

Delving into Colombian EL teachers' identities from their voices in neoliberal times: A narrative study.

Jhooni Albeiro Quintero González

Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas

School of Sciences and Education

Master's Program in Applied Linguistics to the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language

Bogotá, D.C., Colombia 2022

Delving into Colombian EL teachers' identities from their voices in neoliberal times: A narrative study.

Jhooni Albeiro Quintero González

Thesis director: Álvaro Hernán Quintero-Polo

A thesis submitted as a requirement to obtain the degree of M.A. in Applied Linguistics to the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language

Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas

School of Sciences and Education

Master's Program in Applied Linguistics to the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language

Bogotá, D.C., Colombia 2022

Note of acceptance

Thesis Director:

Álvaro Hernán Quintero-Polo Ed. D

Juror:

Malba Barahona Ph.D

Juror:

Adriana Castañeda Londoño Ed. D

Acuerdo 19 de 1988 del Consejo Superior Universitario.

Artículo 177: “La Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas no será responsable por las ideas expuestas en esta tesis”.

### **Acknowledgments**

First of all, I want to thank all the teachers who were part of this study. I would not have been able to conduct this research without their valuable voices and contributions.

Likewise, I am deeply grateful to my thesis director, professor Álvaro H. Quintero-Polo whose wisdom, patience, and experience guided me through the development of the thesis.

Also, I would like to thank all the professors who throughout their classes helped me to set the path in this study. Their expertise and professionalism played an important role in the completion of this thesis.

By the same token, I want to thank my family for always supporting me throughout hardships. Last but not least, I deeply appreciate my girlfriend's support and company during the process.

### **Abstract**

This paper centers on a narrative study that delved into English language teachers' voices in regard to their verbalized identity (re)construction when engaged in a reflexive and dialogical space in which storytelling was employed. This narrative study emerged from problematizing the principles, underpinning institutes for work and human development, which are rooted in the current national bilingual program. As a result, the adopted and adapted neoliberal discourses of the above-mentioned program and the legal measurements that strengthen them, allowed me to consider English language teachers have something to say and do about themselves in regard to ideologically-laden discourses fostered by the national bilingual program that are materialized at a private language institute in Bogotá. This, in turn, guided me to invite English language teachers to participate in a reflexive and dialogical space with the purpose of collecting their stories in order to account for the (re)construction of their identities through their own voices.

EL teachers' stories were collected through narrative interviews that were transcribed and analyzed from a socio-critical perspective using short story analysis (Barkhuizen, 2016). Findings suggest that, as opposed to powerful circulating discourses that have positioned EL teachers as emotionless, uncritical, and docile non-human beings that perpetuate neoliberal agendas, they claim their identity as human educators who attempt to contest a dehumanizing model between vertical and horizontal tensions with a humanistic dimensional agenda.

*Key words:* English language teacher identity, discourses, counter-discourses, neoliberalism, short stories.

**Table of contents**

<i>Acknowledgments</i> .....	5
<i>Abstract</i> .....	6
<i>Introduction</i> .....	10
<i>Chapter I: Statement of the problem</i> .....	13
My story: Unveiling ideologically-laden discourses in ELT .....	13
The national bilingual program and its principles.....	16
Research question.....	22
Research objectives .....	23
Rationale.....	23
<i>Chapter II: Theoretical Framework</i> .....	26
Epistemological underpinnings .....	26
Professional development: A neoliberal instrument .....	28
<i>Teacher as instructors: An essential gear to the neoliberal machinery</i> .....	30
<i>Teacher as instructors: Disciplinary docility endorsement</i> .....	34
A critical EL teachers' identity (re)construction.....	38
<i>A spinning coin: External and internal determining factors in identity construction</i> .....	38
<i>Dialogue, sense-making, and critical awakening: Tools for identity reconstruction embedded in narratives</i> .....	42
<i>Chapter III: Research Design</i> .....	46
Type of study.....	46
Participants .....	48
Role of the researcher: A catalyst .....	48
Going digital: Setting .....	50
Data collection procedure.....	51
Piloting process .....	56
Ethical considerations .....	56
<i>Chapter IV: Data Analysis</i> .....	58
Data Analysis Framework.....	58
Contesting a Dehumanizing Model Brought to ELT Education: The Paradox of the Robot with Emotions .....	63
Mariam's narrative .....	67
<i>Homogenized Students: Tug-of-war with the Methodology</i> .....	67

<i>Delving into Colombian EL teachers' identities from their voices in neoliberal times</i>	8
<i>Community Awareness: Echoing What's Been Banned</i> .....	71
Cosima's narrative.....	75
<i>From enchantment to tension: Am I a repetitive machine?</i> .....	76
<i>Debunking the idealization of the EL teacher: I am more than a level</i> .....	80
Andrea's narrative .....	84
<i>Problematizing marketing strategies: Human education at stake</i> .....	85
<i>The fearful path towards excellence</i> .....	89
Luis's narrative.....	95
<i>From salesman to teacher: Language as a human experience</i> .....	96
<i>The reproduction of values within a neoliberal mirage</i> .....	100
Chapter remarks .....	104
<i>Chapter V: Conclusion, Implications, and Further research</i> .....	106
Conclusions .....	106
Implications and Further Research.....	114
<i>References</i> .....	117
<i>Appendices</i> .....	129
Appendix 1 Semi-structured interview .....	129
Appendix 2 My story.....	129
Appendix 3 Reflective Guidelines for the Narrative Interview .....	130
Appendix 4 Consent form .....	131
Appendix 5 Chart 1 Teachers' narrative interviews transcription chart (example) .....	133
Appendix 6 Matrix 1 Short story analysis chart (example) .....	135
Appendix 7 Matrix 2 Emerging identities (example).....	139
Appendix 8 Matrix 3 Final step towards categories (example) .....	142

## **Table of tables**

Table 1 Media employed for memory activation.....	53
Table 2 Example of short story analysis .....	61
Table 3 Discourses and counter-discourses .....	64
Table 4 Participants' short stories.....	66
Table 5 Short story compilation.....	108
Table 6 Answer to research question .....	113



**Table of figures**

Figure 1 Four Synchronous Communication Type in Google Meet.....	51
Figure 3 Framework of analysis .....	59
Figure 4 Content and context.....	62
Figure 5 Contesting a dehumanizing model brought to ELT education: The paradox of the robot with emotions .....	65

## **Introduction**

This narrative study investigated into the (re)construction of English language teachers' identities in regard to determining ideologically-laden discourses at a private English language institute in Bogotá stemming from the current national bilingual program (NBP henceforth). As elaborated afterward, English language education in Colombia has been shaped by governmental policies executed through official documents that dictate why and how English must be taught in Colombia (e.g., Colombian Technical Standards - 5580 and Foundations for a bilingual and competitive nation, 2005). In the same vein, numerous authors (e.g., Usma, 2009a; González, 2010; Mora, Chiquito & Zapata, 2019) and official national documents published by the government (UdeA, n,d) have given an account of the history, characteristics, and hidden agendas behind it. These policies have unleashed a powerful structure around English language (EL henceforth) teaching and learning in Colombia that has resulted in performativity and quality practices at educational settings (Ball, 2003).

Bearing this in mind, the implementation of these policies in Colombia has been a subject of research, hence these attempts to increase Colombian citizens' level of English have been documented through the evidence of its inconsistencies and issues (Ayala & Álvarez, 2005; González, 2007; Guerrero, 2008; González, 2009; Escobar, 2013; Peláez & Usma, 2017). This process of application nationally has carried with it varied implications and effects on English language teachers' identity in the country from all levels of education (Guerrero, 2010; Guerrero & Quintero, 2016; Gomez, 2017; Camargo, 2018; Mendez, et al., 2019; Duran, 2017). Therefore, this narrative study will focus on the narratives of EL teachers who are teaching or have taught at a non-formal English institute, considering these educational settings have proliferated dramatically nationally (Mejia, 2002).

By the same token, their stories were verbalized in a reflexive and dialogical space (Freire, 1972) fostered through a narrative interview. The verbalization of their narratives accounted for what they had to do and say about themselves regarding circulating discourses underpinning their educational setting and teaching practice. This in turn allowed me to analyze from a socio-critical angle how teachers have made sense of circulating discourses rooted in their practice from their own life experiences. Then, as a result of the analysis, EL teachers' narratives shed light on how they (re)constructed themselves as human educators who strive between vertical and horizontal tensions to contest a dehumanizing model underpinned by neoliberal agendas that position them as passive implementers. Bearing this (re)construction in mind, I intend to account for the whole narrative study in five chapters.

In chapter I, I problematize how the NBP implemented in Colombia contains pervasive discourses endorsing a neoliberal ideology that branch out to language institutes and how they position English teachers as passive implementers. In the same train of thought, I claim that teachers have something to do and say about themselves regarding those pervading discourses. Also, in this chapter the research question, the objectives, and the rationale that guided me throughout this narrative study are laid out. Consequently, in chapter II, I will posit, from a socio-critical perspective, a theoretical discussion based on two main constructs: *Professional development: A neoliberal instrument* and *A critical EL teachers' identity (re)construction*. Afterwards, in chapter III, I will outline the type of study and how the participants became part of it along with my role as a researcher. In addition, in this chapter, I will also explain the decisions I made in terms of methodological procedures in order to foster a reflexive and dialogical space for EL teachers' identity (re)construction. Also, I will address the ethical considerations. Subsequently in chapter IV, I will describe and illustrate EL teachers' identity (re)construction through a main category called: *Contesting a Dehumanizing Model Brought to ELT Education: The Paradox of the Robot with Emotions*.

Lastly, to conclude this narrative study, I focus on the conclusions I drew from this reflexive exercise and discuss its implications for further research.

## **Chapter I: Statement of the problem**

This thesis presents the results of a narrative study carried out with EL teachers who are teaching or have taught at a private non-formal English institute in Bogotá. In Colombia, they receive the legal name *institutes for work and human development* (Law 1064, 2006). Hence, my objective in this chapter relies upon the documentation of a problematic situation which is summarized as follows: **English language teachers have something to say and do about themselves in regard to determining ideologically-laden discourses fostered by the NBP that have constituted the principles of a private institute for work and human development in Bogotá.**

The aforementioned problem statement comes from three main sources: My critical personal narrative (Vravirus, 2017) teaching in this educational setting, a literature discussion on the current national bilingual program, and a semi-structured interview answered by English language teachers. In this fashion, by having established the underpinnings of this narrative study, I will proceed to expose the research question that guided me throughout this narrative study, along with the main objectives set. In the end, it is my intention to put forward the rationale supporting this thesis. Consequently, with the purpose of this chapter, I will first narrate my own story teaching at a work-and-human-development institute where this discussion was conceived.

### **My story: Unveiling ideologically-laden discourses in ELT**

My teaching practice started at a work-and-human-development institute in Bogotá when I was still an undergraduate student at a public university. When I began to teach there, I adopted the institution's principles of teaching and learning English. This process made me believe that the sole purpose of teaching English relied on getting students to achieve a level of proficiency that would allow them to master the language to the level of a person from an

English-speaking country. This belief grew stronger as I kept attending classes at the university and teaching at the institution.

At the university, the classes were focused on methodology and second language acquisition processes. In the same vein, at the institute “experts” from foreign institutions used to provide training sessions on how to apply the institutional material given (e.g., videos, coursebooks and exams). In general, they trained us on how to teach English. They were part of the teacher professional development (TPD henceforth) established by the institution. Then, my view of language was shaped based on instrumental purposes as the focus of the TPD centered on students’ improvement in their proficiency only. It means I believed students needed to master the language only. For this, I conceived English as a neutral language. This is to say language to me was unrelated to social practices and focused only on proficiency (Guerrero & Quintero, 2009).

When I graduated from my undergraduate program, I decided to start my master's degree in applied linguistics to the teaching of English as a foreign language. Once there, I took classes with a professor who fostered a reflexive environment through dialogue upon my practices as an English teacher. This entailed questioning my identity within these practices carried out in the institute. By doing so, I understood that my role within the institute was that of a passive technician (Guerrero, 2010) who barely questioned the decisions made and the principles underpinning my workplace.

As I came to understand this, I realized that I was contributing to the reproduction of ideologies such as neoliberalism (Gallo & Quiñones, 2016) and globalization (Phillipson, 1992). As an example, I used to believe I was in constant competition with teachers from English-speaking countries (TESCs henceforth). I wanted to improve my skills and be the best at teaching as I believed coordinators would acknowledge me to be as good as TECSs to

get benefits (e.g., better salary and higher levels to teach). So, I often ended up caring more for proficiency than for socio-cultural awareness in my students (Escobar, 2013; Giroux, 1988). My argument back then was that English was important as it opened “doors” and English was a global language that was necessary for prosperity (Phillipson, 1992).

After having made sense of this, I also came to the conclusion that improving my instrumental teaching skills was necessary and important in the classroom; keeping in mind, that I could not change this model as it was too powerful and inherent in the Colombian English language teaching (ELT Henceforth). Nonetheless, I started to consider it pivotal to teach English to keep a balance between the instrumental side of it and a vision of education that was concerned with positive social transformation (Samacá, 2012). This balance for me became a burden as the power dynamics in the institution dragged me into focusing only on the instrumental side of language. For instance, I was constantly observed and monitored in classes by academic coordinators. Because of this, I did not venture to teach English for other purposes as I feared losing my job considering it was mandatory to follow the established methodology.

In the same train of thought, in weekly meetings, the topics addressed were related to replicating the company's principles that were customer-oriented (e.g., how to be assertive when communicating bad messages, customer satisfaction, and customer experience, among others). The majority of the coordinator's decisions relied upon customers' satisfaction at the expense of teachers' opinions. Therefore, customer service was an important discourse in weekly meetings. These discourses caused tensions in the workplace. As an example, I often had informal chats with fellow teachers at work and they expressed their concerns. Some of the comments were: “I feel that my integrity is below of what the client says, no matter what I say the client is always right” (My own translation), “As a teacher, one has to be a clown

sometimes to make students happy, or else they say your class is boring...that is a straight complaint” (My own translation). These comments made me think the teachers were problematizing the everyday practices and in addition, they were exposing traces of their identity within the institution; as they talked about how they perceived and were perceived within the institution and what they thought about it.

In accordance with my personal story, EL teachers were trained to adopt and adapt methodologies with the purpose of delivering a product (i.e., English) to clients (i.e., students) as if ELT were a business and not an educational process. Although, these practices exposed in my story were exerted by the institution; I became aware they were the result of a bigger political cascade of consequences derived from policy implementation and appropriation by the government (Usma, 2009b). In this sense, having a different perspective on what could imply teaching English, made me ponder my identity within the institution and in general, the identity of EL teachers within the NBP. Because of this, I became interested in learning about the principles behind the NBP considering there are visible implications on teachers' identities working at institutes for work and human development as I think my case was. Thus, in the following lines, I will engage in a brief literature discussion about the NBP implementation and its discourses in relation to Colombian EL teachers' identity.

### **The national bilingual program and its principles**

The NBP that got underway in 2004 has come with a series of laws, decrees, and reforms that have standardized, regulated, and dictated the characteristics of EL teaching and learning in Colombia (S.M. Gómez, 2017). Within this process, there are principles that deserve attention as they are closely related to teachers' identity (Guerrero, 2010). For this reason, I will expand the connection between the NBP implementation and EL teachers' identity.



The aforementioned implementation has been highly criticized due to its decontextualization and European origin (Ayala & Álvarez, 2005) since it denies local knowledge (González, 2007) and the existing multiculturalism in Colombia (Mora, Chiquito & Zapata, 2019). The detachment from local realities comes from the exclusive place English language has been given by the government. Guerrero (2008) suggests the concept of *bilingualism* was reduced by the program, as it has been regarded as speaking English only. Then, it positions English as a privileged language in the country (Mejía, 2002) and the language of success that has become “essential” in the country (Mejia, 2012). The indicated privileged treatment of English comes from the government as they adopt and adapt foreign models and the discourses that come with them for the acceptance of an imaginary international community that is considered authority (Khamisi, 2004). In this light, this process entails the silent adoption and circulation of discourses such as competitiveness (Usma, 2009a; Villegas, 2017), performativity, and quality (Ball, 2003; Guerrero & Quintero, 2021).

The above-mentioned discourses are loaded with neoliberalism and globalization ideologies. This is to say, the ELT field in Colombia has been made into a business in which companies compete to sell English as a product and in the process, anyone, involved in it, is dragged into quality and efficacy discourses. In addition, the companies that foster these dynamics nurture the idea that English is necessary for the current globalized world we live in. Usma (2009) claims the NBP has entailed the instrumentalization and standardization of English as a foreign language (EFL Henceforth) teaching and learning under the ambiguous concept of ‘quality’ seeing language as a structure of grammar and words in a void. This ideology turns English into a neutral and artificial language since it is taken as a functional vehicle for communication that overlooks its dynamic and social dimension (Guerrero &

Quintero, 2009). This view of language is best represented by the adoption of the common European framework of reference that seeks proficiency (Ayala & Álvarez, 2005).

The specified discourses are normalized and reproduced through the NBP as the ever-chased pursuit of proficiency sought by the program is disseminated in all educational settings and it influences EL teachers' identity construction. This consideration, keeping in mind they are the ones who must strive to teach English language under the established rules (Guerrero & Quintero, 2016). In this process, teachers are involved in discourses of idealization and marginalization (Quintero & Guerrero, 2018). The idealization and marginalization stem from the *fallacy of the native speaker* (Phillipson, 1992). This is to say teachers must obtain a C1 native-like proficiency resembling speakers from English speaking countries as they are taken as a source "of understanding and capability in terms of EFL educational practices" (Estacio & Cely, 2018. p. 218). The fact of being Colombian English teachers puts them out of the idealized image of the "perfect" English teacher which ultimately marginalizes them (Martinez, 2018). Then, the of not-good-enough teacher identity assigned by the NBP and its principles is the result of viewing language as proficiency.

Moreover, language as proficiency also reinforces the idea that English teaching is a simple act of transferring knowledge, which places EL teaching and learning as a mechanical process carried out by teachers as implementers. This identity, required to follow the NBP, has been unveiled by Guerrero (2010) who states that EL teachers are represented as implementers/technicians in official documents that stem from the NBP. The specified identity needs to be reinforced in educational settings through TPD in cascade models (Yoon et al., 2007). Within this type of TPD model in which "experts" instruct teachers on "how to teach", they have little to no space to propose alternatives when it comes to teaching in

formal jobs. Let alone their opinions about the implementation are considered (González, 2007) and as a consequence their voices silenced (Mendez et al., 2019).

Another important aspect to consider in the implementation of the NBP is the regulation through documents advocating for quality. In Colombia, the Norma Técnica Colombiana NTC 5580 (Colombian Technical Standard) is the official document that regulates institutes for work and human development. The main purpose is to establish quality through guidelines and also to reify the NBP principles above mentioned, which in turn industrialize ELT education in Colombia (Usma, 2009a).

Having revised the principles that underlie the NBP and therefore the education I used to teach; I became interested in documenting how fellow teachers felt within the institution in relation to the NBP. Also, I wanted to find out if they had similar perceptions to the ones mentioned in my story. To do so, I designed a semi-structured interview (Richards, 2009) that contained initially four main questions (See appendix 1) to cover the topics and some follow-up questions as the interview went along. Consequently, I invited publicly teachers online through several social networks considering the pandemic situation and five teachers reached out back to me to participate in it. These fellow teachers had been working for more than two years at that time in the same work-and-human-development institute I used to teach at. This brief semi-structured interview was carried out on Google Meet. After that, I transcribed the videos and analyzed the excerpts I considered were related to the traces of their identity, either assigned or claimed (Buzzeli & Johnston, 2002). After analyzing the data collected the following conclusions emerged.

From the results of the data gathered in teachers' semi-structured interview, I learned they were aware of discourses rooted in the NBP circulating in their educational setting. In the same fashion, that TPD is deemed as training for two purposes: The first one is to position

teachers as passive technicians who transfer knowledge blindly in a top-down model and also that their voice is silenced since their expertise on EL learning and teaching is not heard. The second is that the main purpose is to instruct students to master the language for the benefit of a business.

The above considerations stem from teachers' answers. Then, the first question: *How do you think the institution perceives you as an English teacher?* was aimed to find out how they thought the institute perceived them as English teachers. Nataly, one teacher stated that the institute saw her as a reliable professional, however at the same time as a seller of English as a product:

As I was saying; they see us with a professional eye, but then I also feel that sometimes they see us as sellers of a product. (Excerpt 1, Nataly's semi-structured interview. My own translation).

Moreover, Andrea another teacher felt as a part of a machine that is easy to replace:

I believe that the institution sees me as a gear of a machinery, that is, a movable part, yes...a part that can be missing and can be easily replaced (Excerpt 2, Andrea's semi-structured interview. My own translation)

In regard to the second question: *How do you see yourself within the institution?* I intended to grasp how they felt as EL teachers within the institution from their own perspective. Two of them saw themselves as facilitators who provide students with the tools to learn English. One teacher perceived she had no voice in decision-making and that it affected her personal life. Lastly, the other teacher stated that she tried to teach out of the box by having students go beyond the established procedures. I infer these answers brought up the issue of identity formation within tensions rooted in ubiquitous discourses in language institutes related to the principles exposed in the literature discussion above.

To conclude, the other two questions were: *what do you think your role within the NBP is, in relation to the institution you teach at?* and *what do you think about the NBP?* The

indicated questions were related to how they perceived their role within a broader dimension keeping in mind the NBP. One point of convergence in the answers state teachers were aware that the ultimate goal in the NBP and their role is to instruct the students to master English for purposes related to competitiveness in a globalized world. Nevertheless, they problematized the NBP from the following angle: Supporting the program but criticizing the government's actions in terms of the implementation for its success (See excerpt 3)

It's an excellent initiative because we do need it, I mean everyone in general needs English these days... ahm although I think it needs more help from the government in terms of money... (Excerpt 3, Darwin's semi-structured interview. My own translation).

In the same train of thought, Andrea problematized the NBP from another angle in which the implementation is decontextualized and serves empty purposes for the country (See excerpts 4 and 5).

It is not very coherent, first with the profiles of the Colombian people, second with the situation they are living in... (Excerpt 4, Andrea's semi-structured interview. My own translation).

The national plan of bilingualism that aims to make us speak English effectively in the future as a society does not achieve it, it does not achieve it because in itself they are only English programs that teach it as an instruction, that only teach how to speak it, but not for what reason to speak it... (Excerpt 5, Andrea's semi-structured interview. My own translation)

The answers provided by the teachers give an account of how they have different perceptions of their identity within the institution and how the NBP has influenced their setting and practices at a first glance. Most of them are aware of some of the principles pervading the institutional practices and their positions towards the goals are divided into English as an important matter and English as an empty language that serves no meaningful purpose in the Colombia context. Last but not least, two of the teachers problematized how the industry discourses are rooted in education. In other words, they disagreed with having to

go through customer service training often, since they thought their environment was educational.

From the data gathered, the general perception is that there are discourses that come from the NBP circulating in teaching practices at work-and-human-development institutes. Also, TPD is deemed as training to best apply the methodology of the institution in order to get students to master the language, and that the teachers have no voice in regards to their opinions on how English is taught and learned. It means teachers were imposed the identity of passive technicians that blindly transfer knowledge.

Considering the three parts presented, the genuine research problem relies on the fact teachers have something to do and say about their own professional identities in face of ideologically-laden discourses circulating at institutes for work and human development. In the same fashion, how teachers have tackled the effects and tensions on their identities due to these discourses within the ubiquitous principles fostered by the NBP. Thus, I decided to provide teachers with a space based on reflexivity and dialogue in order for them to (re)construct their professional identities in a bottom-up exercise through the use of short stories (Barkhuizen, 2016; Barkhuizen, 2020). The (re)construction is founded on the fact teachers always have something to do and say about themselves (Barkhuizen et al., 2014) and that their voices are valuable since they are the principal actors in education and policy implementation. Subsequently, the question and the objectives that guided the present narrative study are exposed as follows:

### **Research question**

- How do EL teachers (re)construct their identities as professionals of language education through life stories in face of ideologically-laden discourses of work-and-human-development institutes?

### **Research objectives**

- To comprehend counter-discourses constituted when EL teachers (re)construct their identities through life stories in institutes for work and human development.
- To analyze how EL teachers make sense of the determining ideologically-laden discourses embedded in institutes for work and human development.

### **Rationale**

In this section, it is my intention to discuss the importance of carrying out this narrative study in the field of applied linguistics. In this respect, I will elaborate on how this narrative study contributes to the lines of investigation *discourse studies within educational contexts* and *processes of teacher education and development*, which are part of the Master's Program in Applied Linguistics to the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language. Finally, I will argue that this study may serve as a source of information on policy-making processes in Colombia in regard to ELT education from teachers' own voices. Keeping in mind their voices will be heard and valued in the sense their stories can inform the ELT education policy-makers in the process for a more egalitarian and just social order.

This narrative study intends to comprehend counter-discourses in EL teachers' identity (re)construction and analyze how EL teachers make sense of determining ideologically-laden discourses. Having established this, I argue that in this study, discourse production and reproduction in relation to EL teachers' identities, is framed in a narrative paradigm. Hence, this thesis is classified within Critical Discourse Studies (Dijk, 2009). As a consequence, this study contributes to the investigative line *discourse studies within educational contexts* as my objective is to unravel ideologies through the understanding of the teachers' counter-discourses in regard to the powerful ideologically-laden discourses reified in institutes for work and human development.

As being in the line of educational discourses, it is pivotal to generate discussion in regard to the implications of global north discourses (Menezes, 2008) adopted and adapted in the global south. As stated in the problem statement, the NBP is an adaptation of a European context and therefore it has been prone to be at the center of discussion for its disconnection from the Colombian socio-cultural reality (Ayala & Álvarez, 2005). I believe this ongoing debate on external policies influencing Colombian EL teachers' identities, is necessary as it involves power/knowledge relations where there are winners and losers. To that end, totalizing and taken-for-granted discourses need to be examined in order to maintain a balance through bringing up teachers' counter-discourses. Hence, this study will shed light on the (re)construction of EL teachers' identities from the global south (Barahona, & Toledo-Sandoval, 2022a) specifically in the Colombian context.

In the same train of thought, I consider that EL teachers' identity is (re)constructed, maintained, and negotiated primarily through discourse (Gee, 1996; Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). In this fashion, this narrative study also contributes to the research line *processes of teacher education and development*. In the sense that, through EL teachers' stories more comprehension is fostered in regard to teachers' beliefs, counter-discourses, ideologies, and practices which can unfold relevant and insightful aspects to consider in their identities in relation to teacher education programs.

Bearing in mind instrumental purposes to ELT education in Colombia are predominant in most educational settings (Usma, 2009a) based on the argument that English allow individuals to get access to more prestigious economic opportunities in Latin American contexts (Barahona, & Toledo, 2022a) teacher education programs might get insight into alternative ways for the implementation of their programs. One outlook concerning on the teacher identity from their lived human experiences might open the possibility to consider teacher education from a reflexive and dialogical point of view, leaving aside the focus on



accountability such as standardization, certification or evaluation. This assertion considering that an instrumental view disfigures the role of educators as actors of social change (Barahona, & Ibaceta, 2022b).

Finally, another aspect to consider is the relation between EL teachers' stories and policy-making processes in Colombia. As I have stated in the problem statement, teachers through the principles of the NBP have been assigned the identity of passive implementers in face of ideologically-laden discourses in top-down policy implementation. Thereby, this narrative study will cast light on their opinions, reflections, and thoughts in regard to reified practices in their educational setting. Having said this, it is my desire that their voices are heard and valued in this study, since as Moen (2006) has stated, teachers' voices are virtually absent from public debate on teaching and learning.

## **Chapter II: Theoretical Framework**

This study aims at voicing EL teachers' identity (re)construction within pervasive ideologically-laden discourses circulating in institutes for work and human development. Subsequently, in this chapter, I will present my epistemological stand, which stems from a socio-critical perspective followed by a theoretical discussion between the following constructs: *Professional development: A neoliberal instrument* and *A critical EL teachers' identity (re)construction*. In the former construct, I will discuss how I understand neoliberalism and how it has been subtly installed in the concept of teacher professional development. Afterwards, how through legal measurements stemming from the neoliberal principles of the NBP the teacher has been assigned the identity of passive implementer and its implications. On the other hand, for the latter construct, I will elaborate on the connection among factors such as circulating discourses, own counter-discourses, dialogue, reflexivity, and narratives as they are intertwined when it comes to the (re)construction of EL teachers' identity critically and discursively.

### **Epistemological underpinnings**

Considering the nature of this narrative study, the discussion will be developed from a socio-critical perspective (Mclaren & Kincheloe 2007, Kincheloe & Mclaren, 2011; Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2012). From this perspective, reality is not taken-for-granted in a positivistic sphere, but rather it is questionable rejecting notions of objectivity and truth (Steinberg & Kincheloe 2012). It seeks to reconsider assumptions of reality by unveiling factors related to unequal and dominant social orders. This perspective allowed me as a researcher to tap into "uncomfortable" discussions within relations of power, where winners and losers are made visible (Kincheloe and Mclaren, 2011).

Considering the scope of this perspective, it is pertinent to highlight that power exerted through economic and political factors which influence teachers' practice in the classroom, generates inequality (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2007). Bearing this in mind, aspects related to power are important to keep them in the center of constructive criticism. In the same vein, by embracing this position I foster a "discourse of possibility" (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2011, p. 287) that is aimed at establishing the bases for an equal and egalitarian social order. In the same train of thought, this study is not intended to fit into a mold influenced by instrumental or technical rationality. Instead, it is based on the critical understanding of circulating discourses loaded with a neoliberal ideology as a means to make sense of its implications on Colombian EL teachers' identity.

By adopting the above-mentioned perspective, I intend to problematize the concept of TPD as a tool utilized to perpetuate and legitimate an identity of passive implementers in EL teachers at the service of a neoliberal ideology. The legitimization of this identity takes place in the social-discursive setting and ultimately is negotiated by teachers internally through their reflexivity (Wenger, 1999). Considering this, individuals adopt a myriad of identities in order to cope and adapt themselves to the circumstances (Goffman, 1959). This assertion could lead to conclusions where teachers are judged by their "discrepancies" (e.g., Zein, 2017) in what they express and what they really do in their teaching practice due to an alleged lack of coherence. By having mentioned this assumption, it is relevant to state that this is not the purpose of this narrative study. Alternatively, I aspire to shed light on how EL teachers have tackled and dealt with those tensions, where an emergent positionality is verbalized in life stories.

In the same line of thought, I advocate for an ever-changing, multiple, and conflicting type of identity that is in a constant internal struggle with respect to all-present discourses (Maclure, 1993). This vision of identity is detached from the essentialized, fixed-centered

type of identity imposed by political and institutional discourses. To accomplish this endeavor, it is necessary to be aware of the external forces and discourses that shape our identity. In this sense, I believe it is necessary to deem teachers as critical professionals who problematize their world (Freire, 1972). Also, I consider that the identity imposed in neoliberal spheres has made it difficult for them to negotiate their identities (De Fina, 2011) and through narratives, they can do so by reconstructing it critically.

Having taken an epistemological stand, I present a connection between neoliberal discourses and EL teacher professional development. I believe TPD has been utilized as a tool that replicates industrial practices within educational settings such as institutes for work and human development. By the same token within this dynamic, EL teachers are positioned as passive implementers who are expected to comply diligently. Subsequently, I will address factors such as circulating discourses, own counter-discourses, reflexivity, and dialogue which are intertwined in the process of critical EL teacher identity (re)construction in verbalized life stories.

### **Professional development: A neoliberal instrument**

In order to establish a connection between neoliberalism and TPD, I will first outline the main principles of a neoliberal ideology and why they are problematic for the ELT education in Colombia based on David Hardy's (2005) perspective. Thus, in this construct, I argue that TPD has been utilized as a tool for the reproduction of neoliberal ideologies in which positioning teachers as instructors serves this purpose.

In Colombia, there has been an adoption of a neoliberal model in terms of politics and economy (Gallo & Quiñones, 2016). These economic and political practices carried out by the government are based on the belief that well-being in the human being is fostered through the free development of their capabilities and entrepreneurial freedoms where private

property, free market and trade are at the core in the system (Hardy, 2005). From my understanding, what is considered freedom in the market turns into competitiveness within a framework of performativity. From this idea, I consider that what is problematic is that these practices display a culture of individualism which end up becoming hegemonic practices of domination from elite groups to others (Foucault, 1988b; Dijk, 2009; Gallo & Quiñones, 2016). The aforementioned neoliberal discourses of competitiveness and performativity result in practical realizations in the ELT field that fosters inequality. For instance, Colombian teachers have to compete to get a job based on a certification or they compete against teachers from English speaking countries to get a better salary (Martinez, 2018).

Another consequence of a neoliberal model in ELT in Colombia in a broader sense, consists of companies utilizing English language as a commodity (Usma, 2009a). Keeping in mind this view, English is understood as a language to be learned as perfect as possible to get social and economic benefits (Phillipson, 1992). This view establishes the grounds for a dehumanizing banking model of education (Freire, 1972). In other words, teachers transfer knowledge to students overlooking their criticality to question this knowledge. The indicated model sets the ground to reproduce passivity in students which contributes to the benefit of elite groups (i.e., big corporations) (Usma, 2009a). Similarly, in this model of education fostered through educational programs such as the National Bilingual Program is potentially a limitation for EL teachers to dabble in society as agents of change (Barahona, & Toledo, 2022a).

The NBP in which “bilingual” means to speak English (Guerrero, 2008) has been implemented as a result of political, economic, and social forces enacted by powerful English-speaking countries (Phillipson, 1992). Along with this implementation, there has been a body of Colombian scholars and researchers who have questioned it, as to how and for what purposes the program has been implemented (Ayala & Álvarez, 2005; González, 2007;

Guerrero, 2008; Guerrero, 2010; González, 2009; Escobar, 2013; Peláez & Usma, 2017, S.M. Gomez, 2017, Quintero, 2009). Such implementation has come with a series of legal documents, decrees, and laws that have reinforced the standardization and marketization of English learning and teaching (Usma, 2009a) under muddled discourses of “quality” and “accountability” (Guerrero & Quintero, 2009). These concepts have been reinforced through standards (e.g., NTC 5580 - 5555) issued by several quality-related institutions such as the Instituto Colombiano de Normas Técnicas y Certificación (ICONTEC for its initials in Spanish).

The aforementioned practices lie beneath a neoliberal model installed in Colombia. As a consequence, it appears to lead institutions to foster ideas of teachers as instructors in terms of TPD. In this vein, “training and updating” has been legitimized by ICONTEC, (2007, p. 11) as a requirement. The normalization through those and other official papers provides validity to vertical relations, in this way, training implies instructing teachers on how to do and leaving aside what they think and resulting in their voices being silenced. As a result, teachers as instructor are induced to be subjects who follow methodologies passively (Kumaravadivelu, 2003), without a chance to express their opinions about them. In this way, teachers as instructors under the standardized and institutional concept of TPD suit the reproduction and normalization of neoliberal ideologies in educational settings.

### ***Teacher as instructor: An essential gear to the neoliberal machinery***

In this subsection, I will argue that the concept of TPD is fostered for the utility of institutions in terms of quality and competitiveness. That being so, I will characterize TPD as being utilized for an instrumental purpose that positions EL teachers as instructors. Subsequently, I will discuss that this identity is essential for the legitimization and reproduction of a ubiquitous neoliberal system.

TPD has been conceptualized as a continuous reflective process in which the teacher evolves professionally shaping an identity that over time leads to understanding themselves and their own teaching practices (Richards & Farrell, 2005; Díaz-Maggioli, 2003). The indicated evolutionary process as stated by Díaz-Maggioli (2003) serves the essential purpose of promoting 'effective teaching' for students' learning needs. According to Richards and Farrel (2005), this process entails two folds: Teacher training and development. In the former, the authors state that it aims at answering immediate goals in the workplace. It involves understanding basic concepts and principles to apply in teaching. The figure of an external "expert" (Guerrero & Quintero, 2021) is stronger, then it is top-down in nature as teachers are positioned as receivers. In the latter, it refers to life-long growth, which means teachers reflect upon everyday actions in the classroom in the long term. This is what the authors deem as a "bottom-up" process. Nonetheless, I consider, teacher development as these authors propose, is not "bottom-up" either. This is because, in one way or another, a teacher still adapts or adopts external models of self-improvement needs instead of proposing own theories of practice in the ELT field (Segura, 2022). This is argued because, the authors show examples of goals, which are instrumentalist in nature as they place teachers as subjects who have to adopt an understanding of SLA processes, lesson development, and theories.

The above-mentioned concept of TPD has been challenged up to some extent by Hardy (2012). The author suggests TPD is a political, situated, multifaceted, and "reflexive social practice involving the active decision-making by individuals and groups under the specific social settings in which they live and work." (Hardy, 2012. p. 1). This concept of TPD is detached from what institutions have established in Colombia and it would be perceived as bottom-up. Similar definitions have been elaborated by Colombian authors as I present as follows.

In Colombia, there are authors who have compiled local knowledge on TPD. For instance, Cárdenas et al (2010) go through a literature review exposing what has been said internationally (e.g., Richards & Farrell, 2005; James, 2001) and locally (e.g., González, 2003; Vergara et al, 2009) in terms of TPD. The authors suggest adopting the development model of TPD under the lenses of the post-method theory (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). This in turn entails nurturing the reflection and research from teachers to create their own meaningful knowledge and practice. It means that this model proposed by the authors is more contextualized in the sense, that teachers are empowered to create significant knowledge from their local realities. Notwithstanding, in Colombia, the NBP regime rooted in an ever-chased pursuit of native-like proficiency for neoliberal purposes (Estacio & Cely 2018) makes no room for teachers' leadership in the creation of local knowledge.

What I argue about is that any model of TPD based on the improvement of English in students as the ultimate goal is contributing to a neoliberal machinery directly or indirectly positioning the teacher as instructors. In such manner, the identity of a teacher instructor fosters passivity in teachers and students, as the focus is on language proficiency transmission where quality and competitiveness are at their prime. This is to say that language is not perceived as a social practice that can have real implications on social actors, but rather as a static and neutral language untouched by society (Quintero & Guerrero, 2009). Given this, I agree with Estacio and Cely (2018) when they claim that professional development needs to be seen as resistance through the reflection upon discourses and practices behind the teaching-learning process as I consider this vision moves away from the training-oriented model deeply.

Another crucial point to remark is that in literature two principal sources for TPD exist: teachers' own desire to grow professionally (González et al.,2009) and the context in which teachers are in. For instance, when teachers are required to embrace TPD as a result of



institutional policies. This idea is supported by Yilmaz's (2016) study, which is based on university administrators' positioning, who also sponsor TPD. The author suggested that TPD activities are crucial for institutions to reach "perfection". As a consequence, institutions play a considerable role in TPD, teaching skills, and knowledge. This supports my claim that institutions regard success as *effective teaching* and *student achievement* as the ultimate goal.

The outcomes or goals of *effective teaching* are constantly measured in positivistic terms. In this light, research has turned into studies to discover "best practice" (Connell, 2009). As an example, Zein (2017) investigated the professional development needs of primary English teachers, arguing that the study could inform teacher educators and educational policymakers to design a framework that addresses teachers' needs. The concept of TPD adopted by the author relies upon the same instructional efficacy-oriented type of definition. The researcher found that teachers' needs were: in terms of language, pedagogy, and knowledge. The unveiled needs are instructional in nature and fit the purpose of the institution to teach English better.

Moreover, TPD has been imposed in 'cascade models' (Yoon et al, 2007; Gonzalez, 2007) in private institutions. This is mainly due to the educational settings adopting European models to teach English with the "aid" of "experts" (Guerrero & Quintero, 2009) promoted by the government. The adoption is portrayed by language institutes, schools and universities as something positive in order to attract more clients (i.e., students) and position in the market (Cárdenas et al., 2010). The above-mentioned top-down training-based model reinforced the "rigid role relationship between theorists and teachers" (Kumaravadivelu, 2003. p. 9). Guerrero and Quintero (2021) in their study, grounded "experts" as privileged by the government in three broad categories: International agencies, national agencies, and university professors. To this extent, in language institutes, the most noticeable ones are 'international agencies'. Since, they provide the coursebooks, exams, and methodologies used

in institutes. They seem to exert more influence over local matters than local officials (Munck, 2005, cited in Usma, 2009b).

Given this, it is a must for teachers to implement foreign models which end up overlapping teachers' self-initiative or innovation in their teaching, especially at private institutes for work and human development (Rendón, 2019). This is because teacher agency would not comply with the standards of "quality" and would "awkwardly" disrupt the neoliberal machinery. Thus, for the educational system to preserve its correct functioning under the lenses of neoliberal agendas, it is necessary to accentuate in teachers a firm docility (Foucault, 2002). In this sense, I will to elaborate on the power mechanisms employed to endorse this docility in teachers.

### ***Teacher as instructors: Disciplinary docility endorsement***

In this subsection, I seek to unfold the mechanisms of disciplinary control to endorse teachers' docility in order to maintain functioning systems of power where neoliberalism is at the core in Colombian ELT education. First, I will address how the market, managerialism, and performativity have deployed globally in education (Ball, 2003). Afterwards, I will present the following Foucauldian mechanisms: Diving practices, hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment and the examination relying on his studies of objectification (Foucault, 1988b).

Insomuch as stated earlier, private English institutes are constantly carrying out strategies and procedures of TPD to maintain teachers as instructors, in alignment with standards (e.g., workshops, training sessions, and teacher evaluation). According to Ball (2003), the constant compliance with standards comes from a global education reform and with it three interrelated *policy technologies*: The market, managerialism, and performativity. I draw on Ball's definition of these technologies as "calculated deployment of techniques and

artifacts to organize human forces and capabilities into functioning networks of power” (p. 216). The above definition is discussed by Connell (2009) in regard to how it has affected the Australian education system and how it has impacted school teachers. The author states that it is a global process where there is an emergent and imposing new apparatus of certification and regulation for teachers.

The above-indicated global process has taken place also in Latin American countries. As an example, Salinas (2017) explored how macro and micro contextual factors have influenced the formation of EFL teachers' identity in education reforms in Chile. The researcher collected data from deep semi-structured interviews and focus groups applied on twelve EFL teachers. The author suggests the macro contextual environment has turned into bureaucracy and an incoherent EFL national curriculum. As a result, teachers' identity was weakened in the sense they ended up being positioned as bureaucrats in their jobs and hence as passive implementers.

Considering Connell's claims as to the new global processes being adopted in schools, I rely on the concept of *objectification* explained by Gruenfeld et al. (2008). The authors define it as a way to subjugate individuals in order to utilize them with the purpose of obtaining a personal benefit. In Foucauldian terms, it is defined as *technologies of power* “which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination...” (Foucault, 1988a, p. 18). According to Foucault (1988b) in his studies of objectivization the subject is dominated in *dividing practices*. The author suggests this process entails objectivizing the individual in dichotomies of valid or not valid. For instance, it is determined “what is a “good” or “bad” practice, which programs and institutions can be certified, which teachers should or should not be hired or fired, and what credentials can be granted to students and by whom” (Usma, 2009b, p. 32).

This type of domination is present in various Colombian educational levels and institutions, due to the regime of the NBP and its underpinnings. As an example, Rendón (2019) explored how a group of EL teachers teaching at a work-and-human-development institute constructed their identities under institutional policies, including methodologies and rule systems. Relying on semi-structured interviews and a focus group, the researcher found teachers adopted a binary position when being or not observed by superiors. On the one hand, they made the system “work” by presenting themselves as “good teachers” (Connell, 2009). However, when not being observed they changed the methodology according to what they felt comfortable with. By labeling teachers as good or bad, the institute is exerting dominance to maintain a discourse of “effectiveness” and “efficiency”. With these dominant discourses and policy requirements, EL teachers have been idealized under parameters of efficacy (Mendez, et al, 2019).

As in Rendon’s study and as I have experienced myself (See chapter I) when it comes to institutes for work and human development the environment spins around an *audit culture* (Connell, 2009. p. 6). The *audit culture* is a set of practices based on positivistic trends that measure competitiveness in terms of productivity, ‘quality’, ‘excellence’, or ‘best practice’. These practices are substantiated as it is considered important by English institutes to show prospective clients (i.e., students) that they comply with standards and regulations that would allow them to be competitive in the *knowledge economy* (Guile, 2006).

In the same train of thought, Giroux (1983) states that “schools provided different classes and social groups with the knowledge and skills they needed to occupy their respective places in a labor force...” (p. 258). I agree with Giroux in the sense he states that in the theory of reproduction, schools are apparatus that reproduce and legitimate imperatives in terms of economic ideologies. In the process, EL teachers are deemed as soldiers trained under the lenses of teacher professional development in a neoliberal frame. For doing so, they

are imposed the responsibility to contribute to the competitiveness of goods and services they produce (Ball, 2003). Foucault (2002) theorizes how this process occurs:

A "political anatomy", which is also a "mechanics of power", is being born; it defines how to get a hold on the body of others, not simply to make them do what one wants, but to make them operate as one wants, with the techniques, according to the speed and efficiency one determines (p. 126. My own translation)

In such wise, the *political anatomy* are work-and-human-development institutes, that through *mechanics of power* are training EL teachers as *docile subjects* in order to generate utility for the business. To do so, it takes reified practices such as *hierarchical observation* (e.g., a coordinator observing a teacher's class and providing judgment), *normalizing judgment* (e.g., teachers getting memos if class observation went sideways) *the examination* (e.g., teachers being graded through students' satisfaction surveys) (Foucault, 2002).

This model of instrumental rationality (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011) embedded in TPD has been a subject of research in ways that reproduce it as such. This paradigm fostered by institutions has been also documented by Hardy and Melville (2013). The researchers analyzed eighteen teachers' interviews. The authors unveiled competing ways in which continuing professional development (CDP Henceforth) was practiced in schools in England. Findings suggest that CPD was part of managerial, market-oriented machinery in which teachers needed to comply with measures of students' outcomes.

I agree with Conell (2009) when he states that in these neoliberal models, there is no need for education as an intellectual activity or cultural critique. Keeping in mind that, "the humanist model of a good teacher becomes an anachronism" (p. 7). On the other hand, it is important to remark that even though institutes for work and human development are schools for the reproduction of neoliberal discourses and that teachers as instructors are taken-for-granted subjects that help, teachers themselves also resist pressuring must-be discourses

(Méndez, et al., 2019). For this reason, in the following construct, I intend to adopt a general theoretical explanation of how I understand the construction of identity in this study.

Accordingly, I will show how through dialogue and verbalization, EL teachers reconstruct themselves.

### **A critical EL teachers' identity (re)construction**

Considering TPD as a neoliberal tool that influences EL teacher identity, it is essential to explore how their identity is constructed. First of all, identity has become the center of attention, given the relevance it plays in classroom practices and therefore language teaching (Varghese et al., 2005). Furthermore, language teacher identity is often defined as a complex ever-lasting transformative process that usually implies several internal and external constituents. Varghese et al (2005) theorized language teacher identity as “multiple, shifting and in conflict” (p. 35). In addition, the authors state factors such as society, culture, and politics are pervasive and undeniable in the construction process. For this reason, I propose the metaphor of a *spinning coin*. It involves two sides: External factors (e.g., political discourses, culture, and institutions) and internal factors (e.g., experience, judgment, and beliefs). This coin is constantly spinning dynamically and shows two views from which identity is understood. I aim to deepen into the metaphor in the following subsection.

#### ***A spinning coin: External and internal determining factors in identity construction***

On one side of the coin, there are external factors. On this level, I rely on Barkhuizen's (2016) short story approach. The author claims that to deeply understand a teacher's narratives the short story approach is insightful. The researcher explains that this approach allows the researcher to look into *scales of context* in narratives (Blommaert, 2010; Canagarajah & De Costa, 2015 as cited in Barkhuizen, 2016). Barkhuizen explains that these scales are: *story*, *Story*, and *STORY*. The first level “embodies the inner thoughts, emotions,

ideas, and theories of teachers. It includes the social interactions in teachers' immediate contexts" (p. 663). This personal and interactional dimension also is influenced by broader layers of interaction, pertaining to decisions made by external people within institutional levels (*Story*). Finally, the last level (*STORY*) sociopolitical contexts take place. I consider that the *scales of context* proposed are external factors to consider and also, they are sites for the circulation of discourses.

In this light, I believe it is essential to consider the role of discourses, as identity is (re)constructed, maintained, and negotiated significantly through it (Gee, 1996; Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). By the same token, I agree with Fairclough (2001) when he states that discourse is language as social practice. In this sense, when it comes to discourse it is imperative to link it to its social dimension through the exercise of language. From a Foucauldian perspective, meaning that is exerted through power/knowledge systems organizes ways of understanding, and hence they are normalized and naturalized with the aid of language (Lin, 2014). These systems are discursive and represent external factors for the individual. Keeping in mind, that they organize and naturalize knowledge, identity is imposed on by others (Buzzeli & Johnston, 2002).

The imposed identities have been documented in studies on different levels (i.e., politics, school policies, and institutes). As an example, Guerrero (2010) using critical discourse analysis through a Hallidayan "clause as representation" approach and Fairclough's methodology, documented how the NBP portrayed Colombian EL teachers through official discourse (i.e., an official document). The identities assigned were that of technicians/marketers and clerks as invisible in the implementation. The conclusions of this study are well connected to studies carried out on different levels, for example, that of Rendón (2019) presented earlier in which identity is imposed on EL teachers.

Having discussed the external factors, now I will focus on addressing the other side of the coin which is the internal factors. On this side, the EL teacher claims an identity (Buzzeli & Johnston, 2002). I believe *agency* is part of EL identity (re)construction. Even though one cannot deny the powerful and external constituents in identity formation (e.g., neoliberal discourses, institutions, and other people) as discussed above, the primacy of *agency* is undeniable either (Varghese et al, 2005). As EL teachers at institutes for work and human development are part of *communities of practice* (Wenger, 1999), they are constantly investing themselves (Barkhuizen, 2016; Darvin, & Norton, 2015) in activities to accomplish varied goals (e.g., financial security). In motion, EL teachers go through a dual process of identification and negotiation of meaning.

Wenger (1999) in his social theory of identity formation states that identification is the investment of the self in a *community of practice*, then individuals collect meaning in the environment and negotiate it. The author intends “the term *negotiation* to convey a flavor of continuous interaction, of gradual investment, and of give-and-take” (Wenger, 1999. p. 53). This negotiation process is perceived as a “continuing site of struggle” (Maclure, 1993. p. 312) where EL teachers negotiate those meanings internally by reflecting upon those powerful discourses circulating. For doing so, teachers rely on internal and individual factors such as experience, emotions, culture, beliefs, and their own reasoning (Freire, 1972). After this process EL teachers take up a position towards external factors and *agency* takes place.

The above-mentioned identity formation has been investigated in the Southern cone. To exemplify, Barahona and Toledo, (2022a) in a longitudinal and multiple case study, examined the multifaceted and conflicting aspects in the construction of pre-service teachers' identity in Chile. By applying semi-structured interviews, recorded lessons, and pedagogical artifacts, the researchers analyzed from a socio-cultural perspective the trajectories of seven



EFL pre-service teachers. One relevant conclusion from this study is related to the tension of emotions faced by the participants when their beliefs about language teaching and learning were confronted with the reality they faced during their practicum. The clash between these two components triggered emotions that help the participants' identity to emerge and develop. In light of this, I believe that this formation of identity is in constant flux as EL teachers are exposed to external factors and at the same time they are internally negotiated based on their individualities.

Likewise, EL teachers are constantly reifying who they are and their position in discursive practices (Davies & Harré, 1990). One key study that supports my claim is that of Tsui's (2007). The researcher explored an EFL Chinese teacher's identity construction through narrative inquiry adopting Wenger's (1999) social theory of identity formation to describe the teacher's struggles with his identities. This study provided an insightful understanding of the complexities of an EL teacher in regards to how the multiple identities are at the interplay between identification and negotiation of discourses that surrounded him in his TPD process. As it was in the case of Barahona and Toledo's study, the teacher constantly struggled with what he believed teaching English meant in comparison to what he was expected to do in his educational setting.

A similar study was carried out by Duran (2017) who explored the experiences of two non-certified Colombian EL teachers working in elementary public schools. Through narrative inquiry, the researcher unveiled how the teachers understood their practices as a sort of inevitable challenge. This challenge was divided into three categories: Emotions that arise when teaching, teaching the subject, and interest in improving. The author concludes with the relevance of emotions in professional development and its connection to language policy. This study, among others (e.g., Guerrero & Quintero, 2016, S.M. Gómez, 2017, Camargo,

2018; Méndez, et al., 2019; Guerrero & Quintero, 2021) have started to look into the complexities and tensions in EL teacher identity formation in Colombia under the implementation of the NBP. These studies are the emerging ideas on the aspects to consider in identity construction. Correspondingly, I will discuss how EL teachers' identity is reconstructed through dialogue, sense-making, and criticality using their narratives as counter-discourses reified.

***Dialogue, sense-making, and critical awakening: Tools for identity reconstruction embedded in narratives.***

In the pursuit of reconstructing EL teachers' identity through narratives as a bottom-up process, the necessity for a reflexive and dialogical space for teachers to make sense of their teacher professional development within work-and-human-development English institutes is discussed. First of all, I believe that teachers are already critical themselves. This conception goes along with Freire (1972), as he asserts humans "are conscious beings" (p. 99) and this is what makes us different from animals. From this point, I consider pivotal to deem teachers as already able to problematize and take action on the world around them. In this vein, teachers do not need to be positioned as unaware of social and political discourses circulating as they interact with them every day but need a chance to be heard. By stating this, it is important to keep in mind Freire's *pedagogy of the oppressed*, in which the author suggests horizontal *dialogue* among equal human beings as a tool for emancipation and in this study as a way to verbalize their (re)constructed identities.

The author defines *dialogue* as an encounter among human beings to name the world through the use of "*the word*" (Freire, 1972. p. 87). One defining characteristic is that *dialogue* is a horizontal relationship between persons (Freire, 1973). Also, it is stated as an art of creation/interpretation of the world based on trust and hope between equals. This in

essence is the opposite of what the NBL and its neoliberal discourses in non-formal English institutes have established, since their voices, criticality, and humanity have been overlooked in a vertical relationship in which policy makers mandate and teachers obey. Accordingly, a dialogical process between equals is genuinely bottom-up, considering within *dialogue* there is voice construction from the people that live, cope, and deal with pervasive discourses themselves every day (Guerrero & Quintero, 2016). By opening the dialogue with teachers as equals, their humanistic dimension is vindicated; because silencing individuals, as stated by Freire, is a dehumanizing act. As a result, vindication in dialogue would disrupt the identity imposed by those who exert power on teachers as *dialogue* opens up the possibility to unveil counter-discourses from teachers' voices themselves. In the same train of thought, Freire suggests that the investigation of *generative themes* it is how an individual's naive or superstitious thinking transforms into critical thinking. I will elaborate on this assertion, but first, let us place the role of narratives to understand this process.

In this study, it is important to remark on the role of narratives as the means through which teachers' life experiences and counter-discourses are embraced. In this paper, narratives will be equated to the term *stories* (Riessman, 2008). Firstly, stories on the superficial level, are defined as a text that is spoken or written in a way, that gives an account of events and actions in time (Barkhuizen et al 2014; Creswell, 2007). Moreover, narratives can be traced since the beginning of human history (Barthes & Duisit, 1975). This considering, human beings are storytellers by nature (Sikes & Gale, 2006 as cited in Mendieta, 2013). On a deeper level, narratives are understood as a way to construct meaning connecting us to our past, present, and future, in a way individuals "make life" through storytelling (Bruner, 1987; Kramp, 2004). In this process, the human, through storytelling, shapes life experiences making them meaningful (Clandinin, 2006; Kramp, 2004). These meaningful experiences in Freirean terms are the above-mentioned *generative themes*. The

author states they have to do with the relationship between an object situation and perceptions held by the person who experiences it. When EL teachers make sense of meaningful experiences and they are discussed, it evokes reflexivity which ultimately leads to awakening their critical thinking, as they start to decode the “givens” (Barahona & Toledo, 2022a). This reconstruction of EL teachers' identity, I deem it as critically-based. The indicated identity is coined by Giroux (1988) as *transformative intellectuals*, who are professionals willing and engaged in problematizing cultural, social, and political matters.

Narratives in addition to allowing the teacher to make sense of his life and reveal those meaningful experiences also constitute the embodiment of their counter-discourses and how life is perceived by them. It provides understanding from a sense of lifelikeness. This mode of thinking when it comes to perceiving reality arose in what in literature is found as the “narrative turn” (Riessman, 2008; Barkhuizen et al 2014). Storytelling has gained ground in the search for understanding phenomena through storytellers themselves. I believe that as stated by De Fina (2011) narratives are the locus for the articulation of identities, as they allow the tellers the chance to negotiate them. Given that “not all identities can be easily negotiated as social agents are involved in power relations...” (De Fina, 2011. p. 273). For instance, Quintero (2016) created a pedagogical space for pre-service teachers at a public university in a three-step reflective process through the use of narratives. The researcher explained how these pre-service teachers negotiated their identities within life stories, providing them with a voice in the academic field. Then, EL teachers' (re)construction in this study relies on teachers' own counter-discourses reified in narratives as they embody what they have to do and say about themselves (Barkhuizen et al, 2014).

In this chapter, the theoretical discussion spun around the EL teacher identity (re)construction in regard to imposed, circulating discourses, and self-made counter-

discourses. It allowed me to cast light on how TPD is used as an instrument to subject the teacher to be an instructor and to make it easy for powerful institutions to reproduce neoliberal discourses in compliance with governmental market-oriented demands. Also, it allowed me to explore how teachers from a Freirean perspective can reconstruct and vindicate their human identities in genuine bottom-up processes based on their sensemaking and dialogue among equal human beings, in a way that disrupts the neoliberal machinery. In addition, how this reconstruction can guide the teacher to awaken their critical thinking through the help of narratives. To conclude, it is important to remark that when discourses are involved so is power (Dijk, 2009). In this way, power is not only held by the oppressive machinery but also by people who have in their hands the possibility for social change (Foucault, 1988).

### **Chapter III: Research Design**

This chapter will describe the framework that guided how I addressed the research question: *How do EL teachers (re)construct their identities as professionals of language education through life stories in face of ideologically-laden discourses of work-and-human-development institutes?* and the following objectives: 1) To unveil counter-discourses constituted when EL teachers (re)construct their identities through life stories in institutes for work and human development and 2) To analyze how EL teachers make sense of the determining ideologically-laden discourses embedded in institutes for work and human development. In order to so, first, I aim to explain why my study is narrative inquiry within a qualitative paradigm in the title *type of study*. Second, I will explain and describe how the participants became part of the study. Thirdly, my role as a *catalyst* within this study will be elaborated. Fourth, the setting where the study took place will be depicted. After this, I will explain the procedure and strategies employed for data collection. Afterwards, the ethical considerations in the study will be considered. Lastly, an introduction to the framework of data organization and analysis will be exposed.

#### **Type of study**

In this thesis, I intend to cast light on how EL teachers (re)construct their identities through life stories within pervasive ideologically-laden discourses as explained in the theoretical framework (e.g., neoliberalism). Ergo, their stories opened the door for me to add an understanding of how they made sense of their life experiences (Bruner, 1987) taking place in institutes for work and human development. In this light, this research project was based on narrative inquiry principles as EL teachers engaged voluntarily in the process of storytelling, which implied an introspective process that allowed them to (re)construct

themselves as EL teachers (Riessman, 2008). In this process, they made sense of who they were within ideological discourses circulating in their everyday teaching.

As mentioned above, the participants' inner worlds were reconstructed, verbalized, and interpreted (Barkhuizen et al, 2014). Those interpretations were first constructed individually and expanded with me as a co-constructor of those realities. Given that, this narrative study took the form of qualitative research based upon a constructivist ontology (Heigham & Croker, 2009) and a socio-critical epistemology (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2007, Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011; Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2012).

Bearing this in mind, firstly, this study conceives there is no one fixed-determined single universal truth but rather multiple ones. As stated by Heigham and Croker (2009) "each individual creates his or her own unique understandings of the world, so there are multiple constructions and multiple interpretations of reality" (p. 6). Then, the stories constructed by individuals give way to other ontological interpretations that detach from the universal truth fostered by neoliberal agendas established and endorsed by the government through policy making (e.g., NTC 5555).

Second, having mentioned this, another aspect to deem is that those interpretations embedded in stories resulted in a bottom-up process that emerged from and for teachers (Mendez et al, 2019). As a consequence, this process took place in a dialogical and reflexive space among equals where participants' voices were valued (Freire, 1972). Inasmuch as these co-constructions tap into discussions related to power relations and unequal social practices within positivistic realms, the epistemological view is socio-critical based (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011). In view of the considerations presented in this section, this study was a narrative inquiry within a qualitative paradigm. Consequently, I will provide a general description of how the participants collaborated in this project.

## **Participants**

The participants in this study decided to take part in the project voluntarily. Considering that I sought to establish a space for a horizontal dialogue and reflexivity among equals, I decided to make a public announcement on social networking sites for EL teachers wanting to participate in the narrative study. After that, nine teachers reached out to be part of the study. Five out of the nine teachers were also the informants who I interviewed for documenting the problem statement chapter (See chapter 1). However, out of the nine teachers, only four continued to be part of the research project as the rest of them were busy and could not fully participate.

By the same token, the participants of this study were teaching or have taught at institutes for work and human development. In addition, the teachers had a genuine interest in sharing their experiences so as to diminish possible obligations/pressures and increase authentic accountability from them. In this light, I explained to them what the narrative study was intended to do and provided them with consent forms (See Appendix 4). Also, all the participants held bachelor's degrees related to EL teaching and had more than two years of experience in teaching at work-and-human-development institutes. Considering the above-mentioned aspects, the participants of this study are the following: Mariam, Cosima, Andrea, and Luis. These were pseudonyms they all asked to have within the study. Accordingly with the nature of this narrative study, I will elaborate on all of the participants' profiles in the data analysis chapter (See chapter VI).

## **Role of the researcher: A catalyst**

One aspect to consider in this narrative study is the role of the researcher. Considering this, I will explain the role adopted throughout the study. According to Kvale (2007), metaphors may help to illustrate the role of the researcher in terms of epistemological



conceptions when constructing knowledge. As an example, the author proposes a *miner* metaphor in which “knowledge is understood as buried metal and the interviewer is a miner who unearths the valuable metal” (Kvale, 2007. p. 36). Nevertheless, in this *miner* metaphor, the researcher finds knowledge himself which is not the case in this study. Having mentioned this, I propose a *catalyst* metaphor. In this sense, a *catalyst* is understood as a chemical substance that accelerates and affects other substances in order to create a chemical reaction and consequently a change. Thereby, I was a catalyst considering that within the study I told my life story, and after I invited fellow teachers to share theirs as well, we created a reaction within a reflexive and dialogical atmosphere.

Keeping in mind the metaphor above, it is relevant to point out that first, I taught for many years in the same educational setting as my fellow teachers participating in this study. As explained in the statement of the problem (See chapter 1) my concern stemmed from my personal experience teaching at institutes for work and human development. Because of this, I felt it was significant to invite fellow teachers to pitch in and speak their minds as well. In my pursuit, I endeavored to foster a collaborative and dialogical space for reflexivity by sharing my own story (See the data collection process below) and extending an invitation for my fellow teachers to do that too. It was intended that at the end the teachers' stories emerged as a collective thread of narratives giving an account of our experiences within pervasive principles at a language institute. Riessman (2008) suggests the narrative inquirer “does not find narratives but instead participates in their creation” (p. 219). That being so, I did not detach myself from the construction of the narratives, as it would have implied, I had a superior knowing attitude towards teachers (Mendieta, 2013). Then, an emic perspective, in which I engaged with the participants to interpret phenomena suited coherently (Salmons, 2015).

Another aspect that characterizes my role as a *catalyst* in this study is that of a co-creator. Teachers share through their life stories what is meaningful to them after a process of sense-making. After that, there is a negotiation process in knowledge construction between the teachers and me (Clandinin, 2006) in a reflexive and dialogical space. In conclusion, the *catalyst* metaphor represents my role in the study. Subsequently, as a *catalyst*, I pursued to establish the setting where the stories were verbalized. In the following lines, I will depict the space where the stories were created.

### **Going digital: Setting**

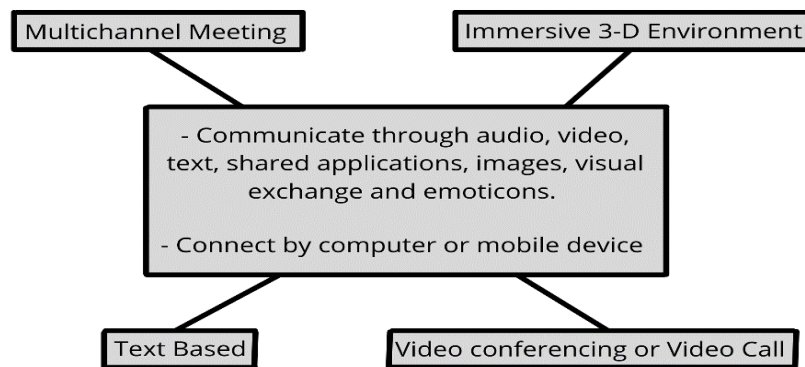
In this subsection, I will explain the decisions made in regard to the means employed to collect the teachers' stories. Thereupon, the participants had been teaching face-to-face before the pandemic broke out and due to the sanitary restrictions set by the government in 2020, they moved to the virtual world. Given the circumstances, in order to collect the stories, the participants and I agreed to carry out the data collection process online. In the process I put forward some considerations.

One important consideration was interaction in digital settings. Salmons (2015) asserts that when it comes to interaction between the researcher and participants through computer-mediated communications (CMCs Henceforth), one should consider the addition of technology as something more important than a mere transaction. This considering "human qualities are experienced differently" (p. 2). The author suggests this loss can be minimized through the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs Henceforth) such as video conferencing programs, as they allow an interaction that resembles natural face-to-face communication. From this consideration, it was my intention to use Google Meet for the whole process. This program allowed me to have real-time interaction with the teachers,

minimizing human quality loss and also endorsing the suggested sanitary measurements set by the government to minimize the spread of COVID-19.

Another aspect to consider in the process is the flexibility given by ICTs in terms of semiotic resources (Kress, 2003). In this study, I activated teachers' stories, and this was possible through the tools provided by Google Meet. Salmons (2010, as cited by Salmons, 2012) characterized four synchronous communication types for online interviews. In this fashion, Google Meet combines them all in one single site (See figure 1).

*Figure 1 Four Synchronous Communication Type in Google Meet*



Source: Adapted from Salmons, 2012.

This channel of communication allowed teachers and me to go into a multiplicity of semiotic resources in real-time interaction in the data collection process. Keeping this in mind, the reflexive-dialogical environment was fostered with the use of technology. Having explained the setting, I will proceed to go in-depth as to how the data was collected in the next section.

### **Data collection procedure**

Taking into account that this study seeks to promote reflexivity and dialogue; the following plan was formulated to collect data. In total there were two sessions: 1)

Induction/activation session and 2) Narrative interview (Edwards & Holland, 2013; Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). First, I had an initial session with each participant individually. In this session, first I introduced myself in order to establish trust and rapport with the participants. Then, the teachers were provided with an induction to the study. In this phase, they were familiarized with the purpose of the study.

After this initial step, my intention was to activate in teachers, life stories embedded in their meaningful events. Given this, I presented my own story of teaching at institutes for work and human development. I gave an account of my significant events, along with what I felt, and elaborated on those experiences. As this first session was not an interview, I relied on *graphic elicitation* (Edwards & Holland, 2013), especially a *timeline*. This technique is aligned with the fact that stories help us connect to our past, present, and future experiences (Bruner, 1987; Kramp, 2004). In so doing, I considered it necessary to proceed with a retrospective, (past) introspective, (present), and prospective (future) process (Quintero, 2016). I also enriched my storytelling process using a poster from Canva.com which is a free website (See appendix 2).

After having told them my story, I proceeded to show them media resources coming from institutes for work and human development. By doing so, I intended to have them remember stories on their own. For instance, I showed them a video in which there was an anchor walking around a branch of an institute many of the participants had taught at before. In this video, the anchor walked around the building asking people questions about the benefits of taking English classes there. The anchor even interrupts a class with the same purpose. In the following chart, I summarize the media aid employed in this part of the inductive session:

Table 1 Media employed for memory activation

Type of media	Summary
YouTube video <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VM0ZIQHXhc&amp;t=21s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VM0ZIQHXhc&amp;t=21s</a>	An anchor is walking around in a branch of an institute. He asks people about their experience as part of the staff or the students. All of them speak positively about the institution.
YouTube video <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SoKpdaJpU6g&amp;t=160s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SoKpdaJpU6g&amp;t=160s</a>	It is a video presentation from the British Council in Colombia. The video shows statistics in regards to many factors in relation to a general panorama of English in Colombia.
YouTube video commercials <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-aUKvqgGShs">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-aUKvqgGShs</a>	A Colombian teacher talks about his doubts about how some words are pronounced. Next to him, there is a teacher from an English-speaking country who models how the words are pronounced. In the end, both suggest studying at a certain institute.
YouTube video commercial <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8KBXcDsE-ck">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8KBXcDsE-ck</a>	A woman explains the methodology of the institutions and the benefits when taking English classes at a certain institute.
Image	In the picture, there are students and a teacher in a classroom. All the students are holding a coursebook from the editorial of the institute.

Source: Own authorship.

Consequently, teachers from this first session were expected to write down ideas, memories, comments and ask questions that may have emerged from the induction/activation session for the second session (the narrative interview). After that, the next session was the narrative interview (Edwards & Holland, 2013; Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). I decided to use the narrative interview as my main procedure for data collection, considering that as Edwards and Holland (2013) suggest:

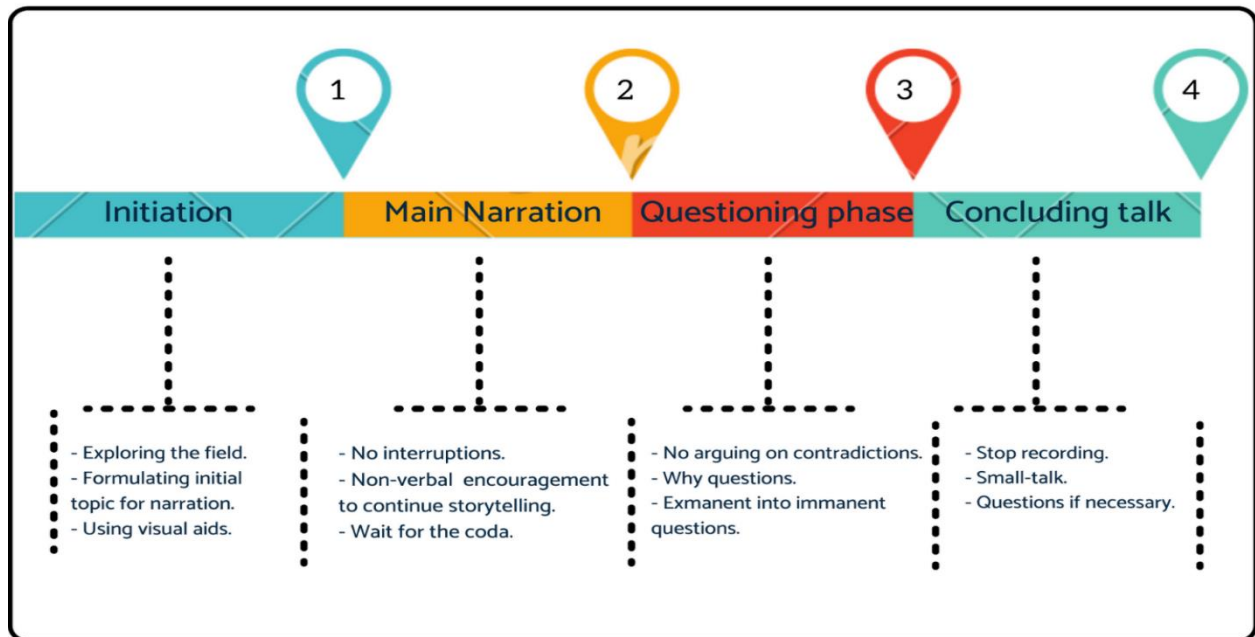
*Narrative interview* is based on the idea that people produce narratives about the self and identity through time that draw not only on their own experiences and

understanding but on culturally circulating stories that help them interpret and make sense of the world and themselves in it. (p. 35)

In the same vein, the main purpose of the narrative interview according to Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000) is to stimulate and encourage the interviewee to tell meaningful events in their life and social context. Even though the authors place the interviewee on the level of an *informant*. Meaning a person who only gives accounts of factual events. I considered in this study the concept of *participants* suits coherently with the purpose of the project, as EL teachers are protagonists of their stories. Nonetheless, not only on the superficial account of an event but also their reflection, emotions, feelings, and thoughts that make them meaningful.

Moreover, an aspect to consider is that for the narrative interview, I provided teachers with a sheet of suggested guidelines so they could reflect prior to the session (See appendix 3). Because of this, in the sheet, there was a timeline so EL teachers could take notes in a way that would help them for the narrative interview. Lastly, for the narrative interview, it was important to establish a protocol to guide the interview. For doing so, I adopted and adapted Jovchelovitch and Bauer's (2000) basic phases for a narrative interview. According to the authors, a narration schema replaces the traditional question-answer model prominent in interviews (See figure 2) which harmonizes with the sought reflexive-dialogical space in this narrative study.

Figure 2 Basic phases of Narrative Interview



Source: Own adaptation from Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000.

In the initiation phase I made small talk with teachers to establish rapport, then I asked them how they felt reflecting upon their stories and I briefly recapped what was necessary for the interview. I started recording the call with the teachers' authorization and the teachers started with the main narration phase. Some of them used the sheet of suggested guidelines with their notes to help the storytelling process, others created visual aid to help themselves express what they wanted to narrate. I displayed non-verbal encouragement to continue with the phase. After that, I proceeded with the dialogue by asking why and exmanent into immanent questions, nonetheless being careful not to argue on contradictions. They elaborated on the stories told in the form of a dialogue. In the concluding talk, I stopped the recording and again made small talk with them to conclude the narrative interview.

Accordingly, the narrative interview was carried out with teachers based on dialogue and reflexivity in a way that allowed teachers to feel safe during the process. As exposed in

the section *going digital: context*, the entire data collection process took place using Google Meet and the sessions were recorded for later analysis. Also, it is important to remark that the life stories were collected orally and the reflexivity from teachers embedded in their life stories that emerged from the narrative interviews was the data collected for the analysis.

### **Piloting process**

Having described the data collection process and the instrument employed, it is pivotal to point out that I piloted it with two volunteering teachers. From the piloting stage, several adjustments were made. The first one was to include *my story*. I had not shown the teachers my story and it resulted in a process where I just asked them for their stories for the sake of the study. Thus, as I wanted to foster a dialogue between equals (Freire, 1972) my own experience served as the bridge to embrace a horizontal relationship between me and the participants and also to trigger stories in them.

The second change had to do with the addition of visual aid. In the piloting stage, I employed videos and images that were criticizing the discourses spinning around institutes for work and human development. Nevertheless, I believed pertinent to focus on encouraging them to remember what was meaningful for them in the form of stories. Finally, the reflective guidelines for the narrative interview were added. I realized in the piloting stage teachers needed tools to achieve a genuine introspective process and I considered the guidelines pertinent to help them do so.

### **Ethical considerations**

The participants in this study decided to be part of the project willingly. Their identities are protected since throughout the study pseudonyms were used (Appendix 4). The participants were familiarized with the purpose of the thesis and the life stories that were



constructed within it. In addition, they were informed about the possible audiences and they signed a consent form agreeing to it (Appendix 4). In addition, it is relevant to state the name of the language institute where the EL teachers were teaching will not be disclosed.

Additionally, to the above-mentioned clarifications, it is my intention to point out that throughout the research process I opted for what Josselson (2007) calls an *ethical attitude*. The author suggests that narrative research entails “responsibility in human relationship” (p. 538). This responsibility was based on dignity, well-being, and privacy towards the teachers in this study (Josselson, 2007). To accomplish this endeavor as suggested by the author I established an explicit and implicit contract. The explicit one has to do with the role of researcher-participant that involves practical realizations (e.g., I presented the study, and teachers signed a consent form among other steps). The implicit one involves “the development of the individual, personal, intimate relationship” (p. 539) between the participants and me.

To sum up, the *ethical attitude* I adopted implies the last consideration. In an open letter to the research community Tuck (2009) raises awareness of how research can be distributed as a tool to endorse damaged-centered discourses on oppressed communities. In order not to fall into victimizing discourses I relied on *critical bifocality* (Weis & Fine, 2012). This bifocal stand regarding teachers' stories allowed me to unveil the power structures to provide an understanding of the circumstances teachers have been subjected to, but with the sole ethical purpose to enrich their counter-discourses of possibility (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011) based on their voice construction.

## **Chapter IV: Data Analysis**

As exposed in the research design, what constituted data in this study was the reflection, emotions, and thoughts generated by the participants themselves in their *generative themes* (Freire, 1972). These themes are rooted in their life stories which were verbalized in narrative interviews (Edwards & Holland, 2013; Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). The data collected allowed me to dive into their perspectives in regard to circulating discourses. From there, I could describe, explain, and interpret a category that was revealed from four teachers' voices in order to answer the following guiding question: *How do EL teachers (re)construct their identities as professionals of language education through life stories in face of ideologically-laden discourses of work-and-human-development institutes?*

In the same fashion, this chapter aims at focusing on three main objectives. First, I will describe the organization and framework of analysis employed in regard to the data collected. Second, I will elaborate on how I answered the research question through the main category which I entitled: *Contesting a dehumanizing model brought to ELT education: The paradox of a robot with emotions*. To accomplish this goal, this category will be depicted and explained focusing on teachers' meaningful events, in order to account for what they have to do and say about themselves (Barkhuizen et al 2014). Finally, after having discussed the participants, I will draw relevant conclusions regarding the findings.

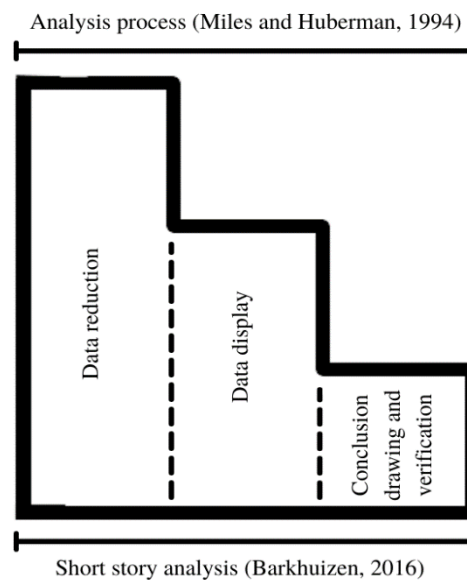
### **Data Analysis Framework**

Bearing in mind the research design chapter (See chapter III), the participants were invited in two sessions to share their life stories within work-and-human-development institutes. The sessions took place in narrative interviews that were recorded on Google Meet. After this, the first step was to organize the teachers' stories collected. Those stories were

first transcribed and organized into charts (Appendix 5). After this initial step, a thorough framework of analysis was followed.

The framework employed was made up of a two-fold process. The first one is entirely related to a procedural route that contains three macro stages: *Data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing /verification* (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The second fold is short story analysis (Barkhuizen, 2016), which is present throughout the previous stages. I firmly believe that this type of heuristic analysis could guide me as the researcher to dive into specific content dimensions as well as scales of context (Barkhuizen, 2016). In addition, these two important aspects were considered within the external ideologically-laden discourses in relation to the teachers' identity (re)construction. The following figure summarizes the entire process.

*Figure 3 Framework of analysis*



Source: Own authorship.

Consequently, I will explain the framework of analysis adopted. After having transcribed the teachers' stories, I moved on to the first stage entitled *data reduction*. In this stage, I selected, focused, simplified, and abstracted the interviews. In order to carry this out,

I took from the interviews *generative themes*<sup>1</sup> (Freire, 1972). As I stated in the theoretical discussion (See chapter II), narratives are the way to reach meaningful events from the participants (i.e., *generative themes*). In the analysis process, I equated them to *short stories*, which are excerpts of data extracted from a larger set of narratives that take place in conversations or interviews (Barkhuizen, 2016). These short stories were placed in a matrix (Appendix 6). Considering this study is underpinned by narrative inquiry principles, it is pivotal to point out that the short stories were analyzed systematically in detail, in order to focus thematically on what Barkhuizen (2021) states as *content* and *context*.

When employing short story analysis, *content* plays as the gate to providing an understanding of three converged dimensions of the stories extracted: *Who*, *Where*, and *When*. *Who*, as the initial layer, comprises the individuals along with their “relationships and their positions vis-a-vis each other” (Barkhuizen, 2016, p. 661). These individuals take action in places and sequences of places (*Where*). Lastly, these actions take place within temporality (*When*) (Clandinin, 2006). By employing this approach, I analyzed line by line the short story by focusing on each of the related dimensions (See Appendix 6).

The above-mentioned dimensions were not enough in the analysis. Barkhuizen (2016) warned that *context* would allow a much deeper understanding of the narratives as they are composed within interactional, historical, institutional, and discursive contexts (Riessman, 2008). Ergo, the author proposed three scales of context: *story*, *Story*, and *STORY*. Regarding the first scale *story*; teachers' thoughts, emotions, theories, social interactions, and immediate context are present. On a deeper level, there is *Story*. This layer goes beyond in terms of interactions. In this light, the *Story* layer considers the interactions with institutional members outside the classroom and deals with decisions made by others on

---

<sup>1</sup> Generative themes in Freirean terms, are topics of great interest to learners that can trigger discussion. In this study, generative themes are the meaningful events generated from teachers' narratives that lead to their identity (re)construction.

an institutional level. According to this, teachers tend to have less agency as the scale is wider. Finally, *STORY* comprises the macro discourses, social structures, and ideologies circulating. It is relevant to mention that the three scales (story, Story, and STORY) are connected meaningfully to what teachers think, feel and do, hence their identities are enacted and negotiated within those layers. For instance, the following is an example taken from Mariam's narrative and the Short story analysis employed where the three layers are considered:

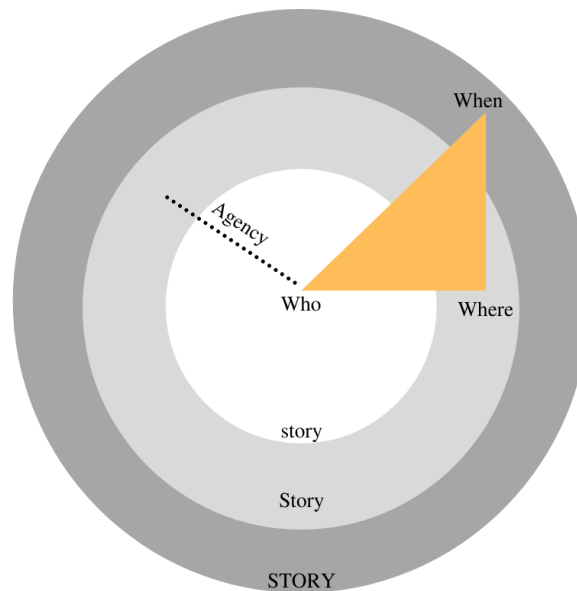
*Table 2 Example of short story analysis*

Extract	Short story analysis
<p>I also remember a class this year when the strike had just started. So, I said well, this is a cool space, we are going to use vocabulary, we are going to use grammar to speak, to ground it. So that they see the importance or relevance of these topics for them, and I remember talking to a boy and one of the students left the class and did not want to speak. So, I said: come on! The English course is sold to them as something that they put on, like a decoration.</p>	<p>This short story takes place at the moment there were Colombian strikes due to political unrest for a tax reform that was going to be passed down in May 2021 (<b>STORY</b>). I infer Mariam saw the classroom (<b>Story</b>) as a space to use language to talk about the strike (<b>story</b>, <b>STORY</b>) and that she considered it important for her students to know about the strikes (<b>story</b>, <b>STORY</b>). Then, she talked to a student and another one left (<b>story</b>). I believe Mariam found it unbelievable that the student left (<b>story</b>) and because of this, problematized how the institution sells the English course as a product (<b>story</b>, <b>Story</b>).</p>

Source: Own authorship

All the short stories relevant to the EL teachers' identity (re)construction were analyzed as exemplified above. The following figure is intended to visualize this approach.

Figure 4 Content and context



Source: Adapted from Barkhuizen (2016, 2021)

Short story analysis allowed me to delve deeper into discourses and counter-discourses, along with hidden ideologies (Appendix 6). At this point, I reached the stage of *data display*. According to Miles and Huberman (1994) at this stage, the information obtained is already compressed and organized. In view of this, I decided to take the main discourses and counter-discourses and ask questions on how those may influence teachers' identities and how teachers would (re)construct their identities. Consequently, by identifying emerging identities, I compared them among the participants in order to find patterns and commonalities. This step helped me get closer to the main category, as I could synthesize general characteristics of the (re)constructed identities (Appendix 7).

Having discerned the (re)constructed identities from the patterns and commonalities, I proceeded to the final stage: *conclusion drawing/verification*. In this last phase, the (re)construction embedded in the teachers' stories that was vague at first, started to become "explicit and grounded" (Miles & Huberman, 1994. p. 11). Given this, in order to consolidate the findings, I accentuated the trustworthiness of the analysis conducted by three means: 1) Short story extracts from the stories 2) Theory support and 3) Member checking. I went back

and forth from the empirical data (i.e., short stories) in order to account for the emerged (re)constructed identities and I supported my claims with theory (Appendix 7). To conclude, I had an online session on Google Meet with each of the participants in order to show them how I had described, explained, and interpreted their stories. Afterward, they nurtured or/and validated my claims so I made sure I enhanced trustworthiness (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). Subsequently, having explained the decisions I made concerning the data analysis process and how it led to a global category, I will elaborate on how the research question was answered with the main category that emerged.

### **Contesting a Dehumanizing Model Brought to ELT Education: The Paradox of the Robot with Emotions**

This category comprises the ongoing and conflicting identity (re)construction teachers have gone through while facing ideologically-laden discourses at language institutes. In other words, the category emerged from the teachers' analyzed short stories, as a consistent theme in their reflection and sense-making of their teaching experience at institutes for work and human development. Forasmuch as it has to do with a conflicting shifting of identities characterizing the teacher either from an imposed or a claimed perspective. The teachers in their journey through the teaching of English have been exposed to powerful discourses in which they have been subjected to an identity that resembles that of a *robot*.

I considered it relevant to rely on the metaphor of the *robot* keeping in mind that when teachers were telling their stories, they often used this term to express how they felt about events lived in their educational settings. In this light, the *robot* identity is characterized by vertical and horizontal discourses that attempt to define teachers as uncritical, voiceless, obedient, docile, and emotionless subjects (Foucault, 2002). Nevertheless, from teachers' voices, there is a latent contestation that stems from their reflexivity. This opposes the

imposed *robot* identity with an inherent ever-present human dimension. Thereupon, teachers' voices reveal that they are thinking, critical, and emotional human teachers (Freire, 1972; Giroux, 1988). In this vein, this paradoxical identity hybrid between the *robot* and the *human* teacher identity is nurtured by two types of discourses: Neoliberal discourses and counter-discourses. On the one hand, the imposing neoliberal discourses stemming from the educational system as it is, and on the other hand, the counter-discourses that emerged from teachers' own voices in face of their everyday experiences in institutes. The following chart illustrates what discourses nurture each one.

*Table 3 Discourses and counter-discourses*

Teacher robot identity	Human teacher identity
<i>English as a product/goal</i>	<i>English to read the world</i>
<i>English as a neutral language</i>	<i>English as a human experience</i>
<i>Competitiveness</i>	<i>Empathy for the other</i>
<i>Quality discourses</i>	<i>Human Latent emotions</i>

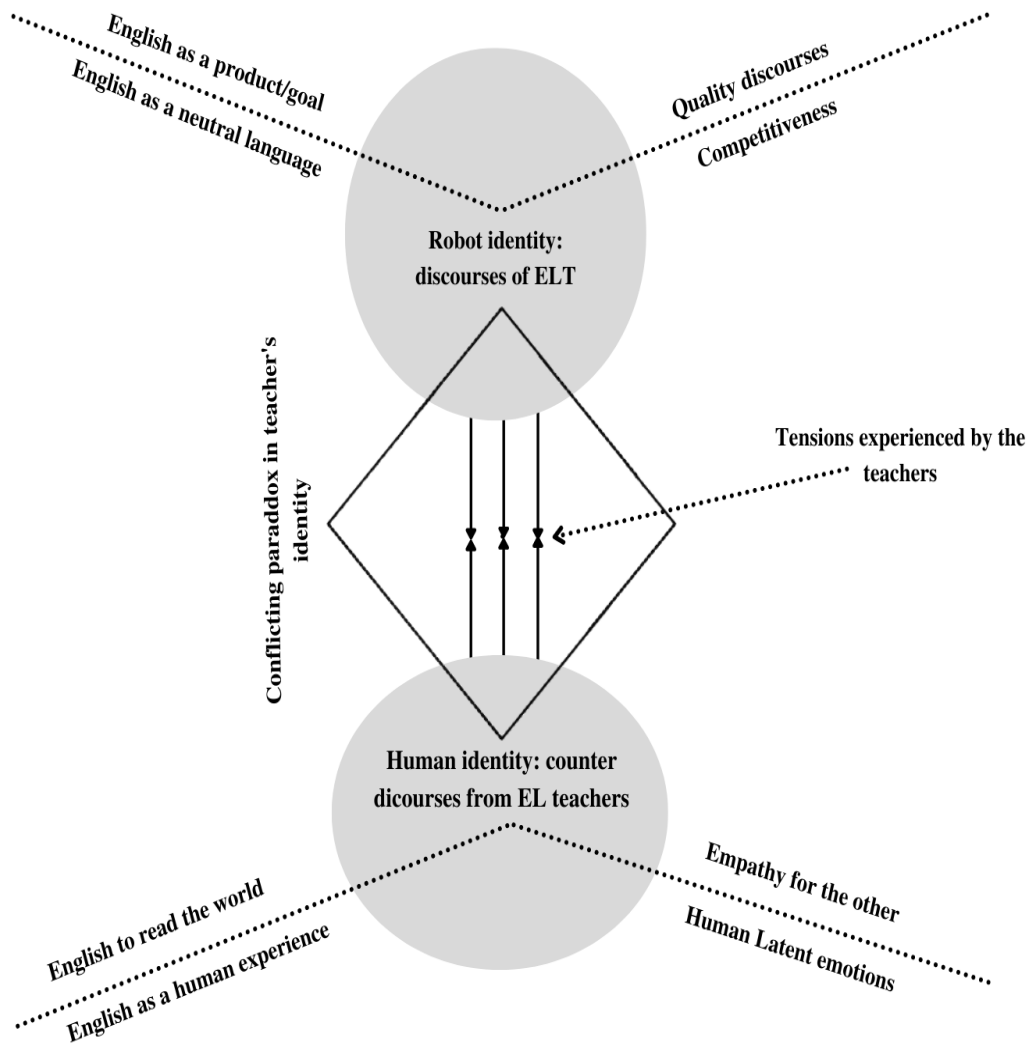
Source: Own authorship.

These discourses do not work in a vacuum but are entangled with each other. This is why I proposed an existing paradox in teachers' identity. The idea to position teachers as robots when they are human beings is conflicting yet it is inherent in institutes for work and human development. From this aspect, the paradox is understood by the conflicting shifting that represents the predetermined emotionless, unthinking, and uncritical teacher robot identity and the claimed human, emotional, thinking, and critical teacher identity in these institutions. The following figure portrays the discursive teacher identity (re)construction and the tensions that emerge in the process.



Figure 5 Contesting a dehumanizing model brought to ELT education: The paradox of the robot with emotions

Source: Own authorship.



The category emerged from teachers' short stories to reach a convergence point.

Nonetheless, it is pivotal to point out that even though, in the teachers' identity (re)construction there are patterns and commonalities; they all interact with the discourses differently for two main reasons. First, the discourses stem from the same neoliberal ideology, yet, they manifest differently in each participant's stories. Secondly, each participant due to their individualities deals with those discourses differently too. Considering this, in the following section, I decided to go deeper into the global category by focusing on

each of the teachers' interactions with the circulating discourses from their short stories. Furthermore, the emphasis on teachers' individual (re)construction led to building knowledge based on their particularities rather than abstract generalizations, therefore, avoiding generalizability<sup>2</sup> (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). In turn, I will present each teachers participants' short stories. The following table presents the participants, their short stories and their relation to the main category. Followed by this, I will focus on the participants.

*Table 4 Participants' short stories*

Participants	Short stories	Identities in the paradox	
		Robot identity	Human identity
Mariam	Homogenized Students: Tug-of-war with the Methodology	Passive implementer	Transformative intellectual
	Community Awareness: Echoing What's Been Banned		Human educator
Cosima	From enchantment to tension: Am I a repetitive machine?	Passive implementer	Reflexive teacher
	Debunking the idealization of the EL teacher: I am more than a level		Transformative intellectual
Andrea	Problematizing marketing strategies: Human education at stake	Seller of English	Dialogical human teacher
	The fearful path towards excellence	Docile teacher	
Luis	From salesman to teacher: Language as a human experience	Seller of English	Neoliberal teacher
	The reproduction of values within a neoliberal mirage	Reflexive teacher	Human teacher

Source: Own authorship.

<sup>2</sup> Generalizability in narrative studies is avoided, since it is sought to explore the richness of individual experience.

### **Mariam's narrative**

Mariam is a twenty-six-year-old EL teacher from Bogotá. She graduated as a Spanish and English teacher from a private university in Bogotá. She is currently teaching English at an institute for work and human development and has been part of the institution for more than a year. This has been her first job as an English teacher. From Mariam's stories, I interpreted that she positions herself as a teacher who has the responsibility to use the English language as the means through which people establish a dialogue between equals to read the world (Freire, 1972). It means English is used by human beings to problematize the world in the sense it is sought to unmask social injustice.

Likewise, I learned from her that she views the classroom as a space connected to a broader socio-cultural reality (Tudor, 2001). These traits allowed me to assert Mariam is a transformative intellectual (Giroux, 1988) who exercises her agency through the teaching of English for social justice (Freire & Macedo, 1987). Yet, this is not an easy task. The teacher in her context has to deal with horizontal and vertical tensions (i.e., the institution and her students) underpinned by neoliberal discourses. Thus, she got immersed in a site of struggle and negotiation (Maclure, 1993; Wegner, 1999) between her human teacher identity and the imposed robot identity. In order to illustrate this dynamic, the following short story shows how this struggle is generated by the discourse of quality reified in the institutional methodology.

### ***Homogenized Students: Tug-of-war with the Methodology***

This short story is about how Mariam struggles with a dehumanizing established methodology that positions students as subjects whose learning process is static and therefore, in which their individualities are taken for granted in order to fit in with the

methodology. This idea is constantly questioned and contradicted by Mariam as she believes that students are human beings who possess individualities that cannot be homogenized.

Based on this, I consider that this dynamic portrayed in this short story resembles the game *tug-of-war*. This game consists of a contest in which two teams have to pull at opposite ends of a rope until one team drags the other over a line. In Mariam's short story, on one end there is her human agency and on the other end, there is the methodology that is underpinned by neoliberal principles that normalize the value of quality education (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012). To grasp the complexity of this dynamic, I will narrate Mariam's short story.

Mariam told me that she had to teach English to students who had different necessities in their learning process. The type of students in one class varied in different aspects (e.g., pre-teens, adults, elders, disabled students, etc.). However, Mariam stated the methodology required her to have them all in one class despite students' particularities (See excerpt 1).

I had students that were ten, nine, eleven years old. And at that time classes were face-to-face. So, it is not easy to follow the methodology having eleven-year-old students who are taking English all the time at school, and whose attention is different from having in the same classroom a sixty or fifty-year-old person, who has not studied English for a long time and obviously needs a different time to learn, right? (*Excerpt 6. Mariam's interview: Homogenized students: Tug-of-war- with the methodology short story. My own translation*)

I learned from her that this methodology in the institution was rather rigid, due to the constant quality controls done by the academic coordinator. The controls consisted of her being observed by the coordinator in a regular class to verify and evaluate that Mariam was following the institutional methodology properly in her classes. Yet, these practices for her generated discomfort. The following excerpt is her reflection with respect to the methodology:

So, this methodology does not see the individual process of the students, **(1) it does not see that each one has a different way of learning, but it is something completely generic and it tries to homogenize a population that is made up of human beings**, that are not homogeneous, that are not machines, **(2) but each one has their own pace and their own learning**, ... well, it is like trying to adapt all that as well. **(3) I remember very much that in my class observations the coordinator**

**always found the same "but" in all my classes. He said (4) "your class was super good, (5) "but" ... with this student, you took fifteen minutes and with this one, you only took eight", but the class is an hour and a half, so everything has to be equal. Students have to be treated equally, so in that idea of equity, in that idea of equality, supposedly it is not taken into account that it is the students who have different needs. But it is the methodology and that's it, so it is squared, a little... (6) Teaching and learning are human and organic processes...** (*Excerpt 7. Mariam's interview: Homogenized students: Tug-of-war- with the methodology short story. My own translation*)

In this experience, the methodology of the institution demands the teacher to idealize the student as a flawless individual who suits a generic process in learning the language (Line 1). Furthermore, as Mariam teaches, it becomes rather problematic given that she sees her students as human beings (Line 1), and she considers that teaching and learning are human organic processes (Line 6). For this reason, for her learning occurs in students differently (Line 2). This realization grew stronger as she ran into students with different needs (See excerpt 6). Mariam is expected to comply with the methodology and she did it partially as the class was "good", but she did not allocate the instructional time equally among the students (Lines 4 and 5).

The above-mentioned story showed me that Mariam was subjected to quality and efficacy discourses (Conell, 2009). The institution, in search of quality standards, carries out procedures that seek to reinforce an idealized effective way for the teacher to be, in this case, Mariam is asked to be "good" (i.e., robot identity). Then, Mariam gets involved in relations of power when she is subdued by the coordinator, who endorses *diving practices*<sup>3</sup> (Foucault, 1988b). In Foucauldian terms, the subject is divided in his/her inside and from others. In Mariam's case she is divided into being good or bad and the consequence results in her being rewarded or disciplined (Foucault, 2002). This is to say her coordinator acknowledges Mariam as a good teacher (Reward) since she complies with the methodology. But if she does

---

<sup>3</sup> In Foucault's terms, the individual is divided in their inside and from others to maintain networks of power. For instance, teachers are divided when they get a level of English (i.e., B2, C1). Depending on the level, they get higher/lower salaries, as it occurs in most private institutions.

not, then she needs to improve (Discipline). According to her coordinator Mariam was good, “but” (i.e., bad) she was not efficient enough in time management for the required methodology (Line 5). Even so, this attempt to divide the teacher, although executed by the coordinator, comes from a big structure of policy technologies (Ball, 2003).

Language institutes are regulated by the official document NTC<sup>4</sup> 5580, which states that institutions must establish criteria of evaluation in teachers to measure performativity and quality (Ball, 2003). By complying with this measure, these practices become part of techniques that aim at organizing Mariam’s capabilities into “functioning networks of power” (Conell 2009, p. 216). This is to say that in order to maintain the discourse of quality education within the institution, the teachers’ robot identity is endorsed. Nonetheless, this discourse is negotiated by Mariam (Wegner, 1999). Given that, although her opinion, as to how the class should be taught to her students, is silenced and her intellectuality winds up overlooked (i.e., assigned robot identity) she makes the decision to resist that identity by letting the “but” in her classes observations to be part of the coordinators’ evaluation (Line 3). Then, when she says “in all my classes” (Line 3) I infer that she always obtains the “but” and but is understood as agency embodied in spending time according to what she believes is necessary for each student, even if her evaluation process is at stake. For instance, when her coordinator pointed out how she distributed time differently depending on the student and in turn an action taken as wrong (Line 5). In the same fashion, these traces of Mariam’s agency are also evidenced in the following excerpt when she asked her coordinator not to observe her classes as the class was not going to come out as expected by quality standards.

I remember that (established methodology) a lot because, I had this one student with paralysis and with other five students and he (The coordinator) was observing my class and I said: Hey, **(7) I'm going to ask you not to evaluate this class** because it's not going to be distributed in equal amounts of time. Look, I have this student. He has

---

<sup>4</sup> NTC stands for “Normas Técnicas Colombianas” (NTC). This is an official regulatory document that dictates how institutes for work and human development must operate in order to be certified and validated by the government.

special needs, **(8) I need to take more time with him and the methodology is definitely not going to work that way, no.** (*Excerpt 8. Mariam's interview: Homogenized students: Tug-of-war- with the methodology short story. My own translation*)

In the co-interpretation session Mariam and I agreed on the idea that she exercised her agency by demanding her coordinator not to observe her class (Line 7) as she warns she made the decision to spend more time on a student with paralysis and stating the methodology would not work (Line 8). It is my understanding that she exercises her agency as she sees in the student another human being (Freire, 1972). This is an emotion rooted in empathy for the other, recognizing in the other person a human being. When Mariam reflects upon the fact that the student is also a human being (Line 1) and decides to do something about it, she is making decisions that vindicate her humanity (Freire, 1976). Because the ability to think and decide for herself is what grants her freedom (Pineda, 2008) and freedom of choosing what is right for her students leaving aside the rigid methodology is a human act. Moreover, following the same thread, this search for freedom sets the ground for her to teach English according to what she believes is appropriate, which is evidenced in the following short story.

### ***Community Awareness: Echoing What's Been Banned***

This short story is related to Mariam's decision to raise awareness about the LGBTQI+ community in her English classes, even when she was warned not to use "controversial" topics in the classroom in order to avoid bad customer service experience. That being so, in this short story Mariam reflected upon the institutional view of language as a product and she claimed she considered language as the means to read the world<sup>5</sup> (Freire & Macedo, 1987). Her view of language implied for her to be struggling with horizontal

---

<sup>5</sup> Freire and Macedo (1987) stated that literacy education has to do with learning to read what is on paper and then use it to read the real world. This is to say that words are meaningless if a student does not connect them to the real world. Then, by being able to read the world the student can question it and interrogate it critically.

tensions (students) and vertical tensions (institution). Hence, Mariam's identity (re)construction is based on a two-fold shifting between an imposed robot identity within the educational system and a self-proclaimed human identity.

Mariam explained to me that where she teaches, students have a space where they can reinforce their abilities in the language. Teachers were assigned weekly to take over these extra classes, so this is a more open curriculum, yet, with some restrictions. For instance, they were not allowed to address topics related to politics, religion, gender topics or anything that might be considered controversial in the classroom. Mariam mentioned that she knew a coworker teacher who was transgender and she made the decision to co-teach a class with her fellow teacher in this space. The activity she decided to carry out was intended to visibilize the LGBTQI+ community. Then, Mariam expressed that it was important to talk about these communities since they were part of our society (See excerpt 4)

A lot is unknown about the LGBT community, and there are many generalized ideas that are not right or that are simply based on a lack of knowledge of what they are. So, we (Her fellow transgender teacher and her) wanted to do an activity in English that would provide them with vocabulary, **(1) that would give them a space for them to give their opinion and how to get familiar with... basically something that they live with every day, but that is not seen or visualized.** (*Excerpt 9 Mariam's interview: Community awareness short story. My own translation*)

Mariam made clear that the activity was not a grammar-driven one but focused on dialogue and reflection around this social issue. I learned from Mariam that while doing this activity, there was a student who stood up upset and said he disagreed with the topic of the activity. He did not consider it relevant. The following extract is Mariam's reflection on the event:

**(2) I felt very useless that day because they (institution) don't allow them (students) to interact with real problems** and also as what we talked about, the bank topics, **(3) as a teacher, you can't talk about abortion, you can't talk about religion, you can't talk about politics, you can't talk about social problems,** **(4) basically the English course is a bubble,** where **(5) they teach you the verb "to be" and that's it, you will figure out what you do with it and if it is useful for something, then good, and if not, well, the same, you already took the course, you already paid us, well no, we don't care if it is really going to be useful or**



**not.** So, yes, that's how I felt. (*Excerpt 10 Mariam's interview: community awareness short story. My own translation*)

This short story makes me think the teacher deemed this class as a space to get out of the mold of her regular classes. Hence, for Mariam, the classroom was a space to talk about social matters (Freire, 1972; Freire & Macedo, 1987). This line of thinking is emancipatory bearing in mind that as Freire states dominant elites use banking models of education to encourage passivity in students. Then, Mariam uses the classroom to raise awareness of reality in students, through the instruction of English (Line 1).

Moreover, in her agency, she encountered vertical tensions (i.e., the student). That is why the teacher problematizes the discourse of English as a neutral language (Line 4), as it is part of the educational system that has normalized it (Line 5). It means English has been used in the institute in an indicative way within a world that is unproblematic (Quintero & Guerrero, 2009). Thereby, in the co-interpretation session, Mariam and I came to the conclusion she felt useless since she felt English was being taught for marketing purposes (Line 5), not being allowed to use English to talk about important aspects such as social issues (Line 2). In this sense, the system is so powerful that her voice is silenced (Freire, 1972) by horizontal and vertical tensions (Line 3).

On the other hand, I believe that Mariam in this short story is characterized by her critical thinking. As she problematized the way English was viewed in the institution (Line 3,4 and 5). This is to say that, from her reflection on the event Mariam unmasked and identified that English is a bubble within the institution (Line 4). Mariam elaborated on this metaphor in the co-interpretation session and we both agreed that by "bubble" she meant to say English is taken as a superficial language untouched by social matters. Hence, from that reasoning, she saw the transformative potential of changing that discourse within her own emancipatory interests (Giroux, 2003). Also, I consider that her desire to oppose the discourse of neutral English as a product has brought up tensions related to an ideological

conflict with a student (Kubota, 2017). This event also demonstrates Mariam's struggle to introduce critical counter-discourses in her classes (*English to read the world*). From this type of conflict, Mariam opted to remain unbiased and let her robot identity take over:

**(6) I'm going to try to go on like a robot. I just feel a little bit like that sometimes, like I'm not even going to care about feeling. It's like I don't care about anything anymore.** I'm just going to let it all happen. I'm just going to let it all slide and that's all. **(7) So as not to stress myself, not to ruin the class,** etcetera, **(8) because as I was saying, the students are not to blame as well, so you have to have a middle ground there...** as well. (*Excerpt 11. Mariam's interview: Community awareness short story. My own translation*)

I learned that Mariam then decided not to express her emotions to avoid the tension let out in class (Line 6). As she expresses, by going against those discourses she might get stressed out and ruin the class mood (Line 7). In addition, in the co-interpretation session, Mariam explained she believes students are not to blame (Line 8) as they have been also influenced to believe English is a product. Ergo, I believe this neoliberal discourse has influenced her and as a consequence, she considers adopting a "non-disturbing" robot identity (Line 6). Nevertheless, having in mind Mariam's identity (re)construction in the previous two short stories, I can assert her human teacher identity, although being disturbed by the imposed robot identity discourses, is constantly coming afloat.

In Mariam's narrative, I accounted for quality discourses circulating in her context and lived experiences in two folds: Quality in applying the methodology in terms of time efficacy for idealized and homogeneous students and quality in using English as a neutral language. They attempted to position Mariam as a robot. Yet, they were opposed by Mariam's counter-discourses: *Empathy for the other* and *English to read the world*, which vindicates her human identity. Having explained the paradox of the robot with emotions in Mariam's narrative, I will explain it from Cosima's identity (re)construction in her narrative. This, bearing in mind the discourses and counter-discourses are manifested differently in her storytelling.

### **Cosima's narrative**

Cosima is a twenty-six-year-old English teacher who graduated from a public university in Bogotá. She is currently pursuing her master's degree at a public university in Bogota. When Cosima graduated from her undergraduate program she started to teach at an institute for work and human development and lasted over three years there. In her time there she was promoted to the position of academic coordinator and later on she decided to quit.

From Cosima's short stories I could interpret her view of language as the same as that of Mariam's, in the sense, that she considers it as the means to read the world (Freire & Macedo, 1987). Moreover, I learned from her narrative that she went through a transforming back-and-forth process in her identity (re)construction. This (re)construction fluctuated from an imposed *robot* identity to Cosima's *human* identity since the moment she started teaching in that institute. While she continued teaching, her human identity grew bigger as she reflected upon her meaningful events within the institution. Hence, her process as it was accounted for by her made me think she was positioned as a passive technician first (Guerrero, 2010). Then, a reflexive practitioner came along (Atkinson, 2004) and a transformative intellectual was formed (Giroux, 1988; Kumaravadivelu, 2001).

This identity (re)construction, as I intend to expose in the following short stories, was a tensioning process for Cosima. This consideration stems from two factors. First, Cosima experienced quality discourses as a process that positioned her as a teacher unable to think and second as a not-good-enough teacher who lacks characteristics that teachers from English-speaking countries (TESCs henceforth) possess. This tensioning experience, as I learned from Cosima, affected her emotionally, personally, and professionally. Nevertheless, Cosima from her reflection found ways to vindicate her intellectuality and her qualities as a professional human educator as is validated in the following short stories.

***From enchantment to tension: Am I a repetitive machine?***

This story accounts for a transition of Cosima's identities when teaching at an institute for work and human development. The transition starts from an imposed passive technician (i.e., robot identity), to a reflexive practitioner, and to a transformative intellectual (i.e., human identity). The name of this short story came from Cosima herself. She stated this experience at the very beginning, as she remembers, made her feel as if she had been in an enchantment to later be in a tensioning condition. It is my intention to elaborate on this process from her own voice.

Cosima told me she felt delighted when she first started to work at the institution since she saw it as an opportunity to grow professionally and also to brush up on her English skills while she taught. I learned from Cosima that she felt excited about learning more English from the books used in the institution and also that she became an expert on what she called "the art of improvising". According to her, in the methodology of the institution teachers did not need to plan classes ahead of time, since teachers had to follow a coursebook to teach. In addition, students had a planner of the classes to be covered and teachers taught those classes from the pages of the coursebook. The topics in those specific pages had to be taught in equal amounts of time, regardless of their complexity. They knew about the class and level to teach five minutes before it started. This caused them to improvise the classes as they go. Then, the enchantment, as she calls it, started to fade. She stated that classes started to become repetitive and she memorized everything in the books. The following excerpt shows what she felt in that realization moment.

In my case, when I had that experience of knowing all that (Methodology) by heart, I remember one day I was walking to work and I said to myself: I already feel bad here because **(1) I became the machine that repeats the English lessons...** I repeat them (Classes) over and over again. **(2) I don't even need to think because I already know them (Topics) by heart. I already know the dynamic. I already know what activities I can do for the warm-up. I already know what I can change from the exercises. I already know what I can do in the practice part.**

Then, one feels stuck and even frustrated, because I have spent so much time studying at the university and **(3) I know that I can do more things, but the system of the institution does not allow me to do them, so what am I doing?** (*Excerpt 12. Cosima's interview: From enchantment to tension: Am I a repetitive machine? short story. My own translation*)

This short story led me to infer that the institution's dynamic positioned Cosima as a passive technician (Guerrero, 2010). This identity is robotic in the sense that Cosima was expected to memorize a pre-established methodology without questioning it (Line 1 and 2), therefore her ability to think or plan a class is denied (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). This denial of Cosima's intellectuality positions her as a docile robot. Foucault (2002) states that those who hold power attempt to control individuals, not only to make them do what they want but to do it in the way they want. Then, in the co-interpretation session, Cosima and I came to the conclusion that the purpose is to create docile individuals who provide them with utility. This is evident in Cosima's case since the institute exerts power on her through the methodology.

Cosima applying the methodology results in her providing the institution with economic utility. Considering that if the teacher applies the methodology, students learn English (i.e., English as a product delivered); So then, the system works. If the system works, more clients (i.e., students) are more likely to buy English courses. She has to apply the methodology as the system demands, otherwise, she is not useful for the institution. This is to say, when she is demanded to reproduce their teaching model, their intention is to maintain a functioning network of power of selling and buying English courses (Connell 2009; Usma, 2009). Hence, docility from the teacher is expected so the institution can keep on selling English courses. In the process, her intellectuality or own theories of practice are not required and finally silenced (Line 3).

Notwithstanding, Cosima's agency under this educational system started to become more noticeable as she continued implementing the methodology. She stated that she started to

perceive the necessities of her context as classes went by. Given this, Cosima started to problematize the teaching system within the institution (See excerpt 13).

As one begins to spend so much time in the same institution, **(4) one gets to know the needs of the context and realizes that the teaching system they (Institution) propose is to sell and sell English, sell and sell a course.** But in the end, **(5) they (Institution) do not care that people learn**, so for me it was problematic not being able to respond to the needs of that context that I had particularly seen. (*Excerpt 13. Cosima's interview: From enchantment to tension: Am I a repetitive machine? short story. My own translation*)

Because of this, Cosima stated she started to look for spaces where she could break away from the methodology imposed. Then, the immersion class<sup>6</sup> became a space for her as she states, “to escape from that sad reality”. Cosima told me she was happy to teach immersion classes as she could address relevant social topics and apply her own methodology. Once she decided to simulate a session of the United Nations tables. Students represented a country and debated on global issues (See excerpt 14)

In the class, **(6) we had time for them (students) to sit down and look and take a position. (7) In that class the topic was about the danger that nuclear energy represents in the world, so each one was a country and they (students) were the spokespersons and they took a position and questioned the danger and so on**, and some of them went out of their mold and thought they were all representatives arguing about whether or not to support nuclear energy, but those were the types of activities that were not just to generate happiness and laugh for a while, but that they really learned something. **So (8) those were my moments of escaping from that sad reality.** (*Excerpt 14. Cosima's interview: From enchantment to tension: Am I a repetitive machine? short story. My own translation*)

The above two excerpts make me think there is a transition from the imposed passive technician to two identities she adopts in order to exert her agency: reflexive practitioner (Atkinson, 2004) and transformative intellectual (Giroux, 1988). Both roles are part of Cosima's human identity, keeping in mind her intellectuality and social agency are embodied in these two roles. Atkinson (2004) states that a reflexive teacher not only reflects upon their

---

<sup>6</sup> Cosima explained to me “immersion” was a free class students had in order to practice their skills. In this space teachers could teach an activity they considered appropriate for their level.

classes to improve their teaching skills (See excerpt 12) but also upon institutional structures and their effect on their teaching (See excerpt 13). As for this, I interpret Cosima reflected upon her teaching and tied it to the institutional structure, and concluded from her experience that the teaching system is designed to sell (Line 4), putting students' learning process on a less important level (Line 5). This reality and the space where it takes place (i.e., Regular classes) is a sad reality for her (Line 8). Then, I believe from her own emancipatory interests (Giroux, 2003) and her own theory of practice<sup>7</sup> (Kumaravadivelu, 2003) Cosima takes action in immersion to escape that reality. This considering she utilizes English to empower students not only to tap on social issues (Line 7) but also to question and take a position on them (Line 6).

I consider this decision-making from Cosima that stemmed from her reflexivity in her daily practices characterizes her as a transformative intellectual. Giroux (1988) claims teachers who are transformative intellectuals are characterized by their inherent teaching reflexivity towards social change. This nurtures Cosima's human identity in the sense that, through immersion classes her critical reasoning and agency are visible. These two components are inherent in a human dimension and they cannot be detached from Cosima's identity, since no matter how much of a routine activity has become, the use of the mind and her agency are distinctly human activities (Giroux, 1988; Freire, 1972).

This short story provided insight into how Cosima went from being in enchantment to being in a tensioning reality in her teaching. This process caused Cosima to make sense of her experience which allowed her to question the identity of a repetitive machine that repeats the English classes in the methodology, in order to unmask the machinery behind her teaching within the institution. Her realization allowed her to break away from it and start

---

<sup>7</sup> Kumaravadivelu claims teachers are constantly reflecting and taking action upon the necessities they identify. This leads them to consider and evaluate alternatives in their contexts. Therefore, theory of practice is thought in action and vice versa.

exercising her own agency in the class with a liberating essence from an instrumentalist approach. This liberating essence not only appears in her desire to change the instrumentalist approach but in her own identity in relation to others as exposed in the next short story.

***Debunking the idealization of the EL teacher: I am more than a level***

This short story accounts for how Cosima went through a tense process pervaded by quality discourses (Ball, 2003) that strengthened an idealization of EL teachers (Quintero & Guerrero, 2018). This idealization demanded characteristics in Cosima that she did not possess and affected her professionally, personally, and emotionally. Notwithstanding, Cosima, from her sense-making and reflection, could debunk that taken-for-granted conceptualization (Freire, 1972) through the humanization of herself and her fellow teachers.

Cosima narrated that from the moment she started teaching at the institute for work and human development, she was asked to obtain a C1 level on an international exam. According to her, this is part of an important characteristic in teachers who are acknowledged as ideal. I learned from her that being a C1 level teacher entailed economic perks (i.e., better salary). Also, non-C1 level teachers could only teach the lowest levels. Considering this, Cosima stated that she was often pushed by her academic coordinator to obtain a C1 level. After that, she prepared herself to obtain a C1, nonetheless, when she took it, she got a B2 level. The following is Cosima's reflection on this matter:

**(1) you feel like, as if you have to sell yourself. Then, the one who has more qualities is the one who will be bought more,** so that is what international exams do with us, language teachers. **(2) You have the most recognized exam with the best level, therefore that will be a tremendous hook to access better opportunities... I wanted to get that C1 so that my salary was raised.** But, one invests a lot in that and when I never achieve it, **(3) one begins to feel frustrated because I am losing money. So, does it mean I didn't learn English? What's wrong with me?** and so yes, then one begins to suffer. (*Excerpt 15. Cosima's interview: Debunking the idealization of the EL teacher: I am more than a level. My own translation*)



Considering the above excerpt, I believe Cosima was involved in relations of power (Foucault, 1988) that pushed her to enter in competition to become an ideal teacher (Line 2). Some aspects to consider in this idealization, demanded by the institution on Cosima, touch on powerful ideologically-laden discourses such as quality and competitiveness (Ball, 2003). These discourses sustained the construction of this ideal teacher who holds a C1 level. Thereon, this is the result of strategies underpinned by a neoliberal ideology. This ideology circulates in policy implementation exerted by the institution that is also supported by Colombian laws and regulations (Usma, 2009). In this case, the official document NTC 5580 mandates that 80% of the teachers in an institution must be C1, because of this, *dividing practices* (Foucault, 1988b) must be endorsed. Foucault (2002) states society works in a way, in which relations of power objectivize individuals, this means that Cosima is made an object and she is used by the institution which exercises power (Line 1). This process entails several mechanisms of power<sup>8</sup> that are present in her educational setting.

The institution is designed by a structure in which Cosima is placed into a hierarchy that serves the purpose to control her. This hierarchy is defined by how competitive Cosima is. In consequence, if she possesses a C1 level that is going to imply a reward which is embodied in a better salary and recognition within the institution to be able to teach higher levels. On the other hand, there is also discipline. Cosima must achieve a C1 level eventually; if she does not obtain it, then she is disciplined. Discipline is reified in her constantly being reminded of her lack of characteristics (Line 1) that affect her emotionally in the way she feels inferior, therefore bad (Line 3). Also, professionally in a way her professionalism is simplified into language proficiency expectations, which also affects her salary and

---

<sup>8</sup> Foucault in his book "discipline and punish" exposed mechanisms of power in society: In my study I rely mostly on: Hierarchical observation, normalizing punishment that complements dividing practices.

consequently her everyday life. Through this process, there are discourses that are subtly installed in Cosima's identity: Competitiveness and quality.

Having broken down this dynamic, Cosima and I believe competitiveness and quality nurtured her robot identity since quality can be understood as seeking an efficient process, this includes the ideal/perfect teacher to do it (Colella & Díaz-Salazar, 2015). In this case, an efficient teacher who models an ideal way of speaking English (Guerrero & Quintero, 2009). Then, the institution needs as many "ideal" teachers as possible to comply with the NTC 5580.

This process as exposed earlier affected Cosima as she was influenced to believe she was inferior. This feeling of inferiority was accentuated by the presence of TESC's. Cosima stated, that although they did not have pedagogy-related degrees or international exams, they were privileged. They were trusted to teach high levels and were paid more. Cosima told me that students also demanded to have TESC's. In this sense, Cosima started to question the reasoning behind it and attempted to make her students reflect that teaching a language is a complex task that goes beyond proficiency in the language (See excerpt 9).

**(4) One feeling at a disadvantage puts them (TESC's) at more advantage, one strengthens that glorification and that was what I often tried to detach myself from.** Then, when the students ask where is my native speaker? or they say that native teachers are better than Colombian teachers, I questioned them and told them: Well, you speak Spanish, come on teach me Spanish, do it. The students responded no teacher, I can't, ah! well, **(5) you see you are native in Spanish, but you don't have the tools to teach it. (6) One makes them (students) reflect that things are not like that and they start to understand what entails teaching and its complexities.** So, then I started not to feel less than them (Teachers from English speaking countries) *(Excerpt 16. Cosima's interview: Debunking the idealization of the EL teacher: I am more than a level. My own translation)*

In the same account, Cosima said that having pedagogical abilities was important to support students' learning process. First, since the institutional methodology did not consider the individualities and this could lead them to experience a traumatic process. Second, in the lowest levels, students learned what was required in the highest levels. She mentioned that

teaching the lowest levels required more patience and pedagogy. Then, she told me she felt that when TESC's have the students in the highest levels, they were enjoying the hard work she had made in the students when she had them in the lowest levels. The following excerpts account for her reflection.

**(7) One can establish these emotional links and can facilitate the learning process for the students so that it is not so traumatic, because one has to go almost bit by bit, to give them everything easy so that they understand in this system (Methodology) that goes so fast.** On the other hand, **(8) these people (TESC's) sat down with them (students) and talked to them and that was basically the class....** (*Excerpt 17. Cosima: Debunking the idealization of the EL teacher: I am more than a level. My own translation*)

But today, I insist that we should not strengthen the glorification of them (TESC's) and in the end, **(9) we should not see them as enemies, or superior beings and not feel threatened, because, in the end, it is not their fault. It is all part of a larger machinery that has been sold through the TESOL industry.** (*Excerpt 18. Cosima's interview: Debunking the idealization of the EL teacher: I am more than a level. My own translation*)

From these pieces of reflection, I can infer Cosima questioned the idealization of TESC's (Line 5). Then, she relied on her pedagogical abilities in order to justify that proficiency itself is not the only aspect to consider when teaching (Line 6 and 7). Tudor (1993) explained that in learner-centered learning there is a humanistic perspective about the student. This means the student is seen as a complex human being, who has an intellectual and affective dimension. Based upon this, Cosima humanizes herself and the students by relying on the affective filter hypothesis<sup>9</sup> (Krashen, 1982) acknowledging students' emotional dimension (Line 7). This reflection from Cosima vindicates her criticality as she dismantled notions that have been taken for granted (Mendez et al, 2019) in this case the "ideal native speaker teacher".

Moreover, in my opinion, it is evident that Cosima, from her reflection, moved from competing with TESC's to humanizing them as well. She did so by understanding that the

---

<sup>9</sup> Krashen (1982) asserted that there are three variables related to learning success: Motivation, Self-confidence and anxiety.

privilege assigned to TESC's is the result of the big machinery behind it (Line 9). In this case the TESOL industry (Usma, 2009; Mendez et al, 2019). When Cosima realized this, she liberated herself from becoming an oppressor. Freire (1972) claims that the oppressed can easily become the oppressor since they adopt their consciousness. In this case, the oppressor consciousness relies on competitive and quality discourses. I believe that Cosima could have adopted the consciousness of an oppressor when she started to look for those qualities that the TESC's lacked (Line 5 and 8). On the contrary, she went beyond that to the point she understood that there was a big structure and, in the process, she humanized TESC's breaking away from the oppressor-oppressed contradiction (Freire, 1972).

In this short story, Cosima was influenced into believing she lacked the abilities and characteristics to be an ideal teacher, resulting in her feeling frustrated and inferior in her community of practice (Wenger, 1999). This feeling of inferiority was accentuated as she realized the better status and economic perks received by either teachers who were certified in C1 level or TESC's (Mendez et al 2019). Yet, Cosima from her reflection and sense-making (Freire, 1972) vindicated her human teacher identity through her pedagogy ability and criticality, debunking the idealization that affected her professionally and personally.

### **Andrea's narrative**

Continuing with the paradox, I will rely on Andrea's (re)construction through her short stories. Andrea is a twenty-five-year-old English teacher who lives in Bogota. She graduated from a public university in the same city. She teaches English at an institute for work and human development. Andrea has been working there for more than two years. She is also a certified examiner for Cambridge exams.

From the stories I could collect from Andrea, I consider her to be a teacher who has a great passion for teaching. Furthermore, she stated education for her was a human process in

which students and teachers recognized each other as human beings and had the intention to establish a dialogue to talk about the world (Freire & Macedo, 1987). She positioned herself as a teacher whose purpose was to guide students to question what has been taken for granted in society (Giroux, 1988). Based on this assumption, Andrea not only problematized the discourses of teaching and language within the institution but also attempted to propose solutions from her role. Given this, due to the vision of quality in the institution, her voice was silenced.

Moreover, I learned from Andrea that although being critical in her environment could result in her being fired, she looked for spaces to teach English with a critical perspective. Andrea problematized the teaching system in two stances: English teaching as a product and the dehumanizing practice of dispossessing teachers and students of their voice (Freire, 1972). The following short stories are aimed at accounting for what Andrea elaborated in the narrative interview.

***Problematizing marketing strategies: Human education at stake***

When teaching at an institute for work and human development, one might be exposed to different practices that involve marketing strategies (Usma, 2009a). This short story told by Andrea, tells how she problematized the institution strategies used in order to get more clients (i.e., students) to enroll in the English courses offered. Her problematization is founded on her view of education which consists of knowledge building among equals (Freire, 1972) opposing the institutional view which seeks to portray education as a business transaction between seller and client. Although Andrea is constantly exposed to the discourse of English as a product (Tan & Rubdy, 2008) she has hope to teach with a humanistic view.

Andrea explained that when the classes were offered to prospective students, the discourse employed was that the classes were so fun and interesting, resembling

“fantasyland” (Guerrero & Quintero, 2009. p 147). Andrea narrated that the infrastructure of the institution was designed in a way to seduce the prospective students and show the teachers as if they were a product (See excerpt 19)

**(1) Other aspects that were very annoying, and I think was the most significant issue I already mentioned, was the fact that the salespeople passed by with walk-ins (prospective students) and came to see you in classes. (2) So, it felt like when a person goes to the zoo and is looking at the animals that there are, what are the animals doing? and look at them doing this and that kind of thing. It felt like that. So, (3) I felt like a product, like when you go to the mall and you see what clothes you want to look for and you look at the mannequins,** selling me as a teacher, selling how I taught classes, selling that charisma and that dynamic that I normally had in classes. So that interaction, right? then something so personal, so natural that emerges in classes, is something that they were selling (*Excerpt 19. Andrea's interview: Problematizing Marketing strategies: Human education at stake. My own translation*)

Andrea's experience reveals how the concept of English learning has been made into a business (Line 3). In the process, Andrea is assigned the identity of a marketer (Guerrero, 2010). This identity provides the institution with economic utility (Foucault, 2002). Hence, when the salesperson walks by with the person interested in buying the course, the product in this case English is being sold through the exemplification of how the process is fun, seducing the student (Line 2). Guerrero (2010) claims that in EL policies in Colombia, the teacher is portrayed as a technician/marketer whose purpose is to deliver a product, in this case, the product is English. Like any business, the intention is to make the client happy. Due to this, the English learning process is presented as a fun process for the client.

I believe that as Andrea started to be positioned as a marketer, she started to negotiate those pervading discourses in her community of practice. Wenger (1999) states identity formation occurs when the individual collects meaning from the environment and negotiates it. This is to say that the imposed circulating discourses in the institute are taken and negotiated by Andrea to produce her own counter-discourses. Then, she concludes she feels uncomfortable as she notices how her spontaneity and humanity are being used for the purpose of a business (Line 1). Andrea and I agreed that her disagreement in regard to this

business practice is mainly based on her vision of education and the dehumanizing practices that are triggered in her educational setting. For instance, displaying Andrea as if she were an object. Then, the following excerpt is her reflection on what she believes education is:

Education is not so much that the teacher is cool or dynamic and that the students laugh and that the class is entertaining, but **(4) it is really a process of building knowledge. (5) So, everyone (any teacher) has their own way of doing it and it should not be sold that someone is cooler or that the class is flashy. (6) Because it is not a product. It is a mutual construction between teacher and student.** Therefore, it does not necessarily have to be eye-catching or to sell. (*Excerpt 20. Andrea's interview: Problematizing Marketing strategies: Human education at stake. My own translation*)

In the co-interpretation state, Andrea agreed with me when I stated that in her reflection, she humanizes education (Line 6). This considering she sees it as an organic process between the teacher and the student, and does not accept the discourse of English as a product (Line 4 and 6). It is my understanding that in the institution the most important aspect is to make it seem like the learning process occurs in a flashy way (Line 3). Then, when Andrea says that everyone (i.e., other teachers) has their own way of doing it, I think she suggests that every teacher is different and how cool a class is cannot be used as a point of reference for labeling the class to be sold (Line 5). I consider this assertion made by Andrea is based on the fact she believes that education is a human process among equals of knowledge construction (Freire, 1972).

In the same fashion, Andrea problematizes this model in the sense that English is sold in a way that English is an entertaining language. In the words of Guerrero and Quintero (2009) English, in Colombian EL policies, is addressed in a way the world is unproblematic, therefore everything related to it is idealized in a kind of “fantasyland where everybody is happy and lives in a perfect world” (p. 147). I believe this vision of language is employed by the institution as a marketing strategy for economic profit. Then, Andrea was utilized to convey that view when she was displayed in her classroom teaching.

This view of language in the institution in which English was a product troubled Andrea. She told me she had felt that her teaching was a job in which she was being paid to transfer information (i.e., English) to the student (See excerpt 21).

**(7) It didn't make sense to me, since it was like doing something because they paid me to. Because that was what I had to do, but, (8) I didn't feel that I was educating human beings, I felt that I was just giving instructions and that was it. (9) Giving information and that was it** (*Excerpt 21. Andrea's interview: Problematizing Marketing strategies: Human education at stake. My own translation*)

In this reflection, Andrea identified how the discourses of education and language exercised in the institution were dehumanizing (Line 8). In Freirean terms, the teaching system was that of a banking model of education. The author claimed this model is commonly used by oppressors to foster passivity in students. In this vein, information is inserted in the student and they are expected to reproduce it as they received it from the teacher (Line 9). Then, I interpreted from this reflection that Andrea at that moment was using her semi-transitive consciousness<sup>10</sup> (Freire, 1973). In the co-interpretation session, Andrea agreed with me as I stated that what was troubling for her was the fact she was not contributing with her human vision of education. Because of this, I infer those visions constructed in Andrea endorsed her *robot* identity. For a salary (i.e., reward), she was subdued to comply using this docile identity (Line 7). Nonetheless, Andrea accounted for her desire to leave aside this identity when she expressed, she had attempted to start introducing, when possible, her vision of education:

I feel that one often achieves small changes with small actions. **(10) Well, since last year, I feel like planning activities that suddenly can be given in certain spaces that occur at (Institution's name) or in moments when I have already finished with all the methodology. And, (11) in case they (Coordinators) observe me I would do the same, where (12) I can open a little more space and a little more interaction and get to know the student a little more and create a critical mentality, a meaningful mentality in relation to the student's reality, with regard to different issues of the social environment itself. (13) Saying that in a certain**

---

<sup>10</sup> Freire (1973) distinguished three levels of consciousness: Intransitive, semi-transitive and critical consciousness. Individuals with semi-intransitive consciousness are aware of their problems and can learn to change one aspect at a time. They consider their problems to be normal.



**way and let's say that in my journey, in my performance as a teacher, I have been able to meet certain expectations.** (*Excerpt 22. Andrea's interview: Problematizing Marketing strategies: Human education at stake. My own translation*)

From this excerpt, I came to the conclusion that Andrea started to move to a higher level of consciousness as she started to make small changes (Line 10). Freire (1973) asserts individuals, with critical consciousness apart from being aware of the problems, struggle in praxis to alleviate them. That being so, Andrea adopted her robot identity in class and attempted to make room for her human identity when she finished with the methodology (Line 10). Her humanistic vision of language and education came in when she used it to know the student and to address social issues (Line 12).

Another relevant aspect to remark is that there are traces of her hope. This means despite the hindering difficulties (i.e, institutional discourses of education and language) she considers small actions to entail small changes (Lines 10 and 13). Andrea's faith in students to read the word embodies her hope for change and vindicates her dialogical human identity<sup>11</sup> (Freire, 1972). In this regard, Andrea's attempts in bringing about changes are often tensioning for her as the educational system is customer-driven. In the next short story, it is my intention to elaborate on Andrea's experience in relation to quality discourses that end up affecting her emotionally.

### ***The fearful path towards excellence***

This short story has to do with Andrea's experience and reflection in relation to quality/efficacy discourses when teaching and how she makes sense of them. Andrea's short story is pervaded by negative emotions such as fear and anxiety. These emotions grew bigger from a search by Andrea for excellence within the dynamics of the institution. This section

---

<sup>11</sup> According to Freire, the dialogical human has faith in other human beings' power to change realities even before they meet them. They seek to establish dialogue to transform realities despite the challenges.

gives an account of the reasoning behind these emotions in neoliberal times through Andrea's story.

In the narrative interview, Andrea narrated the dynamic of the institution in regard to specific practices that she needed to do in order to comply with the quality goals of the institute. She stated there were established procedures that were necessary for the correct functioning of the educational system in the institution (e.g., filling out forms). Then, according to her, there were some that were intrusive and repetitive such as: being constantly observed in classes by her academic coordinator, attending instructional meetings, and having to say specific lines when teaching. Among these practices, Andrea told me that being observed and evaluated by the academic coordinator might have triggered her anxiety and fear (See excerpt 23).

**(1) Last year, I suffered many anxiety attacks and I felt fear constantly. Because any time I had a class observation, I feared something went wrong, even if I thought I had followed all the procedures correctly.** Since there are mistakes that can occur. For example, with technological problems, I can forget stuff so I had in mind that everything needed to be as perfect as possible. **(2) If a coordinator says you are not complying, you can get fired easily. (3) So, I always tried to do my best, but she (The coordinator) always questioned how I taught the class, why I used an image and not a video for example.** There was no way they could tell you "You're doing a good job" because there was a necessity for improvement. **(4) It was always necessary for the satisfaction of the customer (student). So, we (teachers) needed to be under observation all the time so I felt.** (*Excerpt 23. Andrea's interview: The fearful path towards excellence. My own translation*)

She stated despite the fear and anxiety that this triggered in her, she needed that job considering she provided at home for her whole family. As stated by Andrea, she was seduced to teach there due to the economical perks provided by the institute. Andrea told me she had tried to look for other teaching positions, nevertheless, none of them paid better.

In Andrea's accounting of her struggle to fit in, I understand she is part of what Ball (2003) calls *a devolved environment*. This type of environment is characterized to be based on monitoring systems that seek individuals to be competitive for the sake of quality. One example of the reification of this system is when Andrea by procedure needs to be observed

by another individual to check her job (Line 1). This environment is the result of a phenomenon related to the adoption of policy technologies<sup>12</sup> (See chapter II) that endorse the discourse of performativity and quality in teachers. This makes me think the dynamic pushes Andrea to consider herself an individual who needs to strive for excellence (Line 3) and therefore becomes “a neoliberal professional” (Ball, 2003. p. 217). The excellence that is sought by Andrea is what the institution requires from her, so in that way she can stand for quality that is equal to the value, as an individual, she has within a field of judgment (Ball, 2003). In this case, for the sake of quality needed by the institution to be competitive in the market (Line 4).

In such an installation of mechanics of performativity, I believe her emotional dimension has been overlooked and affected (Line 1). There are two points Andrea and I infer from this conclusion. First, the policies that aimed at quality force Andrea to leave aside her emotions. Since what is important, is to comply with standards leaving aside what she feels under such practices. This denial of emotions endorses Andrea's *robot identity* in the sense that she does not need to feel but just complies obediently (Line 3). Second, Andrea's source of fear and anxiety is rooted in a neoliberal ideology circulating in those reified practices. In the words of Ball (2003) teachers become insecure about themselves, not knowing whether they are doing enough, doing the right thing, or as well as others (Line 1). This thought then grows stronger in Andrea, making her look to improve and be excellent. Then, Andrea and I believe the constant search for meeting these expectations comes from her desire to have a job that provides her with income to help her family to live.

The economic perks that seduce Andrea are part of a reward-discipline system, (Foucault, 2002) which is inherent in neoliberalism. In the co-interpretation session, Andrea

---

<sup>12</sup> Ball (2003) argues education reform has come with policy technologies (the market, managerialism and performativity) in all educational settings and they seek to have a greater control of individuals for constant improvement. These have been launched by powerful neoliberal agents (e.g., the World Bank).

and I came to the conclusion she develops anxiety about the future, considering there is a constant threat of poverty and unemployment which are aspects she fears. These emotions according to Gallo and Quiñones (2016) have become a widespread fear among Colombian people due to imminent neoliberal agendas. This, keeping in mind individuals are in constant competence in the market. Hence, the institution provides Andrea with what is necessary for a life in neoliberal times. For instance, money to pay bills, food, leisure activities, and her family needs. The fact Andrea has a steady source of income, creates a mirage of a safe environment in which she is not anxious and worried about the future, however due to the dynamics in her institution she becomes anxious and fears losing that stability anyway. In the same train of thought, the uncertainty and Andrea's fear to lose her job were accentuated by the surveillance exercised by the institution with cameras in the classroom and the constant satisfaction surveys students took to assess how well she taught classes.

There are things one realizes from day one and it is the tension that one feels. **(5) One feels that eye that sees everything and that feeling of being threatened all the time.** Then one feels threatened because **(6) any mistake that you make, anything you say to the student, anything that goes against the work regulations, ... can be a reason to get fired. (7) Then, feeling that control at all times and that fear there is... so, I couldn't have freedom since it was complicated. I had to speak in a certain way, like encrypted so the students won't complain about you.** (*Excerpt 24. Andrea's interview: The fearful path towards excellence. My own translation*)

From this extract, Andrea and I agreed on the fact the institute is structured through an omnipresent controlling system (Line 5). Andrea is being observed by her academic coordinator (See excerpt 23), cameras, and students (Lines 5 and 7). This structure makes me think of the Foucauldian metaphor the *panopticon*<sup>13</sup>. With this in mind, the panopticon is an organized and omnipresent structure full of mechanisms of observation, which is aimed at increasing performativity in Andrea. The panopticon is present in the students, the

---

<sup>13</sup> Foucault (2002) relies on the metaphor of a panopticon to explore systems of disciplinary power. By definition a panopticon was an architectural design used in prisons where guards could observe prisoners but not the other way around.

coordinator, and the person behind the cameras monitoring, and all of them have the function of collecting information about Andrea. In such a way she can be judged and disciplined by the institute when necessary (Line 6) (Foucault, 2002). In the same fashion, the role of the *panopticon* system, in addition to observing and monitoring, is to correct individuals. For instance, when Andrea after the class observation is commented on by the coordinator (Line 3) or just by simply letting her know she would be fired if she did not comply (Line 6).

Similarly, in the institute, instructional meetings are used for that purpose.

I learned from Andrea that instructional meetings were a space used as an instrument to endorse her *robot* identity as she had no voice. Given the fact these meetings were intended to deliver instructions and reinforce how procedures were carried out in a top-down way. Andrea found them pointless and considered those meetings could have been a space for professional growth (See excerpt 25).

For me, the meetings, in general, were very boring and from that moment on I said to myself that there was no sense in them. Just sharing instructions and that's all. At the beginning of my teaching experience, **(7) for me the meetings were also a moment of academic growth and for me, those meetings did not contribute to absolutely anything.** I didn't feel any progress, I didn't feel that they helped me to be a better teacher or that they helped me in the classes in any way. **(8) So it felt like that hierarchy that exists in a normal job but not an academic space in itself, where people contribute, where things are said to improve, and to contribute to the classes.** (*Excerpt 25. Andrea's interview: The fearful path towards excellence. My own translation*)

In the same train of thought, I believe meetings in Andrea's community of practice served as an instrument to make teachers internalize the organizational instructions that concern the institution. In the words of Andrea (Line 7 and 8), she considered that space as an academic meeting for professional development among teachers who discuss their classes to improve (Richards & Farrell, 2005; Díaz-Maggioli, 2003). In the co-interpretation session, Andrea and I agreed that in the institute there was no room for reflection and that the only aspect to be considered in the system was performance.

I consider Andrea's short story is a real-life example of what Han (2012) coins as the *performance society*. Complementing Foucault's technologies of power, the author states that the new modern society encapsulates individuals to be "performance machines" (Han, 2019, p. 262). An individual that has been pushed to focus to work non-stop leaving aside time to reflect. In light of this, as evidenced in the excerpt, Andrea has taken a position about it. This means, that although these practices overlook Andrea's critical thinking, she has internally an opinion that goes against the reason behind the meetings that take place in the institute (Line 7 and 8). For this reason, I think her short stories have shown Andrea's human identity. Keeping in mind that, contrary to what is expected from her, her criticality, reflection, emancipatory interests, and emotions came afloat in the narrative interview.

Andrea's (re)construction evidenced her experience in regard to discourses related to English as a product and education as a business (Guerrero & Quintero, 2009; Usma, 2009). These discourses attempted to endorse Andrea's robot identity by applying technologies of power that overlap her human identity. Likewise, due to Andrea's own counter-discourses of human education and language to read the world her emancipatory interests (Giroux, 2003) started to gloom as she continued teaching. To this point, she started to make room for her human teacher identity in the classroom. In sum, although the dynamics are too powerful to question in her setting, it is evident they have not changed Andrea's opinion and interest in breaking away from the system as it is.

Andrea's (re)construction has illustrated how pervasive and powerful neoliberalism is in ELT education and its influence on teachers' identity in thinking and doing. Also, it is noticeable how teachers hold on to what they believe, despite the taken-for-granted reality in institutes for work and human development. In other cases, as in the next short story I will address, how the influence of pervasive ideologies does impact a teacher's way of thinking about ELT.

### **Luis's narrative**

Luis is a thirty-one-year-old English teacher who has worked for several language institutes in Bogotá for more than five years. He graduated from a private university and started his teaching experience long before he got his diploma. Luis has gotten different Cambridge certificates which have allowed him to perform speaking examination practices for the institute he was working at back then.

Luis's identity (re)construction is characterized by a back-and-forth process between being a teacher seller (robot side) and a reflexive teacher (human side). In this process, Luis was subjected to *power technologies* (Foucault, 2002) that influenced him to teach English instrumentally for the purpose of a business using a foreign model. In this process, Luis managed to position himself as a reflexive teacher when he was entitled to be a curricular designer in his institution.

From the stories that Luis told me, I infer his view of language is divided into two perspectives. The first perspective grows out of his own theory of practice (Kumaravadivelu, 2003) on how English is taught and learned. I conclude based on Luis's short stories that for him language is a socio-semiotic resource utilized by students within the experiential function of language (Halliday, 1975). This view detaches from the taken-for-granted neoliberal view that relates to English as a product. Moreover, the second one is closely related to his relation in regard to English in his life. According to what he stated in the interview, he believes English has helped him break away from poverty. In this fashion, he attempts to help his students improve their economic status through the teaching of this language. Then, I will focus on elaborating on these conclusions through Luis's short stories.

***From salesman to teacher: Language as a human experience***

This short story is characterized by Luis's back-and-forth process of being influenced to be a seller of English to then be able to let his reflexive teacher identity come out. In turn, it implied for Luis an internal negotiation of language views that would push him to adopt two identities: a teacher seller identity (robot side) and a reflexive teacher (human side). The former, considering the neoliberal system, demanded him to adopt an instrumental, and non-intellectual methodology for the sake of selling English as a product (Tan & Rubdy, 2008). On the contrary, the latter as he claimed his way up within the institute hierarchy to become a curricular designer in the institute and changed from his position, the taken-for-granted vision of language to a more human-oriented one.

I learned from Luis when he first started teaching at a language institute. He first thought he was going to teach English according to what he believed language was. For his surprise, as Luis continued to learn about his position within the institute, he learned he needed to adjust to the established methodology (See excerpt 26):

**When I first started at the institute, (1) I thought I was going to plan classes, that I was going to apply what I'd learned at the university. (2) I mean, when I got to teach at the institute, the first week I reflected upon the fact that all that I had studied in my undergraduate study had not been useful. But why? because they told me to follow Pearson books' methodology.** You have to follow what has been established. So, when you begin there, you begin with the expectation of changing the world, of teaching your linguistic experiences not only from the pedagogical and disciplinary point of view **(3) but using a much more experiential method, meaning for example to go out and talk to all those foreigners in the streets or maybe to cook, or to do posters in English etc....** (Excerpt 26. Luis's interview: *From salesman to teacher: Language as a human experience. My own translation*)

From his point of view, it became noticeable to me that his view of English is that of language as a socio-semiotic experience<sup>14</sup> (Halliday, 1975). When he stays, he prefers to involve his students in different environments (Line 3), he sees language as a tool embedded

---

<sup>14</sup> Halliday (1975) considers that language is a system that contains different options taken by speakers in order to answer their immediate demands to produce and interpret text in a certain context.



in a social environment that forms a system of meanings. These are negotiated by students when interacting (Halliday, 1975). On the other hand, in the institute, Luis must follow a methodology brought by a foreign company (Line 2), which leaves no possibility for him to teach the way he considers (Line 1 and 3). Kumaravadivelu (2003) claims that this type of education is a traditional top-down model. Within this line of thinking about education, there was little chance for the teacher's intellectuality to come on board as he was positioned as a teacher whose only function was to follow their methodology. On the other hand, it did not mean he changed his language learning view but that he was forced to execute the neoliberal system's demands in a way his doing and thinking were taken for granted (Line 2).

In the same train of thought, he was also taken for granted when the system demanded more aspects from Luis as he continued teaching. Luis stated he had worked as a bilingual agent at a call center, and given this, he had learned selling skills and customer service. These skills became outstanding for the sales manager of the institute and because of this, he decided to involve Luis in marketing and commercial practices to increase sales. One common marketing strategy was to have a teacher teach a demo class in order to convince prospective students to buy the course (See excerpt 27).

Through sales I was growing, as let's say; in popularity within the institution. Then, I started to stand out among administrative coordinators, and assistants. **(4) They said: Let's pick (To teach demo classes) the teacher Luis, because, it sure was a sale, since I already was that experienced, right? I had to teach a five to ten-minute class and delight the client,** you couldn't spend fifteen minutes. **(5) I felt pressure like, well, if I don't do it right, then the sale doesn't pan out and if it doesn't, maybe I get reprimanded,** or maybe I'm assigned more students, or maybe I don't get to teach advanced classes. **(6) So, I felt strange at times, but I got used to it and I learned to handle it as I kept going.** (*Excerpt 27. Luis's interview: From salesman to teacher: Language as a human experience. My own translation*)

The dynamics portrayed in the above short story, account for a global phenomenon, in which English has been constituted as a saleable commodity that is already part of a marketing culture globally (Tan & Rubdy, 2008). Thus, this phenomenon ends up influencing the activities in institutes but ultimately teachers like Luis. Then, he was perceived as a seller

of this so-called commodity (Line 4). Furthermore, this identity assigned to Luis entailed a subtle controlling system in which his docility needed to be endorsed.

Then, being chosen to be a demo class teacher implied for Luis the endorsement of his identity as a teacher seller. Along with this, his docility increased as a result of his fear of punishment, if he did not sell the course to prospective clients (Line 5). The thought of getting reprimanded, as he stays, influenced him to embrace a docile teacher identity. As a result, the implication laid on the fact he thought it necessary to treat English as a product to sell rather than a human experience as he claimed previously (Line 6). Luis went through an internal negotiation between the imposed identity of a seller and his teacher identity. Considering that as external factors he was immersed in the reward/punishment system and the diving practices that took him to become popular, yet not really from his own desire to do so but his interest in not getting punished.

Continuing with his role as a teacher seller, Luis stated his former bosses began to entrust him with the planning of a new course for a new institute that they later launched. For this reason, Luis could propose and design a curriculum according to what the perceived English was; a tool immersed in social practice (See excerpt 28).

I wanted to teach through experience, we were going to create an institute, that **(7) the mission would be to teach through experience**. In that case, **(8) I said let's start to show everything I learned at the university, those activities that I had planned, imagined in subjects such as materials, designs, etc.,** that I had at the university, I said: well, now we are going to be able to use all the utensils and tools. **(9) We (Luis and students) are going to be able to do experiments, and as you can see in the photos (showing photos), these are class photos where we had students practicing with different colors, papers, origami, we made figures, we even made robots and everything through experience, of course.** (*Excerpt 28. Luis's interview: From salesman to teacher: Language as a human experience. My own translation*)

In this short story, Luis was allowed to propose an alternative curriculum in which the institutional language learning view was humanized (Line 7). In the co-interpretation session, we both came to the conclusion that seeing language as an inherent part of human life experience debunks the generic neoliberal view. This considering that language is not seen as

a mere piece of information (i.e., product) that is transferred to passive students, but rather a human experience in which they are thinking individuals (Freire, 1972). In this experience, students, as part of a socio-semiotic environment, share meaning through interaction with other social actors in different social-life contexts (Line 9). Luis's reasoning in regard to what he considers language learning, is part of his theory of practice (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). Likewise, Luis reflected constantly upon his action when teaching and although he was absorbed by the system at some point, he could make his reasoning about language learning and teaching visible, even to the point of implementing it (Line 8).

The opportunity for Luis to implement such a view was the medium through which he could break away from the imposed methodology. His identity as a human teacher overtook the imposed docile identity. This is by means of proposing and implementing English learned through experience. Luis's view of language is understood as a human activity that is learned through meaningful experience. Consequently, Luis positioned language as a complex activity that does not fall into a set structure that can be made generic to have everyone fit into a mold for easy selling.

This short story exemplifies Luis's opinion on how English is taught and learned and hence, shows his view of language in the classroom. His own theory of practice disrupts a taken-for-granted neoliberal view of English as a commodity in his institution. By doing so, his reflexivity positions him as a human teacher. In the same train of thought, Luis holds another view of language that is related to his experience with English. I will portray how his experience and his view of language have subtly installed in Luis's a human identity based on *empathy for the other* within an aggressive neoliberal system.

***The reproduction of values within a neoliberal mirage***

In this short story, Luis accounted for his conviction to be an English teacher in relation to how English has influenced his life. His thoughts on the English language are underpinned by a neoliberal mirage that English is key to access to economic success (Phillipson, 1992). This in turn, unveiled how Luis has been utilized as a tool to install values that are normalized as positive (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012) by a pervasive neoliberal system. The values identified and that are related to each other are *competitiveness*, *monetary richness*, and *high status*. However, it is paradoxical how Luis's intentions are based on *empathy for the other* within a conception of equity which turns out to be a human value. This being so, I will establish a connection between Luis's relationship with English and his interest in being an English teacher.

Luis opened up to talk about his personal life and the influence English has had in connection with his life and his conviction to teaching English. During the interview, Luis told me about his childhood and how he got to become an English teacher. He stated he had had a difficult childhood as he came from a low-income family and lived through economic hardships. So then, when he started to work at the call center his economic issues were diminished as he started to earn money in his call center position (See excerpt 29).

...in short, I come from a family where I used to sell candy on the street, chocolates, and cigarettes in pubs when I was eight years old, literal poverty. I wore street clothes, ate street food, and many things. **(1) We are talking about a transformation where I remembered that I learned English and after that, boom!! my world changed. (2) English can change your life, it can help you get out of poverty, it can be a tool for traveling, for many things, English gave me enough to eat, to pay for tuition, to support a family...** (*Excerpt 29. Luis's interview: The distortion of resiliency as material success. My own translation*)

In the above lines, Luis established a connection between an economic transformation betterment and the fact he learned to speak English (Line 1 and 2). Then, I consider that for Luis, English meant an opportunity to get out of his economic hardships in the sense he got to

have money for his necessities (e.g., food and tuition) (Line 2). Then, I believe Luis's thoughts on English are the embodiment of the discourse of *English as success*. Phillipson (1992) claims that the hegemony of English as an imperialistic language is supported by three types of arguments: What *English is*<sup>15</sup>, what *English has*<sup>16</sup>, and what *English does*<sup>17</sup>. I consider that in Luis's story the argument of *English does* is present, since English gave Luis access to a higher standard of living. This fact made me think that ELT education in Colombia is part of a ubiquitous *knowledge economy* (Drucker, 2000). This means that economic progress is determined by how individuals add value to the market by means of the application of their knowledge (Drucker, 2000). In this fashion, Luis and his ability to speak English at a bilingual call center granted him economic growth.

Luis stated he continued working at the call center and then started to study systems engineering. Once there, he took some English classes that were mandatory in his career. Then, Luis told me that in that class he realized he wanted to be an English teacher (See excerpt 30)

Then I started the second semester of my degree and it was an A2 course. Then, the professor spoke in English and I understood him, but nobody participated. I thought about it and said: No, I really do not feel very satisfied with my career of systems engineering. I did not see myself in front of a computer twenty years in the future. But **(3) I did see myself as a person who could share English to change the destiny of people's lives... (4) Well as English did with me, it was the only thing that really got me ahead, I could say that, because of the different jobs that I have got.** (Excerpt 30. Luis's interview: *The distortion of resiliency as material success. My own translation*)

In this part of the short story, I asked him later how he felt back then he could change people's lives through English and this is what he answered:

...It's basically changing a person's perception and a person's life, that's changing a person's world. **(5) So, you want that dream, that love for English to be the motto**

---

<sup>15</sup> What English is, refers to exceptional qualities granted to English which allow manipulation (rich, interesting, varied, easy to learn, etc.)

<sup>16</sup> What English has, means material and immaterial resources (trained teachers, textbooks, skills, knowledge, etc.)

<sup>17</sup> What English does, it means that English can realistically or potentially give access to lacking aspects in underdeveloped countries (Modernization, better education, science, etc.)

**of your students and I can transmit that to you through an English course. (6) I am very happy to say that many of the students, that I have had, are in other countries, working with impressive salaries, with impressive changes in their lives.** Others here in Colombia, I have had the satisfaction of receiving messages during the pandemic from students who tell me: **(7) Look teacher, thanks to your classes and all those words that echoed, I could get a job at a Call Center. Thanks to your advice this job is giving food to my family now in the pandemic, thank you, teacher...**(*Excerpt 31. Luis's interview: The distortion of resiliency as material success. My own translation*)

Luis and I came to the conclusion that considering his experience with the discourse of English as success, he wanted to mirror his values to his students (Line 3 and 4). This conclusion led me to think English for Luis meant a tool that will grant students with those desires and necessities rooted in economic aspects (Line 6 and 7). Then, he calls it *love for English* (Line 5). In the co-interpretation session, Luis clarified to me, that by love he meant he felt gratitude for English as for him it was the medium to overcome economic difficulties. Then, I believe he deems English as the source of economic success. In the same fashion, he desires to transmit this *love for English* to his students. This love means an opportunity to grow economically for his students as well.

Consequently, I infer his conviction to teach English consists of reproducing values that are subtly installed, legitimized, and normalized by a neoliberal society. This in turn made me believe his conception of life, which is connected to the mastery of English, is based on fitting into a model of being competitive in a market. This in turn entails a high-paid job for those students who speak English well. Then, in terms of premises, it is understood as follows: If you speak English, you are competitive and if you are competitive, you will get access to the monetary richness and if you have monetary richness then it is positive. This phenomenon can be explained in Fairclough and Fairclough's words. The authors state values are understood as conceptions of abstract notions, for instance: justice, equality, life, etc. Then, an individual's particular conception about an aspect can motivate action and these

actions represent either the individual's desires or the value system that is publicly accepted as they are part of the normative fabric of society (Fairclough & Fairclough (2012).

In the same train of thought, I think this reproduction of disguised and normalized values executed by Luis is the manifestation of a political strategy introduced through the NBP. This considering the NBP is endorsed either in public or private institutions and it has had an effect on Colombian ELT education (See chapter II). Khamsi (2004) suggested that countries in order to appear as competitive to an imaginary international community, adopt foreign models and the discourses that come with them. By adopting, adapting, and welcoming foreign models as the CERF and its discourses they have achieved the transformation of Luis's world through political action (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012). In this sense, English through political implementation is made a fundamental factor that leads to economic success (Usma, 2009)

Having addressed this, I infer that Luis's convictions to teaching English are external and imposed by a pervasive neoliberal ideology that in turn, have influenced Luis's identity as an English teacher. This assertion is founded on my claim that Luis could get out of his economic hardships not only through his mastery of English but his own resiliency in difficult times. This is to say that there is an oversimplification of his resiliency as there is an exaltation of English as success. Based on this, I assert that this exaltation founded on the fact that the emergence of English as a global language (Crystal, 2003) has created a neoliberal mirage in expanding-circle countries (e.g., Colombia) in which individuals such as Luis, are influenced to believe English was really necessary for a successful life (Tan & Rubdy, 2008).

On the other hand, paradoxically I consider that Luis's human identity is as well present in his conviction to be an English teacher. As I stated earlier, Luis was positioned as a reproducer of neoliberal values. However, as Luis and I discussed in the co-interpretation session about this conclusion, we both agreed on the fact there were humanistic values that

were contradictory to the neoliberal values that also played a crucial motivation for his actions. Luis's reasons to help his students speak English are also based on his conception of equality and empathy for the other:

**(8) I mean, we don't need to have a lot of money or be born in a golden cradle to be able somehow to use English as a working tool to get out of poverty, (9) that's why I mean that if I could, other people can too.** (*Excerpt 32. Luis's interview: The distortion of resiliency as material success. My own translation*)

By looking at excerpt 31 and complementing it with excerpt 32 in my opinion, Luis's conception of equality sticks out. I consider it is noticeable when he says 'we' refers to people who do not possess money and after uses a well-known metaphor in Spanish that refers to wealthy people *being born in a golden cradle* (Line 8). I believe that Luis's words mean he considers that learning English is a way to foster social equality for low-income people (Line 8). Then, he does not want other people to go through poverty (i.e., having to sell candy as a child or wearing street clothes, or eating street food) and foster the idea that his students are as well capable of breaking out of it (Line 9). Thereupon, this *empathy for the other* vindicates his humanity as an English teacher as he sees in his students other human beings (Freire, 1976).

Luis's story shed light on the complex back-and-forth identity-shifting dynamic he has gone through as an English teacher for an institute. While his identity as a teacher robot is constantly endorsed by policy technologies for the sake of a business, it is evident how his own counter-discourses also endorse his human identity.

### **Chapter remarks**

From the analysis carried out of Mariam, Cosima, Andrea, and Luis's short stories I was able to show how they (re)constructed their own identities from their voices within ideologically-laden discourses pervading their teaching and doing at institutes for work and human development. Likewise, I depicted the complexity of their imposed and claimed



identities within a deeply-rooted neoliberal system disguised as an ELT educational system through the teachers' thoughts on what they experienced as English teachers. For this purpose, the category: *Contesting a dehumanizing model brought to ELT education: The paradox of a robot with emotions* helped me to make sense of who they were considering their own counter-discourses and the discourses that have influenced them. Having mentioned this, in the next chapter, I will discuss the conclusions of this study as well as its implications and further research within the same scope.

## **Chapter V: Conclusion, Implications, and Further Research**

In this chapter, I will present the final remarks and conclusions I was able to draw from this narrative study carried out with EL teachers working at institutes for work and human development. In this sense, in this chapter, I will first summarize the research process and how I answered the questions and objectives set for this study. Secondly, I will discuss implications that stem from this narrative study in regard to English teachers' identity in political, and research aspects. To finish, I will depart to pinpoint one question that derived from the conclusions and implications early brought to attention in this narrative study.

### **Conclusions**

This narrative study began with my own story that stemmed from my sense-making of circulating ideologically-laden discourses that influenced my identity as an English teacher (Gee, 1996; Benwell & Stokoe, 2006) while teaching at an institute for work and human development. Given this, I embarked to understand through a literature review (See chapter I) how from the implementation of the national bilingualism program, ideologically-laden discourses such as quality, competitiveness (Conell, 2009), English as a product (Tan & Rubdy, 2008) and English as a neutral language (Guerrero & Quintero, 2009) have determined Colombian EL teachers' identity as passive implementers in regard to ELT (Guerrero, 2010; Mendez et al, 2019). While making sense of these determining ideologically-laden discourses, I decided to interview teachers that led to empirical data of the aforementioned influence on their identities.

Having accounted for this influence, I considered it pertinent to collect teachers' voices in order to answer the following research question: *How do EL teachers (re)construct their identities as professionals of language education through life stories in face of ideologically-laden discourses of work-and-human-development institutes?* By answering

this question, I sought to achieve two main objectives: First, to comprehend counter-discourses constituted when EL teachers (re)construct their identities through lived stories in institutes for work and human development, and second to analyze how EL teachers make sense of the determining ideologically-laden discourses embedded in institutes for work and human development.

From the research question and the objectives set in this narrative study, I decided to invite teachers working in these educational institutions to participate in a reflexive process through a narrative interview. Although nine teachers willingly decided to be part of the study, only four could continue. Consequently, I described, explained, and analyzed their short stories in order to account for their own (re)constructed identities. Therefore, from each participant, a common category arose: *Contesting a dehumanizing model brought to ELT education: The paradox of a robot with human emotions*. The indicated category allowed me to answer the research question in the sense that teachers (re)construct themselves as human educators who strive to debunk dehumanizing models brought to ELT (Freire, 1972). However, the findings suggest they have gone through a dynamic back-and-forth process of shifting (Varghese et al, 2005) between two identities: *a robot identity* and *a human identity*. Then, I proposed a metaphor for the robot with human emotions to understand this paradoxical relation between the two identities drawn out. Moreover, this category was supported by eight short stories that accounted for the participants' identity (re)construction. The following chart summarizes the category explanation in each of the participants' stories:

*Table 5 Short story compilation*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Short story</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>Mariam</b>	Homogenized Students: Tug-of-war with the Methodology	Mariam is positioned by a rigid methodology as a robot who must apply a generic methodology for ideal flawless students. However, it does not sit well with her conception of students and makes the decision to teach in a way she understands students as human beings vindicating her human identity.
	Community Awareness: Echoing What's Been Banned	Mariam, as a transformative intellectual, comes afloat as she decides to use English to talk about the world from a socio-critical perspective. Nonetheless, she encounters vertical and horizontal barriers that attempt to position her as a passive robot.
<b>Cosima</b>	From enchantment to tension: Am I a repetitive machine?	Cosima accounts for her process of transitioning from being positioned as a passive technician, to nurturing her reflexivity, to claiming a transformative intellectual identity from her own emancipatory interests.
	Debunking the idealization of the EL teacher: I am more than a level	Cosima is influenced to believe she is inferior in contrast with C1-level teachers and TESC's. Then, she begins to compete with them. Nevertheless, she stops the competition when her human identity grows stronger and she debunks the legitimacy of those discourses by humanizing herself, the C1-level teachers, and TESC's.

<b>Andrea</b>	Problematizing marketing strategies: Human education at stake	Andrea is positioned as a robot for marketing purposes when education and language are being used for business purposes. Then, she presents her own views of education and language which turns out to be contradictory in regard to neoliberal models. This in turn, vindicates her human identity.
	The fearful path towards excellence	Andrea is absorbed by a neoliberal system as it affects her personal life. Her docility to be a robot is endorsed through technologies of power, nevertheless, her human identity is visible as she states clearly, she rejects those notions.
<b>Luis</b>	From salesman to teacher: Language as a human experience	Luis goes through a process in which he is utilized for marketing purposes by endorsing his docility as a robot teacher. This implies he has to use language instrumentally as a product. Then, he claims his way up within the institution to be a reflective teacher who proposes a humanistic view of language in the institute.
	The reproduction of values within a neoliberal mirage	Luis exposes his conviction to teaching English in relation to his history life. Thus, for Luis, teaching English is a way of fostering social justice, nonetheless, he ends up being utilized to legitimize and reproduce neoliberal values.

Source: Own authorship.

The above discussed short stories in Mariam's, Cosima's, Andrea's and Luis's identities (re)construction have been constituents of the back-and-forth shifting between the human teacher and robot teacher while teaching at institutes for work and human development. This is to say, in their reflexive process, their identities are entangled in a complex paradox between a docile, predetermined, emotionless, unthinking, and uncritical *robot teacher* (Foucault, 2002) and a claimed, emotional, thinking, critical, and *human teacher* identity. This paradox, in turn, becomes an internal site of struggle (Maclure, 1993) in which they claim a human agentic identity (Giroux, 1988), but also are assigned a robot identity within the institution and the ELT education in Colombia (Buzzell & Johnston, 2002).

From the findings I learned all the participants experienced tension in regard to what they believe, which was based on their own individualities and the institutional expectations imposed on them. This tension has been also documented in other studies (Tsui, 2007; Barahona & Toledo, 2022a). Likewise, from this tension it is my understanding that there is always some degree of agency from all teachers and this leads to resistance or affordance. This assertion reassures Menezes's (2008) claim that:

agency does not presuppose a neatly pre-established plan to achieve pre-determined outcomes: agency refers to action that is built in the discursive process of meaning-making, in the production and establishment of discourses that define and categorize people, ideas, kinds of knowledge and ways of knowing (p. 6).

In this sense, stemming from the participants' short stories, I was able to account for ubiquitous and powerful discourses such as *English as a product* (Tan & Rubdy, 2008), *English as a neutral language* (Guerrero & Quintero, 2009), *Quality and competitiveness discourses* (Connell, 2009) which derived from neoliberal and globalized ideologies (Usma,

2009), and do have a significant impact on the teachers' identities (re)construction.

Accordingly, Foucault's technologies of power allowed me to understand of how this impact on their identities was generated by the subtle but effective mechanisms that teachers are subjected to. In this vein, this attempt to influence teachers' identities as exposed in the short stories entails the reinforcement of taken-for-granted values (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012) unveiled to nurture an educational system that benefits the corporatization in Colombia (Usma, 2009).

By the same token, the first objective I set for this study in which I sought to explore what counter-discourses were constituted when EL teachers' (re)constructed their identities was met. I make this assertion inasmuch as the teachers' short stories also accounted for their counter-discourses such as *English to read the world*, *Human education* (Freire & Macedo, 1987), *English as a human experience* (Halliday, 1975), *Empathy for the other* (Freire, 1976). I understood that the above-mentioned counter-discourses underlie the teachers' human identity, considering they are thinking beings who propose and make sense of their own experiences (Freire, 1972; Giroux, 1988). Although most of them indirectly nurture and reproduce neoliberal values through their teaching, they do it under a mirage created by neoliberalism. Ergo, their humanity is employed by neoliberal agendas that benefit institutions that exercise power on them (Foucault, 2002).

The second objective I consider was met, had to do with the analysis of how EL teachers make sense of determining ideologically-laden discourses embedded in work-and-human development institutions. I state this taking into account that the teachers' short stories allowed me to analyze how all the participants interacted with the ideologically-laden discourses in their particular ways. In this course of action, I learned they dealt with the above-mentioned discourses according to their particular situations. Their particular way of thinking, in turn, has brought up tensions with their students (e.g. Mariam), colleagues (e.g.

Cosima), themselves (e.g. Cosima, Andrea, Luis), and institutions. I believe these tensions affected them emotionally and professionally (e.g., low salary, frustration, feeling stuck, inferiority feelings, etc.). In this respect, there are studies that reiterate the necessity to consider the teachers' emotional dimension for instance that of Mugford et al (2015) and Duran (2019). Despite these obstacles, I conclude that all of them took action on those tensions in their own particular ways. In turn, through the narrative interview, I consider they were able to externalize their identities according to their situation.

Since in chapter IV I exposed the complexity of the teachers' identity (re)construction in interaction with ideologically-laden discourses, I come to the conclusion that Mariam, Cosima, Andrea, and Luis through their voices advocated for an ELT model founded on humanization rather than the dehumanizing model brought by neoliberal agendas. Consequently, I believe the category: *Contesting a dehumanizing model brought to ELT education: The paradox of a robot with emotions* led me to answer the research question as I consider that from their stories it was evident how they (re)constructed their identities as professionals of language education through life stories in face of ideologically-laden discourses of human-and-work development institutes. The following chart summarizes how this category answers the question:



*Table 6 Answer to research question*

<b><i>Research question</i></b>	<b><i>Answer</i></b>	<b><i>Category</i></b>
<p><i>How do EL teachers (re)construct their identities as professionals of language education through life stories in face of ideologically-laden discourses of work-and-human-development institutes?</i></p>	<p>The teachers (re)construct themselves as human educators who attempt to contest a dehumanizing model. Thus, in this task, they navigate through horizontal and vertical tensions that position them as teacher robots who must maintain and reproduce neoliberal models.</p>	<p>Contesting a dehumanizing model brought to ELT education: The paradox of a robot with emotions.</p>

Source: Own authorship.

On that account, I comprehended that in the same way education is not an innocent act detached from socio-cultural and political aspects (Freire, 1972), neither is the implementation of educational policies (Mugford et al, 2015). Especially when considering teachers' identity (Mendez et al, 2019). Likewise, it is advised to create spaces for reflection and dialogue in educational spaces in order not to avoid teachers' feelings and emotions. As Salinas (2017) has warned, teachers immersed only into bureaucracy-driven activities are prone to experience emotions of frustration and resignation which results in the weakening of their identities as intellectuals.

Regarding the above suggestion, I comprehended that thinking differently from neoliberal discourses about EL teaching and learning is a tensioning task, in light of this, teachers have taken up a big responsibility in trying to change their reality. Freire (1972) asserts that "The dehumanization resulting from an unjust order is not cause for despair but for hope, leading to the incessant pursuit of the humanity denied by injustice" (p. 92- 93). I

believe hope is latent in Mariam, Cosima, Andrea, and Luis since all of them through their stories evidenced those moments in which they exercised their agency toward a more egalitarian English language education despite its difficulties.

### **Implications and Further Research**

By having presented the main conclusions of this narrative study, I will discuss the implications that arose in this reflexive exercise. Thus, it is my intention to proceed as follows: First, I will address one political implication: Teachers are valid interlocutors in the constitution of policies in ELT. Secondly, I intend to expose the following research implication: Research related to EL teachers' identity is encouraged from their reflexivity. Lastly, in the same train of thought, I will expose an implication related to TPD: EL teachers' reflexivity as a characteristic of endorsing TPD is encouraged, considering it as a way to resist neoliberal agendas. In this fashion, my intention is to inform anyone interested in ELT education and research in regard to the importance of valuing teachers' opinions.

The first implication is related to the political sphere. Deeming the results of this narrative study carried out for teachers, I learned from this study that teachers' experience and expertise in regard to English language teaching and learning are valuable sources of information for the consolidation of policies concerning ELT processes in Colombia. As stated in chapter I, the current Colombian bilingualism program has been brought from European countries and also the discourses that imply adopting English only. As I elaborated in this study, Colombian English teachers are professionals and intellectuals in the EL teaching and learning field. Considering this, I believe their opinions and expertise are fundamental for the implementation of programs related to ELT. This considering that the profession of English teachers goes beyond the proficiency of English as a foreign language

and their voices are virtually absent when these types of debates are carried out (Moen, 2006).

Likewise, I wish to address a research implication concerning EL teachers' identity. From this study, I learned that EL teachers' reflexivity unveils relevant contributions in regard to their identities. I landed on this conclusion as their reflexivity was based on their experiences, theories of practice, personal and professional opinions in relation to ELT, which in turn led me to explore traces of the identities that they were assigned and the identities they claimed with respect to their profession. Accordingly, teachers' reflexivity facilitates a deeper understanding of why EL teachers make one decision or another. In turn, this assumption might seem that teachers contradict themselves, yet, in their reflexivity I comprehended that their actions are well-founded and it is more complex than a mere contradiction in their being.

In connection with the above-mentioned ideas, is the view of TPD in research. TPD in ELT education is typically deemed as the exercise of instrumental improvement through reflection on teaching practices that are aimed at improving proficiency in students (See chapter III). Notwithstanding, as I explored teachers' identities, I learned that TPD transcends beyond the improvement of instrumental purposes to the exercise of reflexivity in regard to socio-political aspects to be aware of external discourses and values introduced in the ELT field. Thus, EL teachers are encouraged to reflect upon their everyday practices with reference to their own views of language, education, and pedagogy. I believe reflexivity is valuable in the sense it is not only about being aware of oppressing discourses but also implies action-taking on them. To clarify, by being aware of subtle ideologically-laden discourses in ELT, teachers start to make their own decisions and their own counter-discourses are made visible. On account of this, I encourage teachers to continue teaching

according to their own theories of practice as it will lead to alternative methodologies that ultimately disrupt neoliberal agendas and taken-for-granted realities.

This assertion is based on the fact that alternative methodologies foster a humanistic view when it comes to teaching (e.g., Mariam, Cosima, Andrea, and Luis). In this vein, these alternative methodologies, which do not view English as a product but as a human practice, become a way of resisting neoliberal ideologies. Although it is not an easy task within a neoliberal realm, I consider it is not impossible. There will be moments for EL teachers to make room for their own-made alternative methodologies that disrupt the taken-for-granted views of EL teaching and learning contributing to building an equitable society.

To conclude, this narrative study unveiled how ideologically-laden discourses have influenced EL teachers' identity at a private institution in Bogotá. On the other hand, it has revealed EL teachers' counter-discourses that contradict them. In the same fashion, I have addressed how the NBP has caused real implications for EL teachers and how it has affected their professional, academic, and personal lives. Yet, these discourses not only influence teachers' identity but also all the stakeholders and social actors in Colombia. This considering the discourses that underlie the NBP have an extended reach either in private or public institutions nationally. Given this, I consider pertinent for further research the following question:

- What counter-discourses do actors of the ELT curriculum construct/embrace in regard to NBP in Colombia?

## References

- Atkinson, D. (2004). Theorizing how student teachers form their identities in initial teacher education. *British Educational Research Journal*, 30(3), 379–394.
- Ayala Z, & Álvarez V. (2005). A Perspective of the Implications of the Common European Framework Implementation in the Colombian Socio-cultural Context. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, (7), 7-26.
- Ball, S. (2003). The teacher's Soul and Terrors of Performativity. *Journal of Education Policy*. Taylor & Francis group. 18(2), 215 – 228.
- Barahona, M. & Toledo, T. (2022a) Exploring Chilean EFL Student Teachers' Development of Teacher Identity Through Perezhivanie. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*. 10.1080/15348458.2022.2075875
- Barahona, M. & Ibaceta X. (2022b) Chilean EFL student teachers and social justice: ambiguity and uncertainties in understanding their professional pedagogical responsibility. *Teachers and Teaching*. DOI: 10.1080/13540602.2022.2062726
- Barkhuizen, G. (2016). A Short Story Approach to Analyzing Teacher (Imagined) Identities Over Time. *TESOL Quarterly*, 50(3), 655-683.
- Barkhuizen, G. (2021). Identity dilemmas of a teacher (educator) researcher: teacher research versus academic institutional research. *Educational Action Research*, 29(3), 358-377. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2020.1842779>
- Barkhuizen, G., Benson, P., Chik, A. (2014). *Narrative Inquiry in Language Teaching and Learning Research*. Routledge.
- Barthes, R., & Duisit, L. (1975). An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative. *New Literary History*, 6(2), 237-272. doi:10.2307/468419
- Benwell, B., & Stokoe, E. (2006). *Discourse and Identity*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Bruner, J. (1987). Life as Narrative. *Social Research*, 54(1), 11-32.

- Buzzelli, C. A., & Johnston, B. (2002). *The moral dimensions of teaching: Language, power, and culture in classroom interaction*. Routledge Falmer.
- Camargo Cely, J. P. (2018). Unveiling EFL and Self-Contained Teachers' Discourses on Bilingualism Within the Context of Professional Development. *HOW Journal*, 25(1), 115-133.
- Cárdenas, M. L., González, A., & Álvarez, J. A. (2010). El desarrollo profesional de los docentes de inglés en ejercicio: algunas consideraciones conceptuales para Colombia. *Folios*, (31), 49.67. <https://doi.org/10.17227/01234870.31folios49.67>
- Clandinin, D. J. (2006). Narrative Inquiry: A Methodology for Studying Lived Experience. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 27(1), 44–54.
- Colella, Leonardo, & Díaz-Salazar, Rocío. (2015). El discurso de la calidad educativa: un análisis crítico. *Educación y Educadores*, 18(2), 287-303.  
<https://doi.org/10.5294/edu.2015.18.2.6>
- Connell, R. (2009). Good teachers on dangerous ground: towards a new view of teacher quality and professionalism. *Critical Studies in Education*. 50(3), 1-20.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17508480902998421>
- Creswell, J. W. (2007) Five qualitative approaches to inquiry. In J. W. Creswell (Eds), *Qualitative inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among five approaches* (pp. 53-84) Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a global language*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Darvin, R., & Norton, B. (2015). Identity and a Model of Investment in Applied Linguistics. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 35, 36-56. doi:10.1017/S0267190514000191
- Davies, B., & Harré, R. (1990). Positioning: The Discursive Production of Selves. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 20(1), 43-63.

- De Fina, A. (2011). Discourse and identity. In T. A. Van Dijk (Ed.), *Discourse studies: A multidisciplinary introduction* (pp. 263-282). SAGE Publications Ltd, <https://www.doi.org/10.4135/9781446289068.n13>
- Díaz-Maggioli, G. (2003). "Professional development for language teachers". EDO-FL 03-03. ERIC Digest.
- Drucker, P. P. (2000). *The Age of Discontinuity: Guidelines to Our Changing Society*. Transaction Publishing.
- Duran, K. (2017). Non-certified ELT teachers' narratives: A pedagogical reflection (Unpublished master's thesis). Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Bogotá, Colombia.
- Edwards, R., & Holland, J. (2013). *What Is Qualitative Interviewing?* Bloomsbury Academic.
- Escobar Alméciga, W. (2013). Identity-Forming Discourses: A Critical Discourse Analysis on Policy Making Processes Concerning English Language Teaching in Colombia. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 15(1), 45-60.
- Estacio, A.M., & Cely, J.P. (2018). EFL Teachers' Professional Development: Towards a counterpart of the English Language Supremacy. *Gist: Education and Learning Research Journal*, (17) 215-229. <https://doi.org/10.26817/16925777.408>
- Fairclough, N. & Fairclough, I. (2012). *Political Discourse Analysis: A method for advanced students*. Routledge.
- Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and power*. Pearson Education.
- Foucault, M. (1988a). *Technologies of the self: A seminar with Michel Foucault*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Foucault, M. (1988b). El sujeto y el poder. *Revista mexicana de sociología*, 50(3), 3-20.
- Foucault, M. (2002). *Vigilar y castigar: Nacimiento de la prisión*. Siglo XXI Editores.
- Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Herder and Herder.

- Freire, P. (1973). *Education for Critical Consciousness*. Seabury Press.
- Freire, P. (1976). *La educación como práctica de la libertad* (17ª ed.). Siglo XXI Editores.
- Freire, P., & Macedo, D. (1987). *Reading the word and the world*. Greenwood Publishing Group, INC.
- Gallo, J. E. & Quiñones, A. (2016). Subjetividad, Salud Mental y Neoliberalismo en las Políticas Públicas de la Salud en Colombia. *Athenea Digital*, 16(2), 139-168.
- Gee, J. P. (1996). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses*. Taylor & Francis.
- Giroux, H. (2003). *Pedagogía y política de la esperanza: teoría, cultura y enseñanza*. Amorrortu Editores.
- Giroux, H. A. (1983). Theories of reproduction and resistance in the new sociology of education: A critical analysis. *Harvard Educational Review*, 53(3), 257–293.  
<https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.53.3.a67x4u33g7682734>
- Giroux, H. A. (1988). *Teachers as intellectuals: Towards a critical pedagogy of learning*. Bergin and Garvey Publishers.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *Presentation of self in everyday life*. Doubleday Anchor Books.
- Gómez Sará, M. M. (2017). Review and Analysis of the Colombian Foreign Language Bilingualism Policies and Plans. *HOW Journal*, 24(1), 139-156.  
<https://doi.org/10.19183/how.24.1.343>
- Gómez, L. (2017). Configuration of Subjectivities of English Language Teachers as NNESTs in the Frame of Colombian Language Policies: A Narrative Study. (Unpublished Master's thesis). Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas. Bogotá, Colombia.
- González, A. (2003). Who is educating EFL teachers: A Qualitative Study of in- service in Colombia. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*. 8(14), 153-172.
- González M.A. (2007). Professional Development of EFL Teachers in Colombia: Between Colonial and Local Practices. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*. 12(1), 309 – 332.



- González M. A. (2009). On Alternative and Additional Certifications in English Language Teaching: The Case of Colombian EFL Teachers' Professional Development. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 14(22), 183-209.
- González, A., Montoya, C., & Sierra, N. (2009). What do EFL Teachers Seek in Professional Development Programs? Voices from Teachers. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 7(1), 29-50.
- Gruenfeld, D. H., Inesi, M. E., Magee, J. C., & Galinsky, A. D. (2008). Power and the objectification of social targets. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 95(1), 111-127. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.95.1.111>
- Guerrero, H. (2008). Bilingual Colombia: What does It Mean to Be Bilingual within the Framework of the National Plan of Bilingualism?. *Profile Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, (10), 27-46.
- Guerrero, C. (2010). The Portrayal of EFL Teachers in Official Discourse: The Perpetuation of Disdain. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 12(2), 33-49.
- Guerrero, H. & Quintero, P. (2009). English as a Neutral Language in the Colombian National Standards: A Constituent of Dominance in English Language Education. *Profile Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 11(2), 135-150.
- Guerrero, C. H., & Quintero, A. (2016). *Las voces de los maestros frente a las políticas educativas: ¿la ilusión de la democracia?*. Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas.
- Guerrero, H., & Quintero, A. (2021). Elementary School Teachers in Neoliberal Times: The Silent Voices That Make Educational Policies Work. *Profile Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 23(1), 27-40.

- Guile, D. (2006). What is distinctive about the knowledge economy? Implications for education. In H. Lauder, P. Brown, J. Dillabough, & A. H. Halsey (Eds.), *Globalization, education and social change* (pp. 355-366). Oxford University Press.
- Halliday, M.A.K. (1975). *Language as social semiotic: The social interpretation of language and meaning*. Edward Arnold.
- Han, B. (2012). *La sociedad del cansancio*. Herder.
- Hardy, I. & Melville, W. (2013). Contesting continuing professional development: reflections from England. *London: Taylor & Francis*. 19(3). 311-325.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2012.754162>
- Hardy, I. (2012). *The politics of Teacher professional development: Policy, research and development*. Routledge.
- Heigham, J., & Croker, R. (2009). *Qualitative research in applied linguistics: a practical introduction*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Instituto Colombiano de Normas Técnicas y Certificación. (2007). *Programas de Formación para el Trabajo en el Área de idiomas. Requisitos*.  
[https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1621/articles-157089\\_archivo\\_pdf\\_NTC\\_5580.pdf](https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1621/articles-157089_archivo_pdf_NTC_5580.pdf)
- James, P. (2001). *Teachers in action: Tasks for in-service language teacher education and development*. Cambridge University Press.
- Josselson, R. (2007). The Ethical Attitude in Narrative Research: Principles and Practicalities. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (p. 537–566). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Jovchelovitch, S. & Bauer, M. (2000) Narrative interviewing. In: Bauer, Martin W. & Gaskell, G., (eds.) *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound: A Practical Handbook*. Sage (pp. 57-74). ISBN 0761964819

- Steiner-Khamsi, G. (Ed.) (2004). *The global politics of educational borrowing and lending*. Teachers College Press.
- Kincheloe, J., & McLaren, P. (2011). Rethinking Critical Theory and Qualitative Research. In *Hayes, K. Steinberg, S & Tobin, K. (Eds), Key Work in Critical Pedagogy*. (pp. 285 – 326). Sense Publishers.
- Kramp, M. (2004). Exploring Life and Experience Through Narrative Inquiry. In De Marrais. Kathleen & D. Stephen (Eds.). *Foundations for Research: Methods of Inquiry in Education and the Social Sciences* (pp. 103-122). Lawrence Erlbaum
- Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Pergamon Press Inc.
- Kress, G. (2003). *Literacy in the New Media*. Routledge.
- Kubota, R. (2017). Critical teacher identity. In Barkhuizen, G. (Ed.), *Reflections on language teacher identity research* (pp. 210 - 214).
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2001). Toward a Postmethod Pedagogy. *Tesol Quarterly*, 35(4) 537 - 560.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2003). *Beyond methods: Macrostrategies for language teaching*. Yale University Press.
- Kvale, S. (2007). *Doing interviews*. SAGE Publications.
- Ley 1064 de 2006. (2006, 26 de Julio). Congreso de la República. Diario oficial No. 46.341
- Lin, A. (2014). Critical Discourse Analysis in Applied Linguistics: A Methodological Review. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 34, 213-232.  
doi:10.1017/S0267190514000087
- Maclure, M. (1993). Arguing for yourself: Identity as an organizing principle in teachers' jobs and lives. *British Educational Research Journal*, 19, 311-322.

- Martinez, Y. (2018). The Native Speaker Fallacy in English Teachers' Recruitment Practices: Voices of Resistance within a Social Network. [Master's degree, Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas]. Repositorio Institucional Universidad Distrital.  
<https://repository.udistrital.edu.co/handle/11349/14899?show=full>
- Mugford, G. Sughrua, W. & Lopez, M. (2015) Construction of an English Language Teacher Identity: Perceptions and Contrasts in Mexico. *MEXTESOL Journal*, 39(2), 1-11.
- McLaren, P., & Kincheloe, J. L. (2007). *Critical Pedagogy: Where Are We Now?*. Peter Lang US.
- Mejía, A. (2002). *Power, prestige, and bilingualism: International perspectives on elite bilingual education*. Multilingual Matters.
- Mejía, A. (2012). Reflections on English Language Teaching and Bilingualism in Colombia. *Cuadernos del Caribe*, 9(15), 23-30.
- Menezes Jordão, C. (2008). *A postcolonial framework for brazilian efl teachers' social identities*. Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Facultad de Ciencias Humanas.
- Méndez, P., Garzón, E., & Noriega-Borja, R. (2019). English Teachers' Subjectivities: Contesting and Resisting Must-be Discourses. *English Language Teaching*, 12(3) 65-76.
- Mendieta, J. (2013). Narrative research: An alternative approach to study language teaching and learning. *Folios*, (37), 135-147.
- Moen, T. (2006). Reflections on the Narrative Research Approach. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(4), 56-69.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook (2nd ed.)*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Ministerio de educación. (2005). *Bases para una nación bilingüe y competitiva*.  
<https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1621/propertyvalue-32266.html>

- Mora R.A., Chiquito T., & Zapata J.D. (2019) Bilingual Education Policies in Colombia: Seeking Relevant and Sustainable Frameworks for Meaningful Minority Inclusion. In Johannessen B. (Eds) *Bilingualism and Bilingual Education: Politics, Policies and Practices in a Globalized Society*. (pp. 55 - 77) Springer, Cham.
- Peláez, O., & Usma, J. (2017). The Crucial Role of Educational Stakeholders in the Appropriation of Foreign Language Education Policies: A Case Study. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 19(2), 121-134.
- Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford University Press
- Pineda Ibarra, R. (2008). La concepción de “ser humano” en Pablo Freire. *Revista Electrónica Educare*, 12(1), 47-55. <https://doi.org/10.15359/ree.12-1.3>
- Quintero, P. A. (2009) ¿Es usted bilingüe? Concepciones y alternativas para la educación en idiomas en el contexto colombiano. *El educador*, (7), 4-10.
- Quintero, A. H., & Guerrero, C. H. (2018). The (Re)Construction of Self Through Student-Teachers' Storied Agency in ELT: Between Marginalization and Idealization. In Yazan, B., & Rudolph, N (Eds.), *Criticality, Teacher Identity, and (In) equity in English Language Teaching: Issues and Implications*. (pp. 81 - 102). Springer.
- Quintero, A. (2016). Creating a Pedagogical Space that Fosters the (Re)Construction of Self Through Life Stories of Pre-Service English Language Teachers. *HOW Journal*, 23(2), 106-124. <https://doi.org/10.19183/how.23.2.293>
- Rendón, J. (2019). Exploring EFL Teachers' Activity and Identity Construction through the Path of Private Institutional Policies (Unpublished master's thesis). Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Bogotá, Colombia.
- Richards, J. & Farrell, T. (2005). *Professional Development for Language Teachers: Strategies for Teacher Learning*. Cambridge University Press.

- Richards, K. (2009). Interviews. In J. Heigham, R. A. Croker. (Eds.), *Qualitative Research in Applied Linguistics a Practical Introduction*. (pp. 182 - 199). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Sage Publications.
- Salinas, D. (2017). EFL Teacher Identity: Impact of Macro and Micro Contextual Factors in Education Reform Frame in Chile. *World Journal of Education*, 7(6), 1. <https://doi.org/10.5430/wje.v7n6p1>
- Salmons, J. (2012). *Cases in online interview research*. SAGE Publications.
- Salmons, J. (2015). Designing and conducting research with online interviews. In Salmons, J. (Ed.), *Cases in online interview research* (pp. 1-30). SAGE Publications.
- Samacá Bohórquez, Y. (2012). On Rethinking Our Classrooms: A Critical Pedagogy View. *HOW Journal*, 19(1), 194 - 208.
- Segura, N. (2022). Resignifying Culture through Theories of Practice: An in-service English Teachers' Narrative Experience [Master's degree, Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas]. Repositorio Institucional Universidad Distrital.
- Steinberg, S., & Kincheloe, J. (2012). Employing the Bricolage as Critical Research in Science Education. In Fraser B., Tobin K., McRobbie C. (Eds) *Second International Handbook of Science Education*. (pp. 1485 - 1500). Springer International Handbooks of Education.
- Tan, K.W. & Rubdy, R. (Eds). (2008). *Language as commodity: Global structures, local marketplaces*. Continuum, International Publishing Group.
- Tsui, A. (2007). Complexities of Identity Formation: A Narrative Inquiry of an EFL Teacher. *Tesol Quarterly*, 41(4), 657-680.
- Tuck, E. (2009). Suspending damage: A letter to communities. *Harvard Educational Review*, 79(3), 409-427
- Tudor, I. (1993). Teacher roles in the learner-centered classroom. *ELT Journal*, 47(1) 22-31.

- Tudor, I. (2001). *The dynamics of the language classroom*. Cambridge University Press.
- Universidad de Antioquia [UdeA]. (n.d). Del "Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo" hasta "Colombia Bilingüe".  
<https://www.udea.edu.co/wps/portal/udea/web/inicio/investigacion/grupos-investigacion/ciencias-sociales/giae/normas-reformas>
- Usma, J. (2009a). Education and Language Policy in Colombia: Exploring Processes of Inclusion, Exclusion, and Stratification in Times of Global Reform. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 11(1), 123-141.
- Usma, J. (2009b). Globalization and Language and Education Reform in Colombia: A Critical Outlook. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 14(22), 19-42.
- Van Dijk, T. (2009). *Discurso y Poder*. Editorial Gedisa, S.A.
- Varghese, M., Johnston, B., & Morgan, B. (2005). Theorizing language teacher identity: three perspectives and beyond. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 4(1), 21-44.
- Vergara, O., Hernández, F. & Cárdenas, R. (2009). "Classroom Research and Professional Development". *PROFILE. Issues in a Teachers' Professional Development*. (11), 169-191.
- Villegas Correa, D. (2017). Colombia's nationwide EFL policy and the construction of equity in policy documents. *Apples: Journal of Applied Language Studies*, 11(4), 57-74.
- Vravus, M. (2017). A decolonial alternative to critical approaches to multicultural and intercultural teacher education. In Clandinin, D. J., & Husu, J. *The SAGE handbook of research on teacher education* (pp. 473-490). SAGE Publication.
- Weis, L., & Fine, M. (2012). Critically bifocality and circuits of privilege: Expanding critical ethnographic theory and design. *Harvard Educational Review*, 82(2), 173-201

Wenger, E. (1999). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge University Press.

Yilmaz, F. (2016). An Institutional Perspective into Professional Development of English Teachers: A Case of Schools of Foreign Languages. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, (232), 828-832.

Yoon, K.S., Duncan, T., Lee, S., Scarloss, B., & Shapley, K.L. (2007). *Reviewing the evidence on how teacher professional development affects student achievement*. Institute of Education Sciences

Zein, M. (2017) Professional development needs of primary EFL teachers: perspectives of teachers and teacher educators. *Professional Development in Education*, 43(2), 293-313.



## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Semi-structured interview

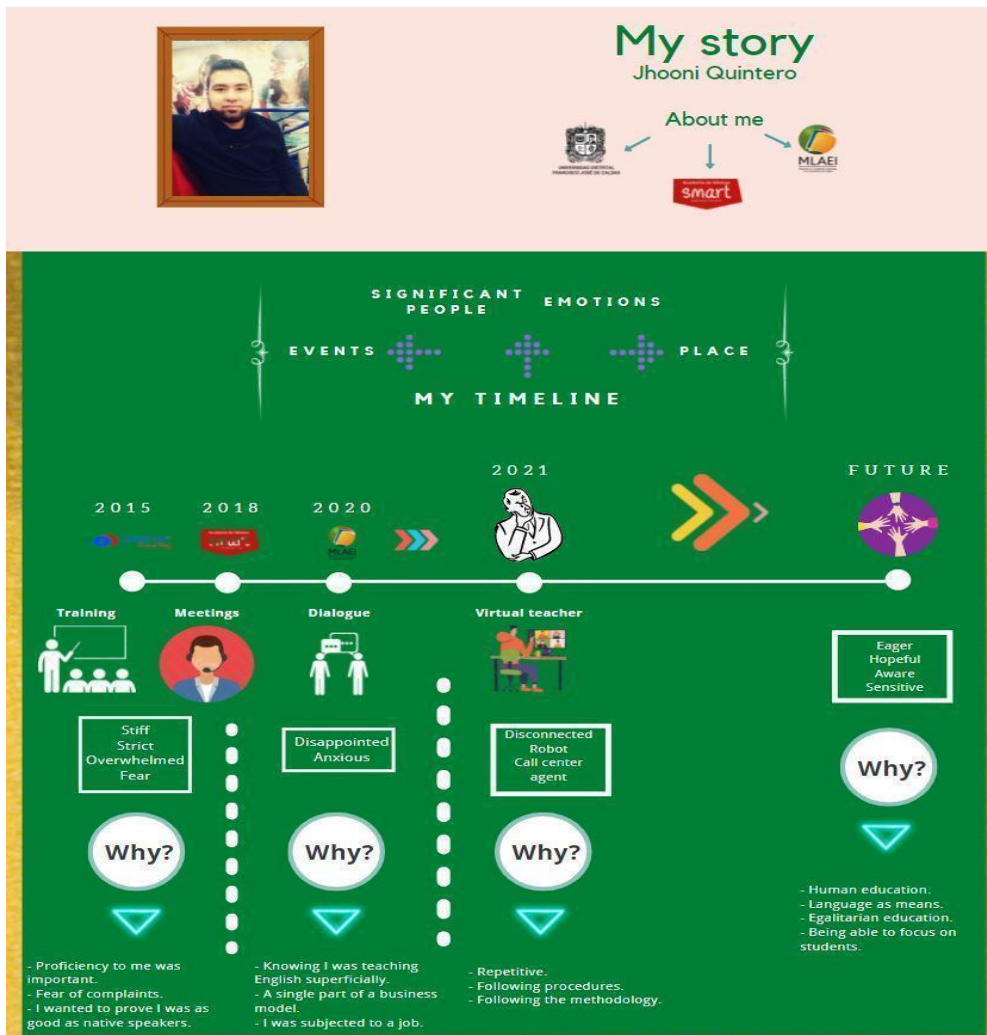
¿Cómo crees que la institución te ve como profesor de inglés?

¿Cómo te ves tú dentro de la institución?

¿Cuál crees que es tu papel dentro del plan nacional de bilingüismo en relación con la institución en la que enseñas?

¿Qué piensas del PNB?

### Appendix 2 My story



**Appendix 3 Reflective Guidelines for the Narrative Interview**

Reflective Guidelines for the narrative interview

Dear colleague,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this initiative that seeks to examine how English teachers (re)construct their identities through lived stories. In order to achieve this, it is pivotal to reflect upon those events that occur(ed) in institutes for work and human development. For the purpose of the narrative interview, you are encouraged to recall stories from the past, present and future projections as an English teacher.

**Retrospective stories:** Those past experiences in institutes for work and human development.

**Introspective stories:** Those present experiences in institutes for work and human development.

**Prospective stories:** How do you picture yourself as a teacher/citizen/member of a family/part of an institution?

TIP: Apart from accounting for the anecdotes themselves, reflect upon the following questions:

How did I feel when it happened at the moment?

Why did I feel that way?

What did I think about it back then?

What do I think about it now?

What do you think about it now?

How do you feel about it now?

Why do you feel that way?



**Feelings**



**Key places**




**Key people**

Feel free to use the following timeline to take notes on the experiences. Keep in mind the above-mentioned aspects and bring them to the narrative interview.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

**Timeline for:**

<p><b>Feelings</b>      <b>Thoughts</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; height: 80px; width: 90%; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	<p><b>Feelings</b>      <b>Thoughts</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; height: 80px; width: 90%; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	<p><b>Feelings</b>      <b>Thoughts</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; height: 80px; width: 90%; margin: 0 auto;"></div>
		
<p><b>Feelings</b>      <b>Thoughts</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; height: 80px; width: 90%; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	<p><b>Feelings</b>      <b>Thoughts</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; height: 80px; width: 90%; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	<p><b>Feelings</b>      <b>Thoughts</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; height: 80px; width: 90%; margin: 0 auto;"></div>

Freeeology.com

## **Appendix 4 Consent form**

### **Consentimiento informado**

#### ***Vindicating Colombian EL teachers' voices in Neoliberal times: A narrative study.***

*“Human beings are storying creatures. We make sense of the world and the things that happen to us by constructing narratives to explain and interpret events both to ourselves and to other people.” Sikes, P. & Gale, K. (2006).*

Estimado(a) colega:

Actualmente me encuentro desarrollando mi tesis de grado de la Maestría en Lingüística Aplicada a la enseñanza del Inglés de la Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas. En este estudio, busco recolectar historias de docentes que estén actualmente enseñando inglés en institutos para el trabajo y el desarrollo humano. Esto con el fin de entablar un espacio reflexivo y dialógico el cual busca interpretar la manera en la que los docentes se reconstruyen a sí mismos desde sus propias voces. Esto se da a su vez dentro de ambientes cargados de ideologías, los cuales son base en la educación del inglés en Colombia actualmente. A continuación, se expondrán algunas de las pautas a tener en cuenta durante el estudio.

**INVESTIGADOR:** Jhooni Quintero González

#### **COMPROMISOS DE LOS INVESTIGADORES:**

Se le garantiza:

- El uso de nombres ficticios para proteger su identidad si usted lo prefiere.
- Estricta confidencialidad con información que usted considere que lo puede afectar.
- Que el proyecto no tendrá incidencia alguna en su trabajo o estudio.
- Que se le responderá cualquier duda que le genere el proyecto.

#### **TÉCNICA UTILIZADA:**

Para el pleno cumplimiento de los objetivos planteados, se recogerán datos a través de: Google Meet (Como fue acordado) a través de una entrevista narrativa. Por lo cual se requiere la grabación de la entrevista en el espacio virtual.

Agradezco de antemano su autorización para contar con usted como participante en este proyecto. Si es así le solicito llenar los datos en la parte inferior de esta carta.

**NOMBRE DEL PARTICIPANTE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CERTIFICO** que he sido informado(a) sobre el objetivo de esta investigación por parte de Jhooni Quintero González en el marco de la investigación arriba referenciada. Conozco el procedimiento que se va a realizar y me han informado acerca de la confidencialidad y uso que se dará a la información que se suministre durante el proceso investigativo. Acepto que se utilicen los datos recogidos durante el estudio con el propósito de ser analizados y utilizados en posibles conferencias y/o publicaciones.

**FIRMA:** \_\_\_\_\_

**C.C:** \_\_\_\_\_

**FECHA:** \_\_\_\_\_

Agradezco su amable participación en el proyecto el cual contribuirá en gran medida al entendimiento de la identidad docente dentro del marco de los discursos auspiciados por el plan nacional de bilingüismo y como este es reconstruido a partir de los mismos docentes.

**Appendix 5 Chart 1 Teachers' narrative interviews transcription chart (example)**

<b>Teachers' narrative interviews transcription chart</b>	
<b>Teacher's pseudonym:</b>	Mariam
<b>General teacher's profile:</b>	24 years old. Graduated from a private university in Bogota as a Spanish and English teacher. Currently living with her parents. She has been teaching at an institute for work and human development for more than a year. It is her first experience.
<b>Time spent in interview:</b>	2 hours 10 minutes.
<b>Followed suggested guidelines?</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<p><b>Mariam:</b> Si</p> <p><b>Jhooni:</b> ¿O hiciste algo distinto?</p>	

**Mariam:** No, intente seguir este porque o si no, no me organizaba bien, entonces ... si lo hice, lo hice con este esquema, entonces pues puse como 6 experiencias les di un título a todas ... y bueno pues básicamente eso fue lo que intente hacer, intentar separarlas por categorías fue como lo que se me pudo ocurrir en este caso

**Jhooni:** Bueno listo, entonces si quieres pues me puedes mostrar qué fue lo que hiciste

**Mariam:** Listo

**Jhooni:** ¿Cuál es el proceso?

**Mariam:** Vale, ... bueno pues recordando que yo trabaje en dos institutos, en América y en Smart, básicamente entonces son experiencias muy diferentes a pesar de que los métodos son similares. Entonces, ... pues voy a hablar primero de American, no, no voy a mencionar nombres, creo que prefiero no hacerlo así si no pues como más o menos en el tiempo, como me fui sintiendo.

Entonces la primera es: Students with special abilities, cuando yo recién inicié trabajando allá ... recuerdo que tenía dos estudiantes. Bueno, inicialmente en el curso se ven, se venden ¿no? como

**Jhooni:** Ujum

**Mariam:** No se tiene en cuenta habilidades especiales o no se nos dice a nosotros, por ejemplo, no se nos habla de políticas de inclusión, no se nos habla absolutamente nada, simplemente es como vamos a dar este curso de esta manera, este es el método y ya. Entonces tuve dos estudiantes que tenían parálisis cerebral, ellos dos eran muy, muy pilos, sin embargo, tenían ... pues algunas limitaciones físicas ¿no?, ellos no, ambos tenían que utilizar silla de ruedas para movilizarse o muletas y pues la parte motriz no les permitía escribir de manera, pues de la misma

**Appendix 6 Matrix 1 Short story analysis chart (example)**

<i>How do EL teachers (re)construct their identities as professionals of language education through life stories in face of ideologically-laden discourses of work-and-human-development institutes?</i>								
<i>Objective 1: To unveil what counter discourses are constituted when EL teachers (re)construct their identities through lived stories in institutes for work and human development</i>								
<i>Objective 2: To analyze how EL teachers make sense of determining ideologically-laden discourses embedded in institutes for work and human development</i>								
Participants	Short stories	Page (Transcription matrix)	story/Story/STORY			Discourses	Counter discourses	Ideologies embedded
			Who	Where	When			
<b>Mariam</b>								
<b>Luis</b>								
<b>Natalia</b>								

<b>Jesus</b>						
<b>Andrea</b>						



<i>How do EL teachers (re)construct their identities as professionals of language education through life stories in face of ideologically-laden discourses</i>			
<i>Objective 1: To interpret how EL teachers make sense of determining ideologically-laden discourses embedded in institutes for work</i>			
<i>Objective 2: To unveil what counter discourses are constituted when EL teachers (re)construct their identities through life stories in institutes</i>			
Short stories	Color / Page (Transcription matrix)	story/Story/STORY	
		Who	Where
Disabled students and the struggle to teach them	Yellow color highlighted (Pag 1 - 2 - 7 - 9)	<p>The teacher has to deal with different tensions in her classroom (story). On the one hand, there are students with different necessities (Age, physical, cognitive) (story). The story tells me the teacher feels she needs to assist those students (story), but she also needs to comply with a methodology that homogenizes students (Story). In the example of disabled students, she mentions the institution was inclusive by accepting the students (Story). However, no preparation whatsoever exists. Teachers in the institution are forced to apply the methodology in which the student is a generic subject (Story). The teacher needs to be very strict (story) in terms of time. For the institution no matter those individualities (Story), also the coordinator as a superior exerts power on the teacher to comply with the methodology (story, Story). The teacher gets involved in a game where she will be always the loser. This considering that if the methodology does not fit or the class does not "work out" well, she is the one who will be blamed for. In the short story where the coordinator told her she was going to be observed, the teacher with fear of being judged since she probably could not do what was required by the institution told the coordinator not to be observed (story, Story). The coordinator one more time exerted his power and still observed the class (story). When the revision occurs, the feedback received from the coordinator relates to time management. In the "BUT" the teacher resisted still (story). Knowing that She would get marked down since time was not allotted "properly" she still did what she felt right (story). A similar dynamic occurs when the teacher gets tangled in between a different space "immersion" the teacher prepares classes to ghost students. She has no idea what type of students she will have (story). The methodology in the institution tries to make English language teaching and learning as generic as possible (Story). In the process, the teacher finds her efforts are not enough, she blames herself for it (story). She thinks she needs to fit in not for the sake of the institution but for the sake of her students. She considers she is not thinking about all the possible students. After accounting for that experience, the teacher still struggles. In the experience of the immersion class, the teacher against all odds adapted the class for that student. In the process she was helped by a fellow teacher (story). The methodology of the institution is regulated accordingly the Common European Framework (STORY). In this framework there are some hours suggested to get to a level. These institutions then are regulated by the NTC 5558 (STORY). This document, does not specify or recognize students' particularities (STORY). Therefore, it gives way for institutions to interpret ELT education as they need it (STORY). This line of thought is that of a Neoliberal ideology (STORY). Teachers need to secure a product in class. The institution main purpose is to sell courses to everyone (Story). In the process, teachers nor students matter much, What is important is that the course works and the teacher must passively do it. Neoliberalism is at the core when the teacher cannot be human for the sake of a schedule and also due to the discourse of the teacher always smiling. Also, the discourse of education is for all is inserted as a value (STORY). However, there is a contradiction considering "equality" for them is to be fixed in a homogenized course without caring about their individual differences. In these short stories is also pivotal to remark there is a denial of emotions by the teacher. If the teacher feels sympathy for those students who cannot understand a topic in 13 mins, and she wants to dedicate more time for those individualities, she will be punished. The teacher is positioned as someone who does not feel, but just execute (Story, STORY). PROFE ES QUE TIENES QUE SONREIR!</p>	
Target students	Blue color highlighted (Pag 2 - 3)		
Time management	Red color highlighted (Pag 3)		

<p>enced ad to should ger a claims view of der they -----</p>	<p>- English as a product, - Homogenization of students, - Teacher as the responsible for the success of the method. - Teacher as a robot - Quality - Language a neutral code unaffected by society - Education as a product - Student as a client</p>	<p>- English as a medium to establish a dialogue. - Students as unique individuals, - Teacher responsible for students' education, - Teacher as a human with emotions. English as the medium to problematize the word. The classroom as a space for reflection and dialogue.</p>	<p>- Neoliberal ideology - Emancipation - Globalization (Education)</p>
---	--	--	---

**Appendix 7 Matrix 2 Emerging identities (example)**

<i>How do EL teachers (re)construct their identities as professionals of language education through life stories in face of ideologically-laden discourses of work-and-human-development institutes?</i>					
<i>Objective 1: To interpret how EL teachers make sense of determining ideologically-laden discourses embedded in institutes for work and human development</i>					
<i>Objective 2: To unveil what counter discourses are constituted when EL teachers (re)construct their identities through life stories in institutes for work and human development</i>					
<b>Participants</b>	<b>Discourses and counter discourses</b>	<b>How do these discourses and counter discourses influence teachers' identity?</b>	<b>How does the teacher (re)construct his/her identity in face of these discourses and counter discourses?</b>	<b>Emerging identities</b>	<b>Patterns / commonalities among participants</b>




Participants	Discourses and counter discourses	How do these discourses and counter discourses influence teachers' identity?	How
Mariam	- English as a medium to establish a dialogue. - Students as unique individuals, - Teacher responsible for students' education, - Teacher as a human with emotions - English as a product, - Homogenization of students, - Teacher as the responsible for the success of the method. - Teacher as a robot	The data tells me that the teacher is being forced to constantly adopt a position within the ELT methodology that she has to be a persona who doesn't think about her students' needs. She is pressured in a way her emotions are hidden and she has to display a rigid and non biased position in the teaching. However, the teacher resists even if it implies she is at stake in an institutional evaluation. Her emotions are present as she teaches her classes and the empathy for her students is always present. She fights for a new reality where language is no a product delivered by a robot but as a social practice where individuals talk and make sense of the world they live in.	The data suggests the teacher is fu (re)construct herself as a human te
Cosime	- Homogenization of students. - Competitiveness equals level of English and nativeness. - The local teacher was not good enough. - The better level you have the more perks you get. - ELT teacher idealization (Proficiency and race). Quality means having the student happy. - Dehumanization of the teacher	From the data, I conclude that the teacher is positioned as an robot who does not think. However, this identity is constantly contested by the teacher as she resists in her classroom. Depending on the rapport established with the students she makes the decision to implement her own conception of language. She understands the methodology is designed to homogenize students and this creates a conflict as she tries to help those students that fall victim of the generalization of their individualities. Another aspect is related to her intellectuality, this one is denied and underestimated by the ideal English teacher. At first she suffers from "lacking" those attributes of an ideal teacher, but as she understands where these discourses come from she starts to resists.	The data suggests the teacher wen transforming students' lives.
Andrea	- English as a product, English as a neutral process, Dehumanization by means of voice supression, Teacher as a transformative intellectual.	I can interpret from the data that teacher is subjugated in her environment and her voice as a teacher is completely silenced. She is fully aware of the discourses in her workplace but the opressing forces are too powerful as punishment is imminent. Although she has vertical and horizontal tensions in her way of thinking, she is still motivated to open spaces where this	The stories tell me although she ne perceives herself as a transformativ

<i>How do EL teachers (re)construct their identities as professionals of language education through life stories in face of ideologically-laden discourse</i>		
<i>Objective 1: To interpret how EL teachers make sense of determining ideologically-laden discourses embedded in institutes for wo</i>		
<i>Objective 2: To unveil what counter discourses are constituted when EL teachers (re)construct their identities through life stories in institut</i>		
<b>How do these discourses and counter discourses influence teachers' identity?</b>	<b>How does the teacher (re)construct his/her identity in face of these discourses and counter discourses?</b>	
The data tells me that the teacher is being forced to constantly adopt a position within the ELT methodology that she has to be a persona who doesn't think about her students' needs. She is pressured in a way her emotions are hidden and she has to display a rigid and non biased position in the teaching. However, the teacher resists even if it implies she is at stake in an institutional evaluation. Her emotions are present as she teaches her classes and the empathy for her students is always present. She fights for a new reality where language is no a product delivered by a robot but as a social practice where individuals talk and make sense of the world they live in.	The data suggests the teacher is fully aware she is seen <b>as a robot within the institution</b> . Although she knows she becomes a robot due to the institutional policies, she also (re)construct herself as a <b>human teacher</b> who believes English language education is an organic process that entails an individualistic process in students.	Te a l
From the data, I conclude that the teacher is positioned as an robot who does not think. However, this identity is constantly contested by the teacher as she resists in her classroom. Depending on the rapport established with the students she makes the decision to implement her own conception of language. She understands the methodology is designed to homogenize students and this creates a conflict as she tries to help those students that fall victim of the generalization of their individualities. Another aspect is related to her intellectuality, this one is denied and underestimated by the ideal English teacher. At first she suffers from "lacking" those attributes of an ideal teacher, but as she understands where these discourses come from she starts to resists.	The data suggests the teacher went from a transition in which she moved from being positioned as a teacher who lacks abilities to <b>an intellectual teacher who is capable of transforming students' lives</b> .	As hu liv
I can interpret from the data that teacher is subjugated in her environment and her voice as a teacher is completely silenced. She is fully aware of the disscourses in her workplace but the opressing forces are too powerful as punishment is imminent. Although she has vertical and horizontal tensions in her way of thinking, she is still motivated to open spaces where this reality is channed. She resists in her classroom with little actions.	The stories tell me although she needs to be a robot for the sake of her employment but she is still opens spaces to change change in her work. The stories suggests she perceives herself as a transformative intellectual.	Vc tra

**Appendix 8 Matrix 3 Final step towards categories (example)**

<i>How do EL teachers (re)construct their identities as professionals of language education through life stories in face of ideologically-laden discourses of work-and-human-development institutes?</i>					
<i>Objective 1: To interpret how EL teachers make sense of determining ideologically-laden discourses embedded in institutes for work and human development</i>					
<i>Objective 2: To unveil what counter discourses are constituted when EL teachers (re)construct their identities through life stories in institutes for work and human development</i>					
<b>Participants</b>	<b>Identity (Re)constructed</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Short Story (Extract)</b>	<b>Theory support</b>	<b>Category</b>




*teachers (re)construct their identities as professionals of language education through life stories in face of ideologically-laden discourses of work-and-human-development*

*Objective 1: To interpret how EL teachers make sense of determining ideologically-laden discourses embedded in institutes for work and human development*

*jective 2: To unveil what counter discourses are constituted when EL teachers (re)construct their identities through life stories in institutes for work and human developme*

Identity (Re)constructed	Interpretation	Short Story (Extracts)	Theory support	
A human transformative intellectual.	Although Mariam is subjected in her teaching practice through neoliberal discourses that assigned her a robot identity. She resists with her own knowledge and empathy for students. The data suggests the teacher sees language is the means through which social actors problematize the world and therefore make sense of it. She aims at changing society through her agency.	Pag 1 - 2 - 7 - 9		
A human transformative intellectual.	Natalia after a reflection on the discourses that she was subjected to, she started to learn she needed to exercise agency. She did it by valuing her teaching praxis and trying to use English teaching as her tool for emancipation.	Pag 1 - 2 - 7 - 9 - 15 - 22 - 23	Transformative intellectual (Giroux 1988), Objectification processes (Foucault, 1988a), Diving practices (Foucault, 1988a) Subject and power (Foucault, 1988b)	The paradox contesting a to ELT educ
A human transformative intellectual.	Andrea's context seems to be authoritative in the control of discourse, even to the point there are harsh consequences in her life (Getting fired). However, as she expressed in her short stories she believes that is the job of a teacher. It consist of challenging the status quo in the classroom. She is eager to open space for	Pag 7 - 11 - 14		

