in my studies in public universities, where the decolonial ingredient was always present, could continue growing and impacting students' lives. My parents could not finish their middle school because of economic problems and, therefore, had to start working at an early age to support themselves. The education opportunities I have had in life have led me to think from a decolonial perspective and to look for a way in which I can show my students that the best way to resist Eurocentric practices is by changing ways of acting that lead us to segregate and reject other people.

The following section describes a very touching experience that I lived in August 2019, and which made me realize that there is still a need in schools to allow students to have their voices heard and shared, not only in the English language classroom, but also in the community.

A Departing Landscape

A male sixth grader arrived at the classroom wearing his hair down and a cap. I asked him for the reason (because wearing a cap is not allowed at school due to disciplinary policy) and he replied that he was losing some hair. However, next class he was still wearing a cap and I asked him again for the reason, and he said he had brought a written excuse by his mother, which I read, but it stated only that her son was letting his hair grow. So, I sent him to ask the discipline head for a behavior monitoring card that granted him permission to enter the classroom, as I realized he had given me a different reason before. Some minutes later, he arrived crying and told me that the discipline head had not given him the card, so I decided to talk to him and ask for the real reason behind his hair longer than usual. This time he said that he wanted to keep his hair long because it is characteristic of his male Ecuadorian ancestors and relatives.

After living this experience with the Ecuadorian boy, I realized that sometimes we do not pay attention to the students who come from diverse cultural backgrounds. Most of the time, children at schools are seen as equal in terms not only of learning processes, but also on their backgrounds, but as teachers we fail to realize that their customs are different. The school´s institutional documents have no mention on their diversity and differences because the same rules are set for all students. That was when I thought about exploring the literature on interculturality, critical interculturality, and intersectionality to see what has been problematized in these fields.

Interculturality, Critical Interculturality and Intersectionality

In relation to the concept of interculturality, Saka & Asma (2020) developed a scale for examining intercultural awareness in their ELT students because they did not find one in their research to conduct their research. Ruiz (2011) identified the need to work with interculturality in his institution, as cultural diversity was not exploited enough; he stated that some students and teachers at his place of work were not interested in working on intercultural topics. Putman (2017) sustains that the school curriculum supports whiteness and, also, that some of those white privileges are not named or acknowledged at school. Sierra *et al.* (2010) identified a clear example of colonialism in a school in the municipality of Cristianía (department of Antioquia, Colombia), where children from the Karmata Rúa indigenous community were forced to learn Spanish as an imposition of the school´s mainstream curriculum; they saw the importance of changing the school curriculum and of taking into account the necessities and realities of the community, instead of strictly following the traditional curriculum established by government policies. Tajeddin & Ghaffaryan (2020) problematized the fact that teachers' intercultural identities are considered; sometimes, English Language Teaching is seen as a means through which American culture is being imposed and shown to students as the model to follow.

In terms of critical interculturality, Bernardes *et al.* (2019) found out that some institutions tend to tell their students that they include this approach in their curriculum to gain status in the field, when this is really not true; they also state that some pre-service teachers' intercultural practices are not followed-up in the long term to visualize their effects or continuity in the classrooms. Márquez-Lepe & García-Cano (2014) chose three preschool and primary schools in the autonomous community of Andalucía (Spain) and found that the studies they consulted did not include school practices and intercultural topics at the same time; these are seen as separate elements. Gómez (2015) states that learners are

seen as passive receivers and that critical interculturality is seen only as a way to distinguish different nations because it is taught from a superficial level. Hazaea (2020) argues that there is a lack of intercultural skills in EFL textbooks, which makes it difficult for teachers to find a balance between what is presented in the books and the local cultural context. Finally, Moya *et al*. (2018) criticize the fact that sometimes culture is not taught from a deep level and, therefore, is not promoting interculturality in an adequate way.

The former literature made me realize that some authors had once had the same questions that I have today in terms of the inclusion of interculturality and critical interculturality in the English language syllabus. Some of these scholars discuss the need to change the curriculum because it is monocultural, involves a preference for whitening processes, and lacks teachers' intercultural identities; sometimes the intercultural aspect is included in the syllabus, and also in some textbooks, but it is not addressed in the lessons because it does not fit in the students' contexts and needs. However, I also realized that some of these scholars still hold some colonial ideas that can be counterproductive for students in their learning processes. The idea of following measurement systems to evaluate and balance the students' intercultural awareness and competences against the idea of telling teachers that they should teach culture from the ground and not from the surface, show that we still believe in binary concepts that indicate an opposition between what is right and wrong in ELT education. It is important to change these Eurocentric practices with the creation of a classroom-sourced cultural knowledge.

Finally, in terms of intersectionality, Wun (2018) problematizes that harsh school discipline policies were only applied to girls of color, even when white girls committed the same faults. Ocampo & Soodjinda (2016) affirm that there are not enough studies related to students' educational lives and state that, in their study, Asian American gay students suffered from bullying while being in high school; worse, they described experiences in which teachers remained passive when noticing this kind of behavior. Simpson *et al*. (2007) interviewed a group of students from rural areas of Indiana (United States) and found that most of the time there is a lack of opportunities to talk about race in the classroom because students and teachers refrain from doing so. Similarly, Showunmi (2020) conducted research among Black minority ethnic (BME) women in a London college who claimed that they were physically, morally, and spiritually stigmatized by the dominant culture and were not taken seriously on their leadership roles. Juan *et al*. (2016) claim that research based on intersectionality, including aspects such as race/ethnicity and gender, is scarce, and claim it is important to study students' individual experiences related to intersectionality. Finally, Cheon

et al. (2020) suggest it would be interesting to have studies that analyze American identity alongside other aspects such as gender, ethnicity/race and social status.

All previous studies state the need to conduct research based on students' life experiences with mistreating during school life. Sometimes children from minority backgrounds must face difficult situations, such as being more punished than their white classmates. Besides, some teachers and classmates normalize bullying situations because of their origin, gender, or race, while rejecting to discuss these topics in classroom. When institutions avoid discussing these issues, they allow students to become passive receivers of information, preventing them from reflecting on what happens around them. This is a clear example of coloniality of power (Quijano, 2014), since schools are trying to hide and avoid discussion about issues that can affect their students' academic and social life.

Teachers should also try to include these issues in the classroom because, though controversial, they can be valuable when letting students express their own ideas freely. Lawrence & Nagashima (2020) suggest that intersectional studies should also be carried out with teachers, because their cultural background may help them create lessons in which social identities may be explored; therefore, by including diversity, the lessons would be more meaningful for students. Teachers' identities can also be affected when experiencing rejection; this usually happens with language teachers who are not native speakers, whose knowledge is not seen as valuable. Ramjattan (2019) shows how some university students complained because they were expecting a native English speaker teacher when taking a language course. This demonstrates the existence of an imposition of Eurocentric knowledge that tends to erase valuable local knowledge. Estrada & Castro (2016) demonstrate how race and gender have been socially and culturally constructed, and how these imaginaries have affected teachers' pedagogical practices. Also, as Francis & le Roux (2011) sustain, there is a need to work on teachers' identities and their impact on social justice at school.

This literature review found that research on the concepts of interculturality, critical interculturality and intersectionality does not often include studies based on students' school life experiences from a non-Colombian traditional heritage. The available literature on the intersection of gender, race, and class in the Colombian school context is scarce. In the next section I will return to the example of the Ecuadorian student who had to negotiate his heritage and masculinity in the school culture, but first I will introduce the context of the study.

An Inspirational Context

The research context is a public school located in the Kennedy locality of Bogotá, one of the biggest of the capital. This school was built in the same place where

US President John Fitzgerald Kennedy laid the first stone of the "Ciudad Techo" housing project when he visited Bogotá in 1961. This stone represents the place where a school, carrying his name, would be constructed later.

The work at school took off informaly in 1963, but in 1977 the school became a basic educational unit (*unidad básica*), meaning they received students from first to ninth grade only. In the beginning the school was named "Simón Bolívar School", but to continue with the nomination of basic unit, the name was changed to "John F. Kennedy Basic Unit". In 2002, pre-school, middle, and high school levels were implemented, and its name was changed to "Colegio John F. Kennedy IED", which keeps today. The school has currently six pre-school groups, fifteen primary groups, and twenty groups ranging from middle to high school (9th to 11th grade).

According to the current demographic information at school, there are a total of 2730 students in both shifts (morning and afternoon), of which 1418 are identified as men and 1313 as women. There are 455 (16%) students who belong to non-Colombian traditional heritage communities distributed as follows: 356 (13%) come from other countries and 99 (3%) come from ethnic groups.

In terms of current foreign language skills, students' English level is low. Although there is an English teacher in primary school, many of the students move to another school when they finish fifth grade. This situation makes it difficult for the school to keep its English level high, as it has been proven that most of the students who come from other schools lacked the opportunity of having English language teachers who studied English at a professional level, while others did not even have had English classes before. In informal talks with students from Venezuela, they said that some schools in their native country do not teach English, as it is thought it represents the dominance of Northern countries over Southern countries.

The John F. Kennedy IED School's curriculum states that English language is taught three hours a week. In 2018 it was decided that students from 10th and 11th grades should choose a specialization (*énfasis*) before graduation (Sports, English communication, or Science and technology); nowadays, some students are choosing the emphasis on English communication. Although this may have increased the possibilities for students to raise their results in state exams (Pruebas Saber) at the end of 11th grade, there is no proof of this yet as this emphasis follows a grammar-based structure which is seen as an extension of the regular English classes.

Problematizing Meaningful Aspects

After the situation with the Ecuadorian boy, I thought it imperative to review the institutional sources to look for bases to support his position at school as a boy and as a non-Colombian traditional heritage member. The Institutional Educational Project (PEI), the School's Rules Handbook and the English Language Curriculum were also analyzed.

Firstly, the PEI shows that the school considers the community needs: human quality, leadership, and sense of belonging. It also mentions that its nature is participatory and flexible, which makes it a project in permanent construction, and an integral training of students is presented as a means to carry each administrative, political, and academic action to the fundamental interest of the school.

Surprisingly, this project does not include the 16% (455 students) of the population who belong to other origins, as mentioned above. It is not a secret that children from various parts of the world are coming to Colombian classrooms, so institutions should pay attention to their needs and take measures to include them in institutional statements instead of making them invisible. These children should not feel forced to act and live in the way the majority do, because their cultural background matters and it should become a crucial element in the classroom and community. Since the PEI is permanently changing, it could well include an intersectional view to allow more participation from the community and promote its inclusion. Although the student body is represented as a group of equal subjects who lack race, gender, and nationality, as of today the project presents an exclusion procedure (Foucault, 1970), because diversity is not being considered.

Secondly, the School's Rules handbook, which includes the institution´s general rules, was examined. The section on the school uniform states the importance of wearing it as a way of representing an identity, something that would demand dignity and modesty from students and also distinguish them from those at other institutions. It also mentions that, while wearing the uniform, students should behave in and outside the school in a way that demonstrates the education received at school and at home; in the end, there is a paragraph mentioning that using caps in school is forbidden. As in other similar institutions, the uniform is a control system where any divergence from the rule is seen as unvalid: all the school´s students should behave in the same way and follow preestablished rules; therefore, students are seen as controllable subjects.

The document also contains a description of the uniform which includes distinct specifications of what boys and girls should wear (apart from the uniform for Sports class). The school uniforms are described on the basis of the traditional

binary concept of boys/girls, without bearing in mind that other genders exist and that everyone should be included in the decision on what to wear in school. According to Lugones (2008), gender and sex are also constitutive elements when talking about colonial power; heterosexuality, for example, has been historically used as a tool of domination, with women and men being shown as binary/opposite and their social roles changing in line with western models. The handbook also states no rule forbidding the use of long hair among boys, which invalidates the punishment on the student. This is the kind of situation that makes coloniality prevail in schools. We as teachers continue thinking that our students need to learn that rules were established just to be followed, not criticized. This could represent, following Foucault (1970), an internal procedure, because it works as a control on students' behavior. Although the School´s Rule Handbook mentions no rule on long hair among boys, those who represent the school´s authority created a rule to be followed and believed in.

Thirdly, the English language curriculum, whose main purpose is to develop students' communicative skills on the English language, was also reviewed. According to the document, the development of said skills will enable students to feel closer to other cultures and ways of thinking, to extend their capacity to integrate knowledge, understand global reality and perceive its importance in the Colombian context. The document also mentions the importance of developing communicative and linguistic competences in English speaking and writing, which will prepare them for the immersion in English language contexts as well as new cultural dynamics. Related policies such as the Curricular Standards in Foreign Languages, which include topics like linguistic, pragmatic, and socio-linguistic competences, are also mentioned. These policies consider Spanish as the students´ native language and English as their second language, which is problematic when we realize there are students from Indigenous communities who have their own language and that there are children who have never been taught English at school or home.

The curriculum states the importance of including different cultures in the classroom, but the only one considered is the North American. The important thing in the English class, according to the document, is to include the Northern cultures, the ones that represent countries whose people speak the target language, as it is the culture that represents the dominant group (colonizers' culture). The document states that the aspects to reinforce in students who learn English are those related to their language competences and to the goal of achieving high English levels within the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and the National Standards (in this last one, grammar is still the most important aspect). Assessment is linked to two distinct aspects: the CEFR (because it follows

the framework´s language classification levels) and the 21st century skills, which were presented for the first time in the United States and state the need to leave contents aside and master the necessary skills to succeed. Both evaluation methods come from other countries, showing that they were imposed for political and economic interests and, hence, fail to reflect the country´s real context for the learning of a foreign language.

Mignolo (2008) refers to the coloniality of knowledge as the imposition of Eurocentric thinking, directed to the extermination of indigenous epistemologies and practices. This situation also demonstrates that most of the time people think that what comes from Northern countries is better than what we already have or produce in Southern countries. The fact that national policies in these last countries state that we must be evaluated by international organizations demonstrates that we are permeated by a colonial way of thinking which makes us believe that our institutions are not able to produce English language quality tests. What is more, they make us believe that we need to be evaluated to demonstrate our knowledge of the foreign language because we are not native speakers.

The institutional documents mentioned before show a monolithic view of reality and fail to grasp the diversity found in the school´s population. According to the school´s demographic information, 16% of the students (455) belong to diverse racial and ethnographic groups, which means there is a need to work with a different perspective and to include students from different backgrounds; this openness to diversity should be present not only in institutional documents, but also in the lessons. The documents may use the word "diversity" frequently, but they are only written paper because, in fact, the lessons fail to address the goal of including students of non-Colombian traditional heritage, other genders, and other social classes.

According to Quijano (2014), racial/ethnic classification has to do with the idea of defining ourselves as inferior when comparing to the European economic and knowledge standards, and that this is the main characteristic of the coloniality of power. The English language was chosen as the international language to be taught in Colombian schools, without considering the existence of a mother language, which most of the times is not even Spanish. The Ecuadorian student and many others from Indigenous cultures are not being considered as relevant subjects in the teaching of a foreign language because what matters is to impose a language that brings more advantages in a globalized world. In conclusion, the three institutional documents analyzed specify only one native language (Spanish) and only one identity (Colombian) when stating the rules for the student body as a whole.

Overall, in Colombia there is still a tendency to normalize colonial practices of extermination. Considering that none of the documents mention children from other cultures, they become symbols that institutions use to generalize and eradicate diversity. When we as teachers reinforce what is said in these documents, we act in a colonial way, as we contribute to the elimination of other identities by making them inexistent; in other words, we fail to integrate other identities, races, gender, and social classes, be they from the same country or from other countries, which are not considered normative by colonial thinking.

This tendency toward discrimination is also evident in situations among students in which they attack each other, verbally or physically, to segregate classmates who are classified as marginal. In some of the research studies mentioned above, various authors (Ocampo & Soodjinda, 2016; Ruiz, 2011; Sierra *et al.*, 2010) claim that some teachers prefer to refrain from talking about minorities in the classrooms, while others prefer to limit themselves to the curriculum and others, finally, remain passive when witnessing this kind of behaviors. When institutional documents, teachers, and students practice a monocultural discourse, they promote discrimination, which, in a way, is also promoting various kinds of coloniality. For instance, Maldonado-Torres (2007) mentions the coloniality of being, which is related to the way in which human beings were exterminated in the past for not being white: they were considered as slaves with no religion, language, education, or culture, and, therefore, were seen as inferior and mistreated. The human being is disembodied to create a subject that consumes knowledge, and thus, becomes a follower of Eurocentric practices who is stripped of everything that made him or her a diverse being. The result, unfortunately, is a subject who does not fight back these practices because they become common, normal, and acceptable, and who believes that rejection and vulnerability based on his/her condition (gender, race, social class, etc.) is justified.

Seeing students mistreating other classmates due to race or gender made me think that we know very little about the learning experiences of students in Colombia that belong to non-Colombian traditional heritage. Some scholars (Juan *et al.*, 2016; Ocampo & Soodjinda, 2016; Showunmi, 2020; Simpson *et al.*, 2007; Wun, 2018) mention that we need to pay attention to students' lives and identities, to listen to what they have to say in terms of what they are forced to suffer because of being considered as part of minorities. It is also important to consider the situations these students must face daily when learning a foreign language that they barely know about, but which is included in the Colombian school curriculum as a mandatory subject. We must pay special attention to students from Indigenous communities, as they already struggle learning Spanish, and even more with a foreign language they do not see as useful.

In addition, we need to consider that teenagers and pre-teens are a very vulnerable population because of the different problems that can disturb their personal lives and school performance. We know that these students' feelings can be affected very easily, and that discrimination can lead them to undesirable situations. After reviewing intersectional studies and the school´s institutional documents (which demonstrate a lack of inclusion of the current population´s characteristics), I can say that students' learning experiences are invisible in the literature related to intersectionality. Aspects such as gender, race, socio-economic strata, origin, and nationality, among other, are not being considered in these sources, and their relation to the students' own experiences in learning English in Colombia are also inexistant.

What to Focus on

At the beginning of this chapter some research studies on interculturality and critical interculturality were discussed, which allowed me to focus on other related elements. For instance, I found that intersectionality could become the main characteristic of my research, as it considers aspects such as gender, social strata, and nationality, apart from race; these aspects can be grouped together to analyze what happens in the English classroom in terms of diversity.

The addressed studies allowed me to identify the gaps in the literature, especially in the Colombian context. Some studies are based on aspects such as gender or race, but there are few studies that include both in a single research project. Furthermore, there are a few studies that discuss intersectionality in school settings, but very few of these studies discuss students' identities and experiences related to intersectionality.

Conclusions

Bearing in mind the input gathered from the institutional documents, the episode of the Ecuadorian boy and the scholarly research identified in the literature review, it is imperative to start changing colonial practices in English teaching in Colombia. To do this, I recommend the following research questions and objectives for future study in this area:

- Which learning experiences are constructed by non-Colombian traditional heritage students in the EFL classroom?
- How do non-Colombian traditional heritage students negotiate aspects of gender, race, class, and nationality in the EFL classroom?

Objectives:

- To identify the learning experiences that students from non-Colombian traditional heritage have in an EFL classroom from an intersectional perspective.

- To describe from an intersectional perspective the English learning experiences of non-Colombian traditional heritage students.

- To analyze the relationship between non-Colombian traditional heritage students´ experiences and foreign language learning.

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Chapter 4.
Author Ideologies and Textbook Creation: An Autoethnographic Study

Jeisson Méndez-Lara

Abstract

This chapter inquiries into the author as a subject as a means to study the ideologies behind textbook creation and the struggles faced when designing textbooks. My study aims to unveil the coloniality present during the process of creating, developing, and adapting material, which is still used as a core resource for language learning and teaching in the Colombian context by authors and editors, who play the leading role in the process. The chapter has three sections: the first section is autobiographical and includes my positionality statement; the second describes my research interest on a general level; and the third section addresses the salient elements of the research focus of my research interest. This helps me to root my interest in setting out the author within the textbook creation process.

Keywords: Colombia, contemporary authors, English language textbooks, coloniality.

Biographical Statement

My experience as an English teacher has guided me in discovering methods to improve my craft as a teacher and the role that research plays towards that end. When I did my Master´s degree at Universidad Externado de Colombia, I took part with some peers in research studies. I was able to collaborate there with pre-service teachers at the School of Education, which helped me to see the need to bring research back to the classroom and lead teachers towards a better understanding of EFL education.

Over the past twelve years, my journey towards this goal has been circuitous at best. It has carried me through different language institutions and universities where I have had the chance to improve my teaching; however, there is still more to be done to enhance the field of EFL education. Along the way in my quest for self-improvement in the field, I have observed how the English language has been taught with the guide of well-known language textbooks, but without acknowledging the prominent levels of superficial cultural components included in their contents, which are displayed to teach English as an instrument of a dominant cultural power. Textbooks carry with them ideologies about the language and the people who speak it (and even about those who do not). In a way, the pre-service teacher favors socio-cultural resources that facilitate not only linguistic interaction, but also cultural exchanges, with a standardized, homogenized, and decontextualized view of the world, in whose production authors and editors at international publishing houses play a key role.

Research Problem

English as a second language is a subject that has been taught in Colombia for many years. As such, it has been affected by economic, cultural, and political factors, as national policies have been influenced by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the Colombian Ministry of Education, to fit the country into the process of globalization, which has indeed affected language teaching in the country. Following Bhabha (1994), I can see how the free market forces of competition are imposed; in this case, with the adoption of mandatory English textbooks, which may fail to meet completely the students' needs or interests. The cosmopolitanism prevalent in society, where relative prosperity and privilege have ushered ideas of progress, has portrayed the role of EFL education as a global development language system for worldwide communication. Therefore, we can say that English language textbooks are linked to state-controlled economies and politics in which bureaucracy, inefficiency, and nepotism exist. Language teachers and students relate daily to cultural differences, social discrimination, inclusion, exclusion, dignity, respect, and repudiation. (Bhabha, 1994. p. 23), but language teachers face a dynamic of power in the classroom that is imposed by textbooks.

Historically, a country´s desire to become bilingual has led to the emergence of colonial practices in the classroom. However, the fact is that local knowledge and expertise in the teaching of a foreign language have not been considered by governments in national bilingualism policies and, instead, have preferred the implementation of a Northern view of how English should be taught and learned in educational contexts, along with the materials, tests, and methods that should

be used. In the end, the EFL teacher has become a consumer of knowledge rather than a producer.

The former context is a framework to explore the authors of EFL material in Colombia, their struggles, and strengths in the field of English teaching and learning. Soto-Molina & Méndez (2020) show that EFL textbooks contents deal with prominent levels of alienation burden, superficial cultural components, and instrumentation by the submissive person, favoring the dominant culture of English and offering no possibilities to embrace interculturality in EFL teaching contexts. In this way, textbook authors impose a great deal of authority over lessons and constrain teachers in terms of syllabus selection, teaching methodologies, and other pedagogical decision-making processes which, in turn, marginalize teachers. Students implicitly accept the power enclosed in textbooks because they lack the knowledge and experience to judge them. These textbooks are not challenged in the academic context and are considered as authorities because they are reliable, valid, and written by experts and published by recognized international publishing houses. Therefore, the cultural content is taken at face value and often unjustifiably considered as correct, or even as the only possible interpretation of a foreign language. As Álvarez (2008) states, "It is common to see text publishing conglomerates offering teacher-proof training programs, promoting the traditional one-size-fits-all methodological model, and commercializing educational materials like textbooks and software" (p. 7). In other words, what comes from international publishing houses is seen as a better option than the material and ideas on language teaching based on local teachers´ experience and knowledge.

According to Usma (2009), the Ministerio de Educación Nacional (Colombian Ministry of Education [MEN]) uses a top-down approach to delegate policies, and even though teachers are called upon to participate in policy creation, their voices are silenced and substituted by foreign views of education. Usma also mentions that the MEN uses mostly the names of teachers and institutions only to validate and provide support to choose the tendency on methods or approaches, meaning they accept what should be taught in Colombian classrooms before discussions on the matter are held. A study conducted by Quintero (2011) traced reports on teaching research conducted in Colombia and found that before 1990, the field of education had been dominated by foreign research on teaching, whereas the next decade, local research on teaching started to appear. Therefore, he states, research studies conducted in Colombia have also been influenced by the coloniality of being, knowledge, and power. The English language is commonly assumed as a language of neutrality and global communication, but a language, as any cultural product, is laden with meanings and pondered on through colonial discourses.

The authors who include cultural components in English textbooks, as well as the diverse ways these components are displayed to teach the language, can be instruments of a dominant cultural reproduction system. Most of the English teachers around the world, once they start working for an institution, decide to follow strictly a textbook´s methodology, which is usually imposed by the organization they work for. Therefore, these textbooks´ authors are presented as invisible people, whose configuration as subjects is, taking Foucault´s words (1969), determined by three dimensions: knowledge, power, and subjectivity, the latter referring to the way the subject understands and expresses itself depending on the context. However, Goldstein & Brooks (2007) also mention that publishers´ representatives and their authors value the feedback local teachers give them, taking notes of requests, compliments, and complaints heard most often. They report this to the publishers who, in turn, hold meetings with the editorial departments, but the feedback stays as worksheets and the textbooks barely change.

In EFL programs, teachers give pre-service teachers a variety of sources to help learners become more skilled in learning a foreign language, leading most of the teachers to prepare their own materials. In fact, they are taught that they are not doing their job correctly if they "simply" take a textbook and teach straight from it day after day. In teacher practice, if a pre-service teacher teaches a lesson directly from the book, the observer appointed by the school dean will call attention to the importance of innovation in the classroom. There are programs in Colombia that give teachers the option to create and adapt material to their needs, but what is usually seen is teachers using foreign EFL material, which is a transfer of idealistic cultural constructs. Authors of EFL material are focusing on providing pre-determined input rather than facilitating intake, language acquisition, and development. Such a concern for input seems to result invariably in material that uses more language-practice exercises than language-using activities (Masuhara *et al.*, 2008).

According to Canagarajah (2005), scholars operating in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom lead the international research community. They not only produce knowledge on the matter of teaching, but also produce textbooks, materials, tests, and training courses that are consumed by countries off the center (countries where English is not the official language). In other words, pre-service teachers learn the coloniality from their teachers, since they copy or imitate predominant English culture practices, and when they are in the classroom, they reproduce the predominant culture to their learners unconsciously. Although many educational institutions have taken for granted that commercial textbooks supply what is needed to help a language learner to become bilingual, these English language textbooks, which are not created for

specific and local contexts, may produce a negative effect on students' motivation. Núñez & Téllez (2008) state that textbooks usually provide content that tends to generalize students' needs and fails to fulfill learners' and teachers' expectations. Harmer (1998) affirms that when students engage with content related to their lives and experiences, they learn better.

Therefore, I will focus my analysis on author subjectivity and the struggles they face on material design. Although they work in groups, they are aware of the neoliberal demands of economic growth imposed on them by foreign educational institutions to gain international recognition, organizations who, according to O´Neil (1982), are the experts or "knowers" in charge of providing scientific knowledge.

Contextualized materials informed by locally emerged content and methods that are sensitive to cultural diversity, without omissions, distortions, and biases, favoring the development of politically and culturally aware subjects.

By the same thought, Núñez-Pardo (2020) calls for students' and teachers' resistance to hegemony, a search for their critical socio-political awareness, committed agency, and generation of local knowledge, so that "subaltern can destabilize mainstream ways of developing standardized, homogenized, decontextualized and meaningless materials" (p. 19). EFL teachers and students are immersed in the world of materials, where the big publishing houses and textbook authors have constructed English as a "branded commodity" along lines which are entirely congruent with the values and practices of new capitalism, selling a world that is different from reality. English textbook authors convey the new capitalist values through idealized representations of work, such as the idea that living abroad helps learners to have better jobs, professions, and occupations, or even a better social status.

Despite the body of research described in this section, little is known about the author´s subjectivity, and the literature on his struggles in material design is scarce. This issue will be addressed in the next section.

A Particular Setting

The use of learning material has played a key role in the teaching and learning of the English language. In all the settings I have worked with pre-service language teachers, I have realized there is a need to follow specific material to teach English in order to comply with the institution's curriculum. Teaching programs planned by teachers who analyze the right contents to include in each syllabus program have shown to offer better outcomes in students' needs and interests. Altman & Cashin (1992) pinpoint that a syllabus aims at communicating to

students what the course intends to be, the reasons for teaching it, its destination, and the requirements to pass it.

Institutional decisions are usually based on the content presented to teachers. However, they feel attracted and trapped by the textbook´s layout and the teaching trends (methods and approaches) implemented in countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, among other. With the idea of teachers following international standards to teach a language like the Common European Framework, institutions and teachers can assume that textbooks are a magic potion to learn and teach a foreign language. The author who creates learning material includes what he or she considers should be the new trend in the market based on interculturality, until a new trend emerges and the author replaces the former one. This happens year after year.

Núñez & Téllez (2008) mention that learners´ needs, informed teaching requisites and learning tendencies, as well as the wide range of socio-cultural conditions, must be properly identified, addressed, and considered by English language teachers if they want to promote more interesting, significant, and favorable learning environments. The evidence shows the degree to which English learning material has been influenced by trends from countries where English is the dominant language. When international publishers reach the teachers in charge of choosing the material to be used in institutions, they cite Colombian bilingualism policies as a way to enhance the validity and reliance of their material; later, teachers are forced to choose only one option of material, include it in the syllabus and use it with their students; finally, when pre-service teachers graduate, they continue replicating the methods and approaches used in the material they used during their studies. Regardless of the blame on this colonizing classroom practice, materials used by teachers in universities are seen as a "straitjackets" imposed on them.

Following my reflections on this procedure in universities, now I want to focus my attention on textbook authors as subjects and find out if they are aware of the colonizing nature of their materials, analyze their struggles before publishing a textbook, and inquire into the existence (or not) of their awareness of the real intentions behind the international publishers they write for.

Problematic Facts

In this section I will address three relevant aspects when discussing authors´ subjectivity from a colonial perspective, since they play the key role in the development of EFL material.

The first aspect is the tendency to normalize the textbook author as someone who creates material. Most of the time, this key player is not as recognized as the publishing houses. Whereas usually we cannot name a single well-known

author of English language textbooks, as language users we know of many globally famous English language publishing houses. Language textbook authors are criticized in academic fields by the coloniality presented in their materials, but those comments are not focused on the authors, but on the materials that teachers and students use to carry out their teaching and learning processes. Teacher resistance is not aimed at the authors themselves, but at the textbooks´ layout and the exclusion methods of less favored sectors of society used in the content.

In Colombia, the MEN usually seeks the advice of international publishing houses on the topic of bilingualism. Most of the government´s strategies on the field of foreign languages, such as "Colombia Bilingüe", stem from the consultancy received from institutions like the British Council, which seek, paraphrasing Quintero (2011), the "strengthening of the development of foreign language skills". In fact, Cambridge University, which produces a comprehensive battery of standardized English language tests, is administered by the British Council. These standardized tests are used to diagnose the state of bilingualism in Colombian schools and help them justify the need to implement certifications of ideal sufficiency levels for the Colombian population. Therefore, language users perceive English language textbooks from international publishers as the guides to the "right" way to teach and learn English.

Though the use of textbooks has brought positive changes in English Language Teaching and learning, it is also true that there have been negative consequences too. On the positive side, they have contributed to the practice of English teaching through the granting of scholarships, assistantships, cultural exchanges, courses, and other similar educational experiences. They have helped most of us to improve our skills on the correct use of the language and have also given us the chance to access more information resources when learning a foreign. Nevertheless, they have self-ascribed the prestige of being the know-it-all when it comes to the teaching of ELT. I believe the MEN has seen the field as a type of "Silicon Valley": when results are positive, they argue that all the programs and the hours the students are exposed to the language are good and that the students are showing better performance in English (in programs offered by offices like the Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje (SENA) or the British Council).

I believe with Bhabha (1994) that in Colombia we are far from those "imagined communities" in which the language teacher is part of a carceral world with low salaries, without access to the privilege given to native speakers, and constantly surrounded by evolving policies and foreign trends. In this changing world, language teaching and learning materials will continue working as scaffolds, but their future is in risk of becoming horizontally connected, as both producers and users (teachers and students) will be part of a creation and re-creation

dynamic. Therefore, ownership, autonomy, and contextualization will be core features of materials and material-rich pedagogies in a hard-to-resist marketed world. English language teachers need to become critical customers and co-developers of their tools. Despite being time-consuming, material development will help teachers continue their professional growth and discover new roads for exploration and inquiry. To do so, they need to understand what is behind the process of material development, which is the author's subjectivity. However, the issue of authenticity and pedagogical modification is more problematic.

When we think of authenticity in the context of EFL education, we tend to associate it with materials that have not been destined for an EFL world or for formal education. Paradoxically, most of these publishers in the Northern countries lack the interest in learning a foreign or second language. The Colombian National Bilingual Program (NBP) sees local teachers as a "force" that guarantees the program´s success. However, this "force" could not be accomplished due to the teacher's low English level; thus, English teachers needed to be assessed, trained, and prepared to follow the experts' recommendations. According to Gray (2010, p. 31), "teachers are primary consumers of coursebooks and retain considerable power in determining the uses to which they are put in the classroom". This critical position on the examination of textbooks as market goods and capitalist objects is the opportunity to start looking at textbook uses in a new way.

The concepts and practices underpinning the author's subjectivity are monolithic. Said (1978) alludes to "the issue of feeling hostile towards 'others', because once one feels superior to another group, the innate desire to control this inferior group inevitably arises" (p. 67). In the imposed view of the world by dominant discourses, in which EFL has not been the exception because educators tend to replicate other discourses, educators do acknowledge that power creates resistance, but lack the interest in trying to change it. It will be interesting to see how scholars can isolate themselves in a world of their own instead of producing innovative ideas for the real world. As Foucault asserts (1969), "a culture and imperialism, such as the hegemony of culture, resistance against a superior one, and, most importantly, the hybridity of culture" (p.26).

This manifestation of power is presented very neutrally by EFL teachers to their students, which is far from the reality of language communication. They do not provide sufficient exposure to the language nor enough opportunities to learners to use the language themselves, which narrows the learners´ opportunities. Probably the biggest complaint that students have about their learning is that the EFL educator is typically a customer of a large market of international publishing houses which try to cater to everybody, but who does not take part in the selection of textbooks. Textbook authors build a worldview with knowledge

and ideas from Europe and other Northern countries, giving language teachers and students the perception that theirs is an inferior culture. Given their key role in the process of material development, these authors should gain a more balanced worldview.

Some textbooks fail to mention local culture and overlook the reality that the learners´ knowledge of the world is partially shaped by the constant exposure to international media. In EFL material development, authors and editors surely struggle about the ideas they plan to include in textbooks, as some of these might have found their way into other books, despite the opposition from other team members. There is also the case of a lack of flexibility from those who designed materials, because maybe they cannot adapt or personalize the books as they would like to. Indeed, most of their ideas could be completely different to what the market considers appropriate and publishable.

The author's subjectivity appears to be invisible in the literature related to the struggles authors face before, during, and after the process of creating materials. Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault have examined the role and relevance of authorship in relation to the meaning or interpretation of a text. In his essay "Death of the Author", Barthes (1977) challenges the idea that a text can be attributed to a single author and argues that "it is the language which speaks, not the author". For Barthes, it is the words and language of a text who determine and expose the meaning, and not someone who possesses a legal responsibility for its production process. Every line of written text is a mere reflection of references from a multitude of traditions. As he puts it, "the text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture" (p.146). therefore, it is never original. Consequently, the author´s perspective is removed from the text, and the limits formerly imposed by the idea of one authorial voice, one ultimate and universal meaning, are destroyed. He states that the explanation and meaning of work do not need to be sought in the one who produced it, "as if it were always in the end, through the more or less transparent allegory of the fiction, the voice of a single person, the author 'confiding' in us'" (p. 123). In this sense, the author's psyche, culture, or fanaticism can be disregarded when interpreting a text, because the words are rich enough and hold all the language traditions. To expose meanings in a written work without appealing to the celebrity of an author, his tastes, passions, or vices is, for Barthes, to allow language, rather than the author, to speak.

On the other side, in his essay "What is an author", Foucault (1969) argues that all authors are writers, but not all writers are authors. He states that to assign the title of author to a written work it is necessary to attribute certain standards to the text. These, for Foucault, are working in conjunction with the idea of what

he calls "the author function". Foucault´s author function is the idea that an author exists only as a function of a written work and warns of the risks of keeping the author´s name in mind during interpretation, as it could affect the value and meaning with which one handles an interpretation. This is probably why international publishing houses decide to assign textbook authorship to a teamwork of scholars working on material design rather than to individuals.

In short, Barthes and Foucault suggest that there is no direct link between the ideas of "author" and "authorship" because of the distinction between producing a written work and the interpretation or meaning of said work; in the context of textbook creation, this same distinction complicates the designation of the "author" title to a textbook writer. Both warn of the dangers inherent in the interpretations arising from the association of meaningful words and language with the personality of a specific authorial voice.

De Sousa Santos (2016) notes that the deliberate destruction of other cultures and the destruction of knowledge has permeated the way our local knowledge is displayed. Authors have been part of the destruction of local knowledge and cultures; therefore, the "incompleteness of knowledge" is a form of domination, oppression, and supremacy on another culture. Not only such destructions have erased memories, but also the way people think about themselves. When applied to textbook creation, the subjectivity of the author who designs material can be seen as an occupation, a domination of the classroom. Displacing the Colombian English teacher's knowledge and experiences, textbooks have placed teachers as subalterns who cannot have an active participation in the students´ learning processes.

Problem Statement

In this chapter I have given some thoughts on the author's subjectivity on material development. Consequently, since my research subject is the author, I want to unveil the authors´ struggles in recognition, rights, organization, and payment on English teaching in the field of English language textbook development. My research seeks to contribute to the development of EFL material with a decolonial discourse. I plan to explore the following research questions and objectives:

Research questions
- How are EFL textbook authors subjected by the industry of textbook creation?

Objectives
- Identify the ways in which the author´s subjectivity interferes with textbook creation.

- Explore the struggles faced in the process of textbook creation.
- Characterize the inner forces that guide the author's subjectivity.

By answering the research question and objectives, I hope to contribute to the field of language teacher education in Colombia by acknowledging the way the author as a subject is submerged in a context of language prestige, habits, and values stemmed from English language dominant circles, which are used to universalize author identities to the detriment of minoritized languages' set of cultural values and identities. Authors of in-house materials in Colombia must overcome the intercultural dimension of language teaching in scenarios where textbooks are culturally biased, address problematic ideologies and are used as acculturation instruments that favor linguistic colonialism.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided evidence for the reason behind the importance of studying the author´s subjectivity. Authors play a key role in replicating ideologies of colonialism, discrimination, exclusion, and inequalities, which affect the educational context in EFL. They can be the path into power-resistance practices from English language teachers and institutions, as the author's subjectivity can trace the field of resistance and creates the possibility of thinking new ways of teaching and learning English and of integrating local knowledge with foreign knowledge (where English is the dominant language). This will give teachers the chance to develop their own ideas on textbook development without recourse to neoliberal values such as individualism, aspiration, affluence, and consumerism. It will also open the analysis of the author of EFL textbooks and their struggles, strengths, and subjections to dominant western cultures, in a context character-ized by power, hegemony, exclusion, discrimination, and oppression, as well as by resistance, independence, inclusion, and individuality.

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Chapter 5.
English Language Teachers´ Critical Identities

Óscar Fernando Abella-Peña

Abstract

The field of education in Colombia demands a critical position due to the policies that seem to be conceived from the concept of a globalized and neoliberal world, which does have an incidence over the students´ learning processes. I have observed that, as English language teachers, we all have a critical identity, but that it shows itself during certain situations. A critical position towards education and pedagogy may make the difference between perpetuating traditional practices and proposing innovative practices that are coherent with Colombian students' particularities and needs. Many studies have explored teachers' identities, but little has been said about critical identity. Therefore, I find it relevant to understand how we construct our critical identities and their characteristics. I want to explore, understand, and reflect on how life histories, at both the personal and professional level, determine our critical identities, as well as their transcendence in our teaching practice.

Keywords: Criticalities, identities, teaching practices, education.

Researcher Positionality

I was born in Bogotá 40 years ago as the second son of a very young couple. My father was a language teacher, and my mother was a housewife. Both faced difficult situations, which, after two more children, lead them to file for divorce when I was seven. This event and a complicated economic situation made me into a child with emotional and behavioral issues. My parents looked for help, and it finally came from my third, fourth, and fifth grade teacher, who practiced a non-traditional teaching methodology in a public elementary school. She encouraged me to teach

my partners to play the flute and the guitar, sparking my interest in becoming a teacher. In my early years of primary school, I developed a keen awareness of the importance of critical thinking as a tool for engaging with the world around me. However, upon transitioning to high school, I encountered an institution with a decidedly traditional approach, prioritizing theory over practical application and emphasizing strict adherence to rules and orders. This juxtaposition significantly shaped my critical perspective on education, as the school failed to address my individual needs, leading to frustration and resentment. Despite my challenging high school experience, my aspiration to become a teacher persisted. While I had not yet decided on the subject I wished to teach, teaching and music were the only two future career paths I could envision. However, I perceived the educational system as a hindrance to my dream, prompting me to withdraw before entering the eighth grade. I opted for a self-directed approach, completing my academic studies independently and validating my secondary education through the ICFES test.

At that time, I genuinely believed the traditional school model held little societal significance and could disappear without adverse consequences. This conviction guided my subsequent journey as an English language teacher at Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, where my primary goal was to create meaningful learning experiences for my students within the context of their lives. This commitment persisted throughout my Master's studies, where I delved into exploring students' argumentative writing skills, and over the course of my ten-year tenure teaching in a public school. However, my unwavering commitment to innovative educational approaches has occasionally resulted in conflicts with colleagues who adhere to more traditional views on education. Despite these challenges, I remain dedicated to fostering a dynamic and impactful learning environment for my students.

My Research Interest

In this section I will describe the research problem that has taken shape during the first part of my doctoral studies, as well as some related studies. I want to problematize the relationship between two social issues: criticality and identity. The discussion will help me understand how we, as English language teachers, construct our identities as an ongoing process that follows the same lines of the construction of a critical identity.

In relation to identity, Wenger (1998, cited by Tsui, 2007) sees it as a relational and experiential issue where we establish associations and differentiations, while positioning ourselves as part of socially organized categories and roles. As teachers we build an identity that is shaped by the events and experiences in our practice, and which characterizes our actions both inside and outside

the classroom. Zembylas (2003) offers three views of identity that I have taken as guide for my study: Ericksonian and neo-Ericksonian, socio-cultural, and post-structural. The first view points out that the person is the one who adapts and fits to life situations. The second view considers that the best way to understand how our mind works is by observing the social and cultural processes that influence the construction of who we are. Finally, the third view analyzes the socio-political context and its importance in the way identities are constructed and influenced by emotions, thoughts, judgments, and beliefs; from a poststructural view, identity is shaped by the relations between the narratives of subjectivity and the narratives of culture. I assume that the interactions we have within the field of education have an impact over our emotions, thoughts, and judgments, and they determine our actions as teachers. However, the construction of our critical identity may be traced from events we lived before our incursion into the teaching world; these past actions can potentially characterize the way we understand and live this identity.

Our identities are determined by the events and characteristics of our teaching context both inside and outside the classroom. Zare-Ee & Ghasedi (2014) analyzed how teachers' professional identities are constructed and how our self-image —in terms of our success or our students' success, our families, maybe a second job, etc., — are elements that outline our professional roles and the way we are seen by ourselves and by others, which affect the way our identity is formed. The events of our lives are constantly shaping and re-shaping our identity, and one of the things that I seek to understand with this study is the role played by movements and changes in our critical identity during our lives. Santa Monica (2017), who analyzed the process of redefining teacher identity by exploring areas of teacher socialization, argues that when we become teachers, there is a formation, and even a transformation, of our identity because it is a negotiated and shifting process; this process is not isolated nor personal, and arises from the socio-cultural elements of the field of education. I find it interesting to understand the elements and events that change our critical identity, and which may determine the transcendence of our critical positions towards the classroom.

An element that characterizes teachers' identities has to do with how being an agent with a wide incidence over the social context, leads us to assume positions that may agree or disagree with educative policies and administrative decisions. I assume this is a manifestation of our critical identity —which determines our concepts, actions, and decisions—, but sometimes it is hard to find this identity inside the classrooms. Miller *et al*. (2017), who analyzed language teacher identity as the base of educational practice and observe Foucault's notion of ethical self-formation to understand the development of teacher agency and critical

identity work, pointed out that our objective as language teachers is to facilitate transformation inside the classroom to improve our students' learning processes. According to the authors, our ethical judgments may create consciousness of our subjectivity in terms of how discourses influence the way language is taught and learnt. This critical identity, which may emerge when we try to resist educative policies that we do not find appropriate, should transcend to the classroom, so our students may benefit from untraditional teaching practices that allow them to construct their own critical identities.

The other element I want to problematize has to do with *being critical*. When it comes to talk about this issue in the ELT field, it is quite common to reflect on it as a language teaching approach and, later, to develop critical thinking or critical awareness. Therefore, talking about being critical in the language teaching field means creating teacher instruction programs, enroll teachers to the concept, and implement strategies to promote critical thinking or awareness in their students. Nowadays, critical thinking has become a prominent issue when it comes to designing school syllabi. For instance, syllabi are considered as content by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and by The Partnership for 21st Century Skills. Petek & Bedir (2018) —who problematize the impact of a 14-week action plan implementation on eight pre-service English teachers' awareness and teaching practices on the integration of critical thinking into language teaching— point out that thinking critically is something that must be learnt to innovate in post-secondary education and the workforce. They also say that without training our brains, our thinking may be biased, distorted, partial, uninformed, and prejudiced. Although this statement is not related to my study, I find it interesting to see how some government policies, motivated by economic purposes, have forced teachers to implement strategies that favor critical thinking, but without considering teachers' reflections about their critical identity.

I agree with Fatemeh Sadeghi *et al*. (2020) —who problematized the perception of EFL teachers and learners on the fundamental principles and constructs of critical thinking, the main characteristics of a critical thinker, and the strategies to reinforce critical thinking— when they argue that it is crucial to develop critical thinking in formal education. I also agree with them when they point out that teachers and other members of the educative community regret the lack of critical thinking, not only in school, but also outside school in moments and spaces with cultural influence over the students. I consider, as they suggest, that to understand critical thinking, we need to consider learners and teachers' perceptions of what critical thinking is, and then, generate pedagogical proposals. It is imperative to reflect upon how being critical influences our identity and

how this incidence goes beyond teaching practices and affects our essence as language teachers and humans.

I consider that if we, as English language teachers, observe, reflect, and understand our critical identities, we will be able to appreciate the importance of designing proposals that enable students to construct their identities that allow them to observe and reflect upon their own realities from a critical viewpoint. Accordingly with Hatch & Meller (2009) —who problematized the incidence of introducing critical pedagogical approaches in a program for pre-service teachers—, I believe schools and their agents are partners in crime in the prevalence of an unfair socio-economic system, but also that we, as teachers, can fight the *status quo* and promote social change by developing a critical perspective in our students. This may help them make connections between what they learn at school and what they experience from the world. We need to move away from the common perception of the school as a building where students go to become informed about the world by teachers. As Freire pointed, "liberating education consists in acts of cognition, not transferals of information" (Freire, 2000, p. 79).

Although my focus is on teachers, I cannot forget that my purpose as a language teacher is to be part of the learning process of critical, reflective, and socially active students. Therefore, I hope that by going through a process that allows us to observe ourselves, students will benefit and have opportunities in school to grow their critical identities. Menard-Warwick *et al.* (2019) —who problematized how English teachers build their identities today by being conscious of their roles in history, their connections with their students, and the way they perceive the English language— signaled the importance of developing teacher identities through a dialogue between teachers and learners. I believe the benefits that come from teachers' exercises that involve reflection will surely have an incidence over the students' learning processes.

Despite the body of the research problems described in this section, little is known about critical identity. So far, I have not found a concrete definition of the concept. I will address this issue and its relation to my teaching context in the next section.

Salient Elements of my Research

This research proposal will be conducted with English language teachers from the Colegio Marruecos y Molinos IED, a state-founded school with morning, afternoon, and night shifts. This school is in the south of Bogotá, in the Rafael Uribe Uribe locality. It has around 3000 primary and secondary students in the morning and afternoon shifts, and about 300 in the night shift. The school implemented the "Enseñanza para la comprensión" approach (EPC), whose objective is to

Énfasis

guide students to perform actions that demonstrate knowledge of an issue and to move forward by using information in new ways (Perkins, 1998). By November 2020, the school started to shape a new proposal based on the "campos de pensamiento" approach, which is based on Edgar Morins' theory of complex thinking. The school´s PEI (Proyecto Educativo Institucional) is titled "Respuesta a un sueño de crecer juntos y ser felices mientras aprehendemos", which points three elements in the students' learning processes: procedural, axiological, and cognitive issues. According to the syllabus, the subject of English is conceptualized from the communicative approach, which is articulated with the EPC. The Marruecos y Molinos school has only one institutional project that focuses on the English language learning, called "Music for learning English", and is part of the "Aulas de inmersión" program, led by the city´s Education Office (Secretaría de Educación Distrital), and other city projects, such as the Spelling Bee. According to tests such as Pruebas Saber and Aptis, students´ proficiency on the English language is low; this has been confirmed by on-site teachers´ characterization of classroom processes.

Some elements of the previous context led me to problematize teachers' critical identities. On the one hand, I believe that very few of the school's theoretical foundations can be evidenced in English language classes, and that the material, strategies, and methodologies implemented in the classroom fail to represent what is written in official documents. On the contrary, the classes seem to follow a traditional approach. On the other hand, power relations at school prevent teachers from resisting decisions and indications of the city´s public office. The Colombian Ministry of Education commands Bogota´s Education Office and dictates what coordinators should say to the teachers, who simply obey in return. Nevertheless, since the school is a public institution, most of the teachers belong to teachers' unions such as FECODE and ADE; I perceive here a critical position to educative policies and to decisions and indications made by the principal about work issues. This difference between teachers' identities and critical features needs to be understood within the context of my research proposal.

I have identified three problematic factors that, joined together, form the basis of my problem statement; they result from my reflections and observations during the last ten years while teaching at the Marruecos y Molinos school. The first factor is what I see as an incongruence between English language teachers' identities both inside and outside the classroom. I believe this inconsistency affects our practice and the students' learning processes. Teaching English in the school has been, so far, a basic exercise on trying to teach students how to learn grammar structures. I have proposed different strategies to innovate and teach the language with communicative purposes, so that students can read, understand,

reflect, and propose ideas about the social issues that characterize their lives. However, some of my colleagues seem to ignore them and have, instead, defended and perpetuated (perhaps unconsciously) what I think is a traditional and decontextualized teaching methodology that seeks, unsuccessfully, to lead students to achieve good results in standardized English language tests such as Pruebas Saber and Aptis.

I believe this focus on favorable results in tests comes from certain discourses by school administrators who connect high scores to the reception of more money for the school and to a public recognition as a "successful school". In the process to understand the reason behind this resistance to innovation, I have seen teachers criticizing national and district governments and their policies, as well as decisions made by school administrators, participating in teachers' union meetings and stating viewpoints in both formal and informal settings, all of which I interpret as evidence of resistance. I perceive that some of the teachers I work with express critical positions, but they hide them once inside the classroom or when they work in planning or adjusting the syllabus. Although the document "Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés", by the Ministerio de Educación Nacional (2006), sets objectives in terms of language acquisition, I consider that in the school where I work there is a certain freedom to define the grammar topics to include in our lessons; then, we determine what happens in between, that is, inside the classroom. At the beginning of each year, we as teachers are free to discuss the methodologies, approaches, materials, and activities to be used during the school year. Year after year there have been proposals around making English a means and not a target: to use English to learn, reflect, and discuss about social issues, instead of making English a subject based on grammar rules. It is in those moments that my colleagues recognize the government as the instance that dictates what, why, when, and how we should teach the language, something which forestalls all attempts to renew our practices and include novel approaches to language teaching.

According to Jodelet (2011), social representations in education are the evidence of how we as teachers position ourselves in the field, based on our practice, relations with coworkers, norms, and social roles. Apparently, most of my colleagues position themselves in their teaching practice in the classroom as agents who are meant to obey. However, as I mentioned, outside the classroom they seem to be socially active agents who reflect, analyze, and oppose to government policies on language teaching. This counter position leads me to presume that when we build our identities, we develop a critical one, which is evidenced in different contexts or situations in the field of education.

I sense that we all have our own personal history in becoming teachers, and that this history determines the way each of us perceives his or her profession. These histories influence our decisions because, as teachers, we want to see in our students a reflection of our own experiences as students: we may want to replicate as teachers the school we experienced as students. My critiques to the disappearance of teachers' critical identities in the classroom may respond to the need of connecting what we do to what we consider the school should be on the basis of our past experiences as students. In other words, if a teacher had a pleasant experience as a student in a traditional school, he or she will try to make his or her practice a reflection (as in a mirror) of his or her own individual experiences. I find here a connection with the contradiction of the "oppressed oppressor" that Freire (2000) mentions: "Every prescription represents the impo-sition of some individual's choice upon another, transforming the consciousness of the person prescribed to into one that conforms with the prescriber's behavior, following as it does the guidelines of the oppressor" (p. 47). I feel that some teachers are afraid of trying new things in the classroom and, therefore, end up taking the role of the oppressor, because they believe in what they have been ordered to do.

I have reflected on the origins of my critical identity and observed events that defined and characterized it. I did not have an enjoyable experience as a high school student in a traditional context; ultimately, I found the way to skip that step. That is why I seek to change everything: there are wounds that I am trying to heal with my practice as a teacher. I understand that inside and outside the classroom, what I consider is the most important goal to achieve as an English language teacher is to respond to my students' needs and to favor their learning from a critical approach, regardless of the neoliberal policies that see students as potential instruments for a globalized capitalism. I consider that my critical identity is revealed in every situation of my teaching practices, both inside and outside the classroom, and that this position has brought me several confronta-tions which have harmed my relationships with work colleagues. I am not saying that all teachers' critical identities should arise in all aspects of the teaching practice: each teacher has his or her own personal history and events, and both shape their identities as language teachers, define their decisions and determine the way they conceive the field of education.

Teaching dynamics prevent us from stopping and reflecting on the way we got to a certain point in our teaching life, on where we stand today and on how we do our job, so we tend to normalize our actions and perceptions, disfavor-ing a self-analysis of our identity. What I want to problematize is related to the origins of our identity as English language teachers and its relation to our critical

positions. It is key to comprehend the role and the characteristics of this critical identity and how it affects our practices because it can contribute to develop a better understanding of ourselves, which can bring about a deep reflection on our lives' histories and their connection to our practices, and, eventually, favor students' learning processes. I also find it interesting to analyze these critical issues as determining elements of teachers' identity, rather than as a set of rules that we are forced to include in our classes to favor students' critical thinking or awareness. I will address this point in the third problematic fact, but for now, I want to focus on the incidence of teachers' critical identity on the stagnation of education in Colombia.

The second problematic fact is related to the vicious circle that I identified in the teaching practice, on the topic of the construction and shaping of critical identities. The critical thinking theory, the EPC approach, the theory of complex thinking, and the considerations of the different students' dimensions, among others, are basic tenets that support the institution's PEI and, therefore, should be the basis of the teaching practice. These elements could help pave the way for students to purposefully project themselves onto a new future, build their critical identities and having a broader view of their contexts. In the future, I believe these students should be capable of changing some of the colonial and Eurocentric practices and perceptions that have permeated Colombian culture for centuries, to move towards a new perspective on time and history, as future is the only moment in time where changes may occur (Quijano, 2014).

Even if these pedagogical proposals are not adequate by the moment they take place, nowadays teachers should participate actively in discussions that generate agreements, instill reflection, and benefit the teaching practice. Unfortunately, when teachers' identities are built from a traditional perspective, those proposals are accepted on paper but put aside in practice. This must be explained from the basis of teachers' narrations of their personal histories: from there, we may be able to identify how we built the concept of what education should be and the influence of critical issues in our lives. What determines the characteristics and the role of school in society is the way teachers see their role in the education field. Our teaching identities take shape in relation to our subjectivity and culture (Zembylas, 2003), and some of us still perceive school as an instructional institution where the power is vertical and flows from the top, reaching students at the bottom. Here appears what I call the "vicious circle", which helps explain the fact that teachers are victims of the system and then become victimizers within it: as students, we were structured by the school, but as teachers we structure the school.

Therefore, it is important to allow teachers to explore their own histories and to understand their identities, specially the critical one, to reflect if their decisions are perpetuating practices that they disagree with, but that they find necessary to develop because of their compliance with the system's aspirations. There are practices that have prevented schools from being perceived as meaningful and purposeful experiences for teachers and their histories, present times, and futures. In my opinion, most of the students today go to school only because society makes them believe that they must do it; they think it is a social requirement and not a personal project. I believe this happens because the institution itself is anachronical and decontextualized, and that its bases are still connected to outdated concepts of strategies, methodologies, conceptualization, objectives, and purposes that belong to education theories from 18th century Europe. Because of these school practices, education in Colombia seems to remain in the past and to appear disarticulated from the social context. Elements such as the school uniform, settings, and classroom dynamics, and rituals like the flag honors ceremonies —where students are forced to sing a misunderstood national anthem and both male and female students are taught to behave according to their genre— are proof of how far we are from a renewed society and from breaking the vicious circle I mentioned before. The continuous loop in how education is perceived and implemented may stem from the educational system's limited focus on contemplating and comprehending the concept of critical identity.

Finally, the third problematic fact is related to the literature I have reviewed about the issues I defined for my research interest. In the profiling exercise I conducted, most identity-related studies focus on other aspects of English language teacher identities, not to critical identities. There is indeed a current interest in defining our identities in relation to our profession, subjectivities, and lives as teachers, but little has been said about our critical identity. Additionally, as I mentioned before, critical issues in education have been addressed in terms of educative programs that promote critical thinking, whereas teachers have not been observed as critical agents. Critical issues have been described as the result of training processes and as a set of operational tasks that should be learned beforehand to become better teachers. However, so far, I have not found studies that question our perceptions on critical positions. It has not been easy to find studies that explore the way we build our individualities as teachers or the role of criticality on this process. There is also a gap on the literature, as there is no definition of the concept of critical identity. Menard-Warwick *et al.* (2019) conducted a study that problematizes how English teachers build their identity in a contemporary global society by understanding their positions in history, relationships with students, and perception of the English language as a symbolic

capital. They believe that English language teachers use the word "critical" to refer to power relations in the field of education. They also point out that teachers develop their identities by taking part in discourses with other field agents and relating then to their own subjectivities. Nevertheless, this study fails to offer a definition of English language teachers' critical identity: though it explores it as an observable feature in an immediate context, it does not follow it outside the teaching practice and throughout teachers´ lives. This clearly opens a door to a deeper study of teachers´ critical identities and the way they build them and express them as social agents. In the Colombian literature this issue is absent and there is a need to explore it in depth; the local context and the education field require the exploration of critical positions that allow a new way of perceiving teachers´ roles and the purposes of education in the country.

In short, these three problematic facts construct my problem statement and they emerged from my observations, experiences and reflections of some teaching practices at the school where I have worked for the last 10 years. The first problem is the need to understand the differences between teachers' critical identities, which are observable in elements that affect them directly in relation to work-related issues, and their absence in situations that require an active participation in decisions and actions which affect the teaching practice. The second problem is the never-ending vicious circle that stems from the lack of reflection on the characteristics of our identities as teachers, which makes Colombian education a perpetuated practice that forces students to become agents who are meant to obey and fit into the system. Lastly, the third and last problem is the lack of literature in Colombia that explores, defines, and characterizes teachers' critical identities from their life histories. These problems, I believe, may allow my proposal to become relevant for the field as these are issues that should be explored to improve our understanding of ourselves as teachers and, also, taken in consideration in the training of future teachers.

Problem Statement

Based on the previous sections, I have identified the following statements and questions:

- What do teachers understand by "being critical"?

- What does it mean to be critical, understood not as a systematic pedagogical strategy, but as a social representation that emerges from English language teachers' perceptions?

- Are we aware as teachers of the existence of this critical identity and of the way it influences our decisions?

- What may imply the differentiation between the implementation of critical issues as a demand from educative policies and the reflections upon these issues from teachers' identities, and how this may influence our practice as English language teachers?
- Is there a critical identity in the English language classroom? What is it and how does it happen?

These short statements have supported the following problem statement: How do we, as English language teachers, construct a critical identity, what characterizes it, and how it transcends the teaching practice inside and outside the classroom, but within the field of education?

Conclusions

Identity is an element of English Language Teaching that has been explored by different perspectives, but which still needs to be analyzed from the viewpoint of its critical attributes. Being critical should not only be a pedagogical strategy to be learnt and implemented; it is also part of what we are as teachers, and by being aware of that, we can make criticality something meaningful in our practice. I find it necessary to explore what is behind our critical positions and how we became critical subjects, whether if teaching influenced our critical positions or our critical positions led us to become teachers. It is important for teachers to reflect on the way their life stories connect to their practices, and how their decisions are the evidence of what education represents for them. By defining *critical identity*, we as teachers will be aware of its existence and identify its presence in different daily and work situations in the field of education. With this research proposal, I want to motivate more teachers to explore issues such as these, so that we may obtain a broader view of the meaning of critical identities.

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Chapter 6.
Bilingualism in Science Class: An Approach to the Identities of Bilingual Science Teachers

Carlos Sebastián Figueroa-Salamanca

Abstract

The phenomenon of bilingualism in science has become naturalized in our society. Even so, there is still a lot of work to be done for this process to be successful in school. The starting point of this chapter is the analysis and understanding of the identities of bilingual science teachers across various dimensions: their training, their actions, their struggles, and the way they conceive the process. The documentary review allowed us to identify some related works on said aspects, but the results show that, in our context, this path is still unexplored; therefore, we must work on its deconstruction in order to generate new knowledge that enriches the fields of English language learning and teaching (ELT) and science didactics, since it is not possible to speak of bilingualism and identities without taking into account the knowledge produced in these two fields.

Keywords: Bilingual science teacher, Identities, Bilingualism, Science education, English learning and teaching (ELT).

Who am I: My Researcher Positionality

Understanding current science teaching perspectives is crucial, as it informs how science teachers develop their identities and, ultimately, benefit their professional growth, which implies the changes that this field has undergone. This research focuses on understanding current perspectives on science teaching, emphasizing the profound insights gained into how science teachers construct their professional identities. This exploration not only illuminates pedagogical methods but

also recognizes the influence of individual experiences and perceptions in the classroom. With a specific emphasis on bilingual science education, the research is grounded in the unique perspective of the researcher as a bilingual science teacher. This personal experience motivates the exploration of how teacher identities, particularly in bilingual settings, impact pedagogical approaches. The goal is to bridge the gap between theory and practice by drawing on the lived experiences of bilingual science educators, contributing to the broader discourse on effective science education.

The starting point to approach the topic comes, naturally, from my researcher positionality, because my research interest arises from my personal experience. I am a teacher of Natural Sciences and Environmental Education who works with the Colombian State. I currently work in Soacha (Cundinamarca), a neighbor municipality of Bogotá (Colombia), I hold a Bachelor´s degree in Biology Teaching from Universidad Pedagógica Nacional and a Master´s degree in Communication and Education from Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas; currently, I am a student of the Doctorado Interinstitucional en Educación (DIE) at Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, in the emphasis in English Learning and Teaching (ELT). In my work experience I can highlight my work as a bilingual science teacher in private institutions in Bogotá and as a virtual content editor, pedagogical advisor in science didactics projects, and monolingual biology teacher, as well as in different science teaching projects. My research interests include science teaching, bilingualism in science, and digital content analysis in the educommunicative field.

Profiling Bilingualism in Science and Identities of Bilingual Science Teachers

In recent years, Colombia has been developing a road towards bilingualism with the use and appropriation of the English language (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2004). Private schools have gone further and implemented the use of English in spaces other than the language class, which has led to the teaching of subjects such as biology, social sciences, and mathematics in English. In the United States, this practice is referred to as "dual language education" (or bilingual education), whereas in Europe it has traditionally been called "content and language integrated learning" (CLIL).

From my personal experience in the field of bilingualism in science, I can say that the teaching-learning process of Biology in English is not traversed by deep epistemological reflections, at least in the institutions where I have worked as a bilingual Biology teacher, as they only require an intermediate level of English.

To understand the phenomenon, I conducted a research profiling that includes categories such as bilingualism in science, bilingual science teacher identity, translanguaging in science class, CLIL, and use and appropriations of bilingualism in science class.

Within the framework of decolonial thought, and analyzing what is happening with science teaching these days, it is necessary to rethink the teaching-learning processes of biology in this new context. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze how science teaching has been perceived as part of colonization processes. Although the science field stemmed from a positivist and orthodox current of thought, its teaching must give rise to other epistemologies; for this reason, I consider it important to make a distinction between scientific practices and educational practices. This distinction is necessary because the way we do science cannot be the same as the way we teach it. In the first case, the object of study is precisely that: an object. In the second case, there is no object of study: there are subjects with whom we work. From that perspective, it is impossible to think about science teaching the same way scientific knowledge is produced.

In the review I conducted, I found works related to bilingualism in science and the identity of the science teacher, some of which were interesting and pertinent. Such is the case of Suárez (2020), who says that content must be learned beyond proficiency in English and proposes working in translanguaging spaces (García & Kleyn, 2016). Suárez acknowledges that this pedagogical theory has been widely developed in the socio-linguistic field, but that it is completely new in the field of natural sciences. Likewise, the author develops the idea of generating equitable learning spaces for all students in multilingual contexts and proposes that students should report their findings using their communication resources, without language limiting their participation. The author reveals his identity as a bilingual teacher with Latin American origin, his concern for language and science teaching, and the struggles in understanding students´ learning of science, regardless of their communicative abilities in a given language. Surprisingly, the author recognizes that his struggles as a "translanguaging" teacher are still intense and that he is still seeking strategies to promote equity among his students. For the author, modeling in science is an extremely useful space to promote translanguaging practices.

Another interesting reference is Marco-Bujosa *et al*. (2020). From the viewpoint of a multilingual context, the work reflects on the identity of the science teacher and highlights that primary school teachers are not experts in science teaching; therefore, they have challenges when facing differential learning or students who do not speak English. The authors show their concern for the preparation of primary school teachers in science teaching, questioning the identity

of the science teacher. Likewise, the work of Maxwell-Reid (2020) argues that bilingual education in a monolingual context cannot use English in a static way; on the contrary, language must be dynamic and promote appropriations in students. The author criticizes the instrumentalization of English and the teaching of vocabulary in science class. Although the Colombian and Chinese contexts are quite different, they both share characteristics in the implementation of bilingual science education. The text also points out that prohibiting the use of the native language in class implies for students that English is the exclusive language to be always employed. Furthermore, the work of Amat *et al*. (2017) acknowledges that science teaching in English favors the learning of English, but not that of science. The study is concerned with the perceptions of primary school teachers of their university training and speaks of the fears that teachers face when teaching science in English.

The work of Heng & Tan (2006), who study the re-introduction of English in mathematics and science content to weave relationships with the globalized world, was carried out in the multicultural context of Malaysia between Chinese, Hindus and Malaysian people. It justifies the use of English in science and mathematics teaching but questions the loss of national ethnicity. The study also reviews the advantages and disadvantages of using English as the language of instruction in said fields.

Avraamidou (2014) studies the identity of the science teacher and reviews its construction and constitution, reflecting on the changing capacity of this feature. She takes James Paul Gee as a theoretical reference to work on the concept of identity and adds concepts such as personal stories, life stories, and narrative research. In her conclusions, she addresses the future paths in research on the science teacher´s identity, where identity is proposed as a dynamic feature that depends on other aspects such as the context, for which she concludes that identity must be studied as a process. Moreover, Lee *et al*. (2008) aim to explore the impact of language on science education. They acknowledge the underemphasis on the relationship between language and science, particularly given the perception of science as a universal subject that supposedly requires minimal linguistic consideration. This underscores the significance of approaching science teaching through the lens of language ideology. Similarly, Belhiah & Elhami (2014) highlight challenges associated with teaching and learning science in English. They point out that students often face difficulties in simultaneously grappling with the English language and comprehending scientific concepts.

Within the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) category we can highlight the work of Evnitskaya & Morton (2011), who determine that the use of CLIL benefits the learning and appropriation of English. This idea is reinforced

in the works of Hughes & Madrid (2020) and Lo & Fung (2020), who argue that this bilingual perspective does not delve into the understanding of non-linguistic issues; on the contrary, they find that students have much deeper learnings in their native language. Numerous studies on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) are evident. Only Karabassova (2020), who reveals the concern for the training of teachers who carry out bilingual education process, and Campillo *et al.* (2020), who seek to understand the points of view on CLIL of primary school teachers in a monolingual context, reveal said identities.

It should be noted that there are few studies on the identity of the bilingual science teacher, the study of bilingualism in monolingual contexts, and the epistemological relationships between the teaching-learning of science and the teaching-learning of languages. These issues will be addressed in the next section.

Problematizing the Identities of Bilingual Natural Science Teachers in Monolingual Contexts

Within the context of bilingualism in Colombia and the way bilingual science teachers´ identities in Bogotá are configured, I will conduct a study that covers various aspects of identity, since one of the main axes of my research deals with the identity of the bilingual science teacher. This is a broad research context due to the many aspects that can be analyzed in identity traits. Since the methodology is a multiple case study, I will work with teachers who work in bilingual private schools. However, teacher training programs will also have to be reviewed because, in terms of identity, it is necessary to review the pedagogical and didactic bases that teachers receive in their undergraduate programs and to check if they reflect on issues related to bilingual education. Likewise, the work will be conducted in a monolingual context, where most of the population uses only their native language (Spanish). This will allow us to think of bilingualism from a unique perspective when compared to other countries where the population speaks more than one native language.

The research will take place in private schools that work with science from a bilingual perspective. Since educational practices can also constitute a feature of science teachers´ identities, we will have to review what are some of the practices that occur inside and outside the classroom. The purpose is to identify how the relationships between these two conceptual bodies take place (teaching-learning of English and teaching-learning of science), and how this configures teachers´ identities. In the same way, it is essential to understand how the bilingualism process occurs within institutions, what are the teachers´ theoretical bases and how they unwrap in these processes, and what are their struggles and their perspectives on the bilingual process in science teaching. Another key aspect in science

teachers´ training programs is the nature of this training before assuming the bilingual process. In addition, we must know if teachers carry out any pedagogical or epistemological reflections on the process, if dialogues occur between school faculties for the construction and constitution of the syllabi, which universities have bilingual training programs for teachers and, if so, how they train them. Thus, there are two axes to analyze in science teachers´ training: 1) the practices within bilingual institutions; and 2) the lived experiences of the teachers who assume this process.

From the profiling , it is possible to interpret that there are certain processes of science teaching that tend to normalize: for example, processes such a s bilingualism in science in Colombia, identities in bilingual science teachers, and the epistemological relationships between English Learning and Teaching (ELT) and Science Learning and Teaching, have not received much academic attention, despite the fact that current job offers for teaching subjects such as Biology ask for bilingual teachers. Sadly, there are currently no studies dealing with these categories.

The concepts related to bilingualism in science have not been widely developed in the literature. In most of the investigations, the concern falls on how to generate equitable opportunities for multilingual students; therefore, it is necessary to generate research on other aspects related to bilingualism practices. One of these aspects is the identity of bilingual teachers: in Colombia, it seems that it is enough to speak English to teach it, and even more, to teach other topics such as Natural Sciences and Social Sciences. However, we need to ask the following questions: what is this identity? How is it constructed? How does it transform itself? How does it interact with other identities? What is its role in bilingualism processes? The Colombian case adds unique features to these questions, since it is possible to think, for example, about which social classes receive bilingual education and for what purpose. In the same way, it is necessary to think about why science teaching is conducted in English and how this is connected to teacher training, from which a question arises: where do bilingual science teachers acquire these skills? I consider, then, that there has been a reformulation of what it means to be a science teacher, and which has not arisen from the academy, because, although studies exist on the identity of the science teacher, there has been, so far, no work on the subject from the perspective of bilingualism.

I think that in the field of linguistics there have been conceptual, epistemological, didactic, and pedagogical developments that could help science teachers to understand what it means to teach their content with a language other than their native language. However, this knowledge must be analyzed as a whole. In the case of science teachers, I think they have been involved in an epistemological

displacement because they feel that their knowledge of the science field is placed in second place and proficiency in English, particularly the speaking abilities, is given first place, regardless of how English is used in a science class. Proof of this are the studies mentioned in the previous section and which show that the use of English in science class does not promote deep learning, but instead, it seeks a communicative instrumentalization in memory terms and the use of scientific vocabulary. Therefore, it is necessary to think about how to evaluate learning from a bilingual perspective, how teachers see themselves within this evaluation, and how they feel about facing this new challenge, which forces them to change their identities to adjust to the labor market supply. As described in this chapter, many times science teachers take the risk of applying to bilingual science teaching positions —some have the required skills while others are developing them—, so it is interesting to review how the process occurs within institutions and analyze how these processes configure identities or how teachers´ struggles resist them.

There are currently many bilingual schools in Bogotá, but some of them lack the proper academic development in bilingual education, particularly in the fields of natural sciences, social sciences, and mathematics, which are offered frequently in English. I consider that "bilingual" education processes have been normalized in the city and that the current science teaching training programs in universities, while offering different English language levels, reveal the absence of epistemological bets on bilingual education. I believe the question of the identity of bilingual science teachers should dig deeper into the question of the type of knowledge created in these practices. From my point of view, it is impossible to think that the use of another language for teaching does not change or reconfigure identities. Perhaps we as science teachers have neglected what happens at the social level with our practices and its direct repercussions on the processes and actors at school. Likewise, studies on the identities of pre-service teachers and in-service teachers have not been worked on and I believe that we have here a long way to go. From my personal experience I can say that in the teaching process there is a particular development of specific attitudes and skills, which are often typical of the working world. Likewise, there is a normalization in the profile of the science teacher: it seems it would be normal for them to be bilingual and to teach their content in another language, but in truth, teacher training programs have not reflected on this and, therefore, have ended up normalizing this teacher profile. I believe it is necessary to destabilize these "normalities" and question their origin, process, and objectives.

Nowadays, the process of bilingualism in Colombia is only developed from the viewpoint of English Language Teaching (ELT); however, it has other possibilities

at hand, such as the use of other modern languages or even native languages. A question arises here: what characteristics does the English language have to be considered as the language for communication within science classes? It is well known that English is the language of globalization and that there is a utopian need to make Colombia into a bilingual country (and I say "utopian" because, although English has entered our society from the North American culture and its audiovisual products, there are not many Colombian scenarios where there is a need to establish communication exclusively in English). Then, do schools intend to become the scenario where the use of English is mandatory? From my experience, I anticipate an affirmative answer. In schools, teachers are forced to speak English all the time, even outside the class, and students who communicate in Spanish in science class are penalized. It would be necessary, then, to think the extent to which this process should be bilingual, and the use of the native language be forbidden. Another concern arises here: the exclusivity of the use of English.

The Colombian context presents singularities that are not present in other countries. One is that we use only one language for communication (monolingualism). As I mentioned earlier, bilingualism in science has been widely studied from a multilingual perspective (contexts where students speak more than one language), but it has not been studied much in contexts where only one language is spoken. This context could well be Latin America , where most countries have Spanish as their main language, which gives the topic of bilingualism other characteristics: it is not the same, for example, to think of bilingualism for students who have different mother languages and their own cultural backgrounds, and bilingualism for students with the same mother tongue and with similar backgrounds; both are different types of bilingualism from their origin, intention, and methodology.

One essential aspect of this study is the use of English in monolingual contexts. Few studies are concerned with understanding what it means to be bilingual in a context such as Colombia, and even more, what it means to receive a bilingual education in the field of science. I believe there could be a very profitable encounter between two epistemologies, which can dialogue and create paths that emancipate bilingual education and prevent it from becoming an instrumental education, allowing teachers and students to understand natural phenomena and approach new challenges from the basis of both national and foreign cultures, therefore promoting a dialogue of knowledges. In some studies on the use of bilingualism in monolingual contexts, there is a concern about the loss of national identity when using a foreign language in content learning, which extends to deep content understanding; in the Colombian case, this is a

big concern. When we ask ourselves why it is necessary to teach science through bilingualism critically, much less in terms of decolonial thinking, we need to remember that the Colombian nation recognizes various native languages. A decolonial practice would be, in this context, to learn science in native languages (as opposed to English) or even giving rise to different modern languages, but then we have to ask ourselves the following: how does bilingualism benefit the teaching-learning processes of science? What languages are conducive to teaching science content?

Another feature of bilingualism in science that must be studied is the epistemological principles of the process. As I mentioned earlier, it is necessary to generate an encounter between the fields of English Language Teaching (ELT) and the field of Science Didactics. Although we know little about this relationship due to the processes of normalization, which assume that teaching sciences in English simply requires translating the content, it is not common to teach content bilingually in a language different than the native language. There are research questions within the ELT field that have not been considered in the realm of science didactics, and, conversely, there are unaddressed questions in science didactics that have not been explored in ELT. These two fields could mutually benefit from each other. I do not assume there is a relationship of superiority between the mentioned fields; on the contrary, I want to recognize that they are different, but not independent, lines of study, since both are concerned with the teaching-learning processes. I consider that from these two fields of research, another line of research could arise: the problematization of science teaching of science. From a bilingual perspective, this new line of research could look for intersections, encounters, and disagreements, aiming to arrive at a proposal of bilingualism that finds its meaning in the pedagogical work of teachers, without generating domination practices inside or outside the classroom and creating new possibilities of understanding instead of creating communication barriers, where students and teachers are heard. The bet is ambitious, but necessary, because the processes of bilingualism must be based on theoretical-pedagogical principles, which are constantly changing, and the epistemological relationship between language and science has not been extensively studied in the literature. Both fields have elements that, if put into dialogue, could generate new teaching-learning strategies that go beyond vocabulary or memorization, enriching the identities of science teachers.

Reflecting on all this configures our position as teachers and our connection to knowledge, and helps us to analyze what happens in science teaching in English, the struggles of science teachers in the workplace and the ways in which they configure their identities; all this can be studied within the field of English

Learning and Teaching (ELT). This research proposal is important because the number of colleges and schools adopting the teaching of content in English is increasing globally. Furthermore, I intend to discuss whether or not it is appropriate to adopt this type of teaching practice and enrich the field of ELT with a perspective that includes other ways of being a teacher in a foreign language, a perspective that allows us to think of English as the way to teach other content. Therefore, I aim to broaden the discussion on science teaching and learning beyond the use of English and to ascertain whether English is the destination or the means when universities propose bilingual science programs. Similarly, it is crucial to understand the characteristics of teaching natural sciences through bilingualism, as it has the potential to reshape science education itself. In addition to being a current issue, its relevance is of interest to the fields of science didactics and ELT education because science is a subject studied compulsorily in schools, which means that all Colombians have some connection to this subject.

In consequence, I seek to understand the phenomenon of bilingualism in science and how the identities of science teachers are configured within these practices in the Colombian context. This research will help to generate spaces for dialogue between the fields of ELT and Science Teaching and Learning through the analysis of science teachers´ training processes in the Colombian monolingual context, to generate our own views of what it means to be a bilingual science teacher. For this, I will use the decolonial perspective (Castro-Gómez, 2005) and the epistemologies of the south (De Sousa Santos, 2011) to analyze and understand if there is an instrumentalization of language in science classes and how this configures science teachers´ identities.

Purpose of the Work: Defining the Problem

There is a lack of studies on the phenomenon of bilingualism in science in Colombia. This is why little is known about the identities of science teachers who conduct these processes, their types of training or their fields of study, and even more, the pedagogical and epistemological bases they use to conduct this process. I find that bilingualism has been widely studied in multilingual contexts where students speak more than one language, but in monolingual contexts, such as Colombia, the topic has not been studied in depth. Therefore, my research study seeks to reveal the identities of bilingual science teachers based on their training, practices and relationships with other fields of knowledge. I consider that this research is fundamental to the practice of science teaching and the ELT field, and that there is still much work to be done in understanding the phenomenon of bilingualism in Colombia. This is why it is crucial to conduct research in this field so that it may have a real-time impact on school practices.

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ELT Research Agendas III continues the conversation started in the previous two volumes, which main objective has been to map the research interests of our students and our own as faculty. It has been our interest as doctoral program and as ELT researchers, to reflect critically upon the our field and to propose a research path that points at, not only the issues that we consider worth studying, but also the ways in which these studies are conducted.

The first chapter serves as a window into reconstructing the epistemological building of this major in ELT Education as the three authors (who happen to be the teachers in the major) tell their professional stories to become part of the program in this University. In the second chapter, Andrea Gallo lays out her interest to explore on the dynamics of the implementation of a language policy in a small town near Bogotá. In a change of gears, in chapter three Catherine Benavides, using her EFL classroom as an excuse, presents her research interest in which she deals with issues of diversity, intersectionality and interculturality. the perspective of an English teacher in a public school where cultural diversity is the norm but where somehow becomes invisible. Jeisson Mendez delves into ELT Colombian textbook authors, in chapter 4, and tries to figure out who they are, what their struggles are and how they relate to the publishing industry. Chapter five brings the concerns of Oscar Abella into how English Language teachers move around their critical identities in an attempt to show that teachers' identities are very complex and at times, paradoxical. Last chapter, written by Sebastián Figueroa proposes a groundbreaking topic in ELT and has to do with the identity of so called "bilingual science teachers" a topic which has not been widely explored and which might bring new ways of understanding what we understand by "bilingual education" and "bilingual teachers". We hope this book engages different ELT practitioners into a vibrant dialogic conversation at different levels.

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