PROFILE

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Number 2

Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development, a refereed journal, encourages the dissemination of classroom research projects and innovations by teachers of English, and is published twice a year (in January and July). It is currently registered in Scopus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, Latindex, EBSCO, Informe Académico, Academic OneFile, Red Iberoamericana de Innovación y Conocimiento Científico - REDIB, the Directory of Open Access Journals - DOAJ, and Dialnet. It is indexed in the MLA International Bibliography, Educational Research Abstracts online - ERA, The Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), The Emerging Sources Citation Index (Clarivate Analytics), The European Reference Index for the Humanities and the Social Sciences (ERIH PLUS), IRESIE, LatAm Plus, Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts database - LLBA, Redalyc, SCIELO Citation Index (Web of Science), CLASE - Citas Latinoamericanas en Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades, Publindex - Minciencias (classified in **category A1**), and Scimago Journal Rank (SJR) 2021: Quartile 1 (Linguistics and Language), Quartile 2 (Education).

PROFILE IS REGISTERED IN

Scopus

Scopus
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Ulrich's Periodicals Directory
http://www.ulrichsweb.com/ulrichsweb/

Latindex
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EBSCO
https://www.ebscohost.com/titleLists/eue-coverage.htm

Informe Académico
https://www.gale.com/intl/c/informe-academico

Academic OneFile
https://www.gale.com/intl/databases/gale-onefile

Red Iberoamericana de Innovación y Conocimiento Científico - REDIB
https://www.redib.org/

DOAJ - the Directory of Open Access Journals
https://doaj.org/toc/1657-0790

SciELO Citation Index (Web of Science)
http://wokinfo.com/products_tools/multidisciplinary/scielo/

Dialnet
http://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/revista?codigo=22417

IT IS INDEXED IN

MLA - the Directory of Periodicals & International bibliography
http://www.mla.org/bibliography

ERA - Educational Research Abstracts online
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The Education Resources Information Center (ERIC)
http://eric.ed.gov/

The Emerging Sources Citation Index
http://wokinfo.com/products_tools/multidisciplinary/esci/

The European Reference Index for the Humanities and the Social Sciences (ERIH PLUS)
https://bit.ly/3bhCpJA

IRESIE (Índice de Revistas de Educación Superior e Investigación Educativa)
http://iresie.unam.mx/

LLBA - Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts database
https://www.proquest.com/products-services/llba-set-c.html

Redalyc - Red de Revistas Científicas de América Latina y el Caribe, España y Portugal
http://www.redalyc.org/revista.oa?id=1692

SciELO Colombia
https://bit.ly/3bZMN3d

CLASE - Citas Latinoamericanas en Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades
https://bit.ly/3n50TZ7

Publindex (Categoría A1)
https://bit.ly/2LYebnC

LatAm Plus
http://www.latamplus.com/

SJR

Scimago Journal Rank 2021: Linguistics and Language (Q1), Education (Q2)
https://bit.ly/3e5zmAG

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Editorial

In the latest report of the Scimago Journal Rank (SJR), updated in April 2022, our journal maintained its position in the Quartile 1 of the linguistics and language area. Furthermore, it was categorized in a higher position in the area of education, and it is now in Quartile 2. The classification is reported every year and is based on the evaluation of the journals included in the Scopus database. Figure 1 shows the position of *Profile* in regard to Colombia, Latin America, and all the publications in the corresponding areas classified in the SJR worldwide.

Figure 1. Classification of *Profile* in the Scimago Journal Rank, According to the Results Published in April, 2022
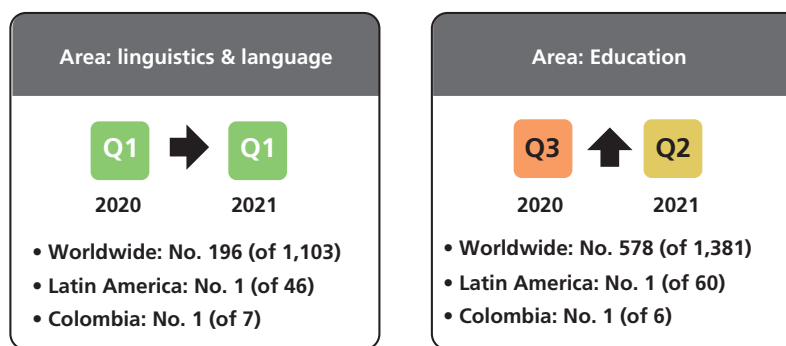
Note. The report published in 2022 is based on data from 2021.
Source: Scimago journal & Country Rank (http://www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php)

The advancement of *Profile* in the SJR evidences that it has gained visibility among the most prestigious publications in the areas of language, linguistics, and education in international scenarios. It also means that the journal is a source of reference for the teaching of English, teacher education, applied linguistics, and language.

As we know, the classification is the result of the analysis of the impact of the journals as evidenced in citations received. Thus, the more a publication is cited by a scientific community, the higher the possibility to escalate positions in the rank. This is based on the assumption that contents that are acknowledged via citations are part of active interactions or debates in a field, and thus effectively impact the way knowledge is constructed.

Needless to say, such achievements are very satisfactory for a publication edited outside hegemonic publishing countries, that is to say, the center or anglophone regions. Nonetheless, and as we have argued in other editions, this categorization is controversial. First, the ranking regimes are inequitable because they only process information from a selected group of publications—only those included in the Scopus database. Second, the impact of a journal is mainly measured by taking into consideration the number of citations it receives. This appraisal is extremely restrictive as it does not care for the actual use of articles by individuals or scientific and academic communities. In other words, indicators do not monitor the use of contents in different contexts and for various reasons: teaching practices, teacher education, papers that are not necessarily published, and academic events, among others.

The fact that *Profile* had been ranked in Quartile 1 was decisive to regain the A1 category in the Colombian National Index for scientific journals, Publindex. Our publication shares this position with six other journals edited in the country and is number one in the areas of education and language. However, this new achievement is not in harmony with the mission and vision we have maintained since our publication started in 2000. Once more, we stress that focusing exclusively on reaching high positions in indexing systems by prioritizing the accomplishment of their evaluation indicators is risky because those authors who do not always have the chance to get published in recognized journals can be excluded. Our commitment is then the same: to foster the publication of research done by teachers, researchers, and novice teacher researchers from different contexts and educational levels, provided they comply with the parameters of quality publications and focus on topics related to English language teaching, innovation, research, and reflections that contribute to the development of this professional area.

In this issue, we are very pleased to share with you 16 articles. Nine correspond to the section *Issues from Teacher Researchers*, two to the section *Issues from Novice Teacher- Researchers*, and five to the section *Issues Based on Reflections and Innovations.* The contributions come from eight countries: Colombia (eight articles), with papers from 14 scholars; Mexico (two articles), with the participation of five scholars; Indonesia (two articles), represented by six scholars; Iran (two articles), with four scholars (one of these articles is a joint effort with a Turkish researcher); Spain, with one article and the perceptions of three academics; and Ecuador and the United States in a joint venture with one article and three participating researchers.

The topics discussed by researchers in the current issue concern teacher training and teacher professional development, teachers' identities and pedagogical beliefs, language teachers' effectiveness and self-efficacy, assessment practices, and technology integration within the classroom. Some articles also discuss language teaching methods—among which we find mentoring practices—and research methods such as collaborative autoethnography and the repertory grid technique for interviews. These topics take place both at pre and in-service teaching contexts.

The section *Issues from Teacher Researchers* opens with an article by Melba Libia Cárdenas, the journal Editor, from the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, in Bogotá, Colombia. This

paper offers a description of the steps taken to design an action plan to improve some areas within the editorial process of the *Profile* journal. The guiding objective for the elaboration of such a plan was placing the journal at the core of the generation and consolidation of teachers' communities, focusing on novice researchers who are starting their professional and academic lives.

This article is followed by a contribution from Ecuador and the United States in a joint effort. Hazel Acosta and Diego Cajas (Universidad Nacional de Educación, Ecuador) and Elizabeth Minchala (Kansas State University, USA) present teacher training in Ecuador as a method of multi-level replication and scaling-up for in-service English teachers. The article emphasizes the training input as a factor that influences the effectiveness and sustainability of an English as a foreign language (EFL) program. The study highlights the crucial role of collaboration that facilitates collective efforts in contextualizing training input to achieve profound insight reflected in classroom practices.

The second contribution from Colombia is the result of joint work between Jhon Eduardo Mosquera-Pérez (Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia) and Jhon Jairo Losada-Rivas (Universidad Surcolombian). The two researchers carried out a qualitative narrative study with the potential of identifying the impact of a master's program on their students by comparing their identities before and after their participation in the program. The results showed that teachers' identities are part of an endless process nurtured by experiences at the academic, pedagogical, and personal levels. Most teachers reported developing higher levels of social commitment, critical-reflective engagement, and research-oriented practices due to their graduate academic experience.

The first article from Iran comes from the hand of Akram Nayernia and Rana Nosrati (Iran University of Science and Technology) together with Hassan Mohebbi from the European Knowledge Development Institute (EUROKD) in Ankara, Turkey. The joint project of these three scholars takes us to the field of English language teachers' effectiveness. This was assessed through a variety of variables: literacy, content and pedagogical content knowledge, experience, oral proficiency, personality type, and self-efficacy. The results of these measurements are visible in a questionnaire with 19 items entitled "EFL Language Teachers' Effectiveness."

Burhanuddin Yasin, Usman Kasim, Faisal Mustafa, Saiful Marhaban (Universitas Syiah Kuala), and Endang Komariah (Universitas Lampung) represent the first contribution from Indonesia to our current issue. The article touches the topic of self-efficacy of high school English language teachers with two levels of curriculum literacy. The findings show that teachers with higher curriculum literacy levels were more self-efficacious than those with a lower level of curriculum literacy. This implies that curriculum related courses in preservice teacher programs need to be improved, and in-service teacher training should focus on curriculum knowledge.

The third contribution by Colombian authors is carried out by Indira Niebles-Thevening, Angela Bailey, and Nayibe Rosado (Universidad del Norte). The three researchers explored

a teacher evaluation tool to identify critical and reflective aspects of teachers' practices for professional development. Results suggest that teachers have strong procedural knowledge and perceptions of self but struggle with recognizing unique opportunities for critical approaches to their practice, thus indicating a lean toward more efficient ways of analyzing teachers and focusing on more specific contextual areas in teacher professional development.

The contribution of Spain to the current issue comes from Elisa Pérez-Gracia, Rocío Serrano-Rodríguez, and Alfonso Pontes-Pedrajas (Universidad de Córdoba). These authors tackle the construction of the professional identity of teachers through their beliefs and from the point of view of both male and female teachers. Results show that the participants consider that the teachers' professional identity is connected to the ability to motivate students, manage the classroom, and worry about interpersonal relations. To conclude, this study brings the chance of reflecting on the importance of strengthening English as a foreign language teachers' professional identity considering the gender perspective to introduce changes in the curriculum.

Edgar Aguirre-Garzón (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá) and Diego Ubaque-Casallas (Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas) represent the fourth Colombian contribution. Their narrative study analyzes mentoring practices with language student-teachers. Mentors' narratives include life-story interviews and theorizing from praxis. For mentors, mentoring practices represent a space for knowledge reconfiguration, a locus of collective knowledge construction, and territories where student-teachers can mobilize and exercise their agency. The mentors show a distance from traditional logics and look for knowledge and the self in teacher education.

The last article in this section is the second Indonesian contribution with the article by I Putu Indra Kusuma (Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha). The paper discusses the integration of technology with language teaching in times of the pandemic. Remote teaching was the means through which speaking skills were taught. It is evident that teachers used popular social media such as WhatsApp, YouTube, and educational tools such as Google Forms for classroom management and teaching speaking purposes. This study offers some implications to advance English language teacher education programs to prepare the future EFL preservice teachers in the post-pandemic era.

Section two—*Issues from Novice Teacher-Researchers*—includes two articles. The first article is a contribution from Cristian Camilo Peynado, María Camila Morales-Triviño (Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas), and Jairo Enrique Castañeda-Trujillo (Universidad Surcolombiana). This is the fifth article originated in Colombia. This article analyzes, through collaborative autoethnography, the experiences of preservice English language teachers within their bachelor's degree and their pedagogical practicum. This approach empowered the novel researchers to reflect on topics such as the methodologies followed in their undergraduate programs, mentor teachers, native speakerism, colonial ideologies, and decolonization processes. Findings suggest that preservice English language

teachers should be allowed to reflect, analyze, and thus contribute to understanding the social dynamics of what it means to teach and be a language teacher.

The second article of this section is the first Mexican contribution to this issue. In it, Diana Leslie Castillo-Nava and Irasema Mora-Pablo (Universidad de Guanajuato) studied the implementation of an international bilingual model from the perspectives of the teachers', the students', and the coordinators' experiences. They consider that the introduction of this model represents both benefits and challenges. With respect to the former, the authors indicated a positive change, focusing on improving teachers' and students' linguistic abilities in English. With respect to the latter, the scholars stated the lack of teachers' training, the context of the university, and teachers' knowledge of the language.

Our issue closes with the section *Issues Based on Reflections and Innovations* with the inclusion of five articles. Jesús Alirio Bastidas (Universidad de Nariño), the sixth Colombian contribution, questions if language teaching methods are extinct. The claim comes from many TESOL authorities who questioned the method's usefulness and scope and favor the arrival of a "post-method era." Professor Bastidas reflects on this trend and argues that language teaching methods cannot disappear as they are an essential component of any teaching process.

Kenneth Richter, Patricia Houde, and Krisztina Zimányi (Universidad de Guanajuato) represent the second Mexican contribution to this issue. Their reflection concentrates on a research method—the repertory grid technique—for conducting and analyzing interviews within the field of teaching EFL. The research method was piloted, and the authors expect that it will have an impact in the field of applied linguistics and in EFL teaching in particular.

Sonia Patricia Hernández-Ocampo (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana & Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá) is Colombia's seventh contribution to this issue. Professor Hernández-Ocampo discusses assessment in the language teaching context. The paper presents a review of five Colombian well-known journals during the period 2009–2020 aiming to identify the scholarly discussion regarding language assessment and testing in the country. The findings suggest that Colombian researchers are concerned with fair and democratic assessment practices, and the involvement of students in peer- and self-assessment practices to improve learning and promote autonomy. Also, there is a perceived need for more teacher education in language assessment.

The second Iranian contribution comes from the hand of three researchers, Zia Tajeddin (Tarbiat Modares University), Zari Saeedi, and Vahid Panahzadeh (Allameh Tabataba'i University). The paper reflects on the development and validation of a classroom-based language assessment literacy scale to measure teachers' perceived classroom-based assessment knowledge and practice. The scale items clustered around four factors: (a) purposes of assessment and grading, (b) assessment ethics, (c) student involvement in assessment, and (d) feedback and assessment interpretation. The findings suggest that the newly-developed scale can serve as a valid and reliable tool to explore language teachers' classroom-based assessment literacy.

The last article, contributed by Claudia Patricia Gutiérrez (Universidad de Antioquia), is Colombia's final representative. The author depicts the journey of preservice language teachers from a critical an intercultural perspective through the implementation of an English course containing these elements with first semester preservice students. The results indicate that this approach to language teaching allowed preservice teachers to affirm their multiple identities as they developed and strengthened their language skills in English.

Melba Libia Cárdenas
Journal Editor

María Claudia Nieto-Cruz
Journal Director

P R O F I L E

Issues from Teacher Researchers

Building and Strengthening Teacher Communities: Improvement Plan for the *Profile* Journal

Generación y consolidación de comunidades docentes: plan de mejora para la revista *Profile*

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Scientific or academic publications have become the best accepted media for scientific and academic communities—mainly established in universities or research centers—to share the knowledge they create and give it greater visibility worldwide. That is, these journals are at the core of scientific communication, which requires permanent assessment of the editorial work and careful planning bearing in mind the responsibilities and needs of the stakeholders that are involved in the production and use of these periodical publications. In this article, I share an improvement plan for the *Profile* journal, whose purpose is to strengthen the journal's editorial management and, thus, support the generation and consolidation of communities of teacher researchers.

Keywords: communities, *Profile* journal, teacher researcher

Las revistas científicas o académicas se han establecido como el principal medio para la difusión del conocimiento generado por comunidades académicas y científicas —ubicadas principalmente en instituciones universitarias o en centros de investigación—, y darle una mayor visibilidad internacional. Es decir, esta clase de revistas se encuentran en el centro de la comunicación científica, lo que implica una evaluación constante de su labor editorial y una cuidadosa planeación que tenga en cuenta las responsabilidades y necesidades de los actores que participan en la producción y uso de una publicación periódica. En este artículo presentamos el plan de mejora de la revista *Profile* con el que se busca fortalecer la gestión editorial y avanzar en el propósito de contribuir a la generación y fortalecimiento de comunidades de docentes investigadores.

Palabras clave: comunidades, docente investigador, revista *Profile*

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Introduction

In past editorials we have referred to the *Profile* journal's national and international ranking achievements (Cárdenas & Nieto-Cruz, 2021; Cárdenas et al., 2020). However, gaining such recognition and being subjected to the logics of evaluation systems convey a risk: silencing some of the voices that have traditionally been welcomed in scientific journals. The *Profile* journal is not exempt from this potential phenomenon. In fact, since 2020, when the journal was classified for the first time in the Quartile 2 of the Scimago Journal Rank, email queries from interested authors have increased, and so has the number of manuscripts submitted for peer review; and although contributions mainly come from diverse peripherical contexts, the challenge is to ensure the presence of the national and local professional communities that inspired the creation of the publication and that have contributed to its evolution.

The *Profile* journal remains committed to being an outlet for the opinions and ideas of a diverse community of educators with different educational levels and research experience and who are mainly immersed in social and educational contexts with complex circumstances. In this sense, the journal departs from the scheme followed by "mainstream" journals that usually feature renowned scholars or researchers with long trajectories. Even so, a publication like *Profile*, edited outside the dominant sphere of the English language teaching profession (i.e., the English-speaking countries), is forced to measure itself against such mainstream, high impact journals due to the current national evaluation system of Colombian scientific periodicals defined by the Ministry of Science and Technology (Minciencias, 2020), which places great emphasis on the position Colombian journals have in international rankings. Thus, there is an imbalance to be addressed between the vision of the journal and institutional requirements.

Our interpretation of what can be regarded as "quality" indicators is not necessarily aligned with the instrumental and effective nature of Colombian economic, scientific, or technological policies. In order to fully grasp the quality of a scientific journal, we need to learn more about the actors involved in its publication; especially from what the theory of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 2001; Woods, 1983) can tell us about the processes those actors follow while performing a given role within scientific publishing.

With all the previous considerations in mind, we carried out a case study with an ethnographic approach to gather the insights from novice writers and reviewers of the *Profile* journal regarding the role scientific journals play in community building within knowledge society (Cárdenas, 2021). The study focused on the experiences and beliefs of readers, authors, and reviewers, which has helped me identify elements that could be introduced into an improvement plan closely related to the English language teachers' local realities. It is hoped that such a plan can contribute to strengthening our communities, our knowledge, and, ultimately, the teaching profession.

In this article, derived from the abovementioned study, the focus is on the authors and the defining characteristics of the types of communities to which they belong. We will also discuss the analytical template followed in the elaboration of an improvement plan for the journal management.

What Can Be Understood by Community?

Basically, a community can be defined by the relationships between its members: proximity (geographical location), commonalities (interests, functions), or any other sort of connection that may emerge and act as a cohesive factor (Cárdenas-Londoño, 2000). Nevertheless, it should be noted that such a definition may imply certain ambiguity because it can be applied to both freedom movements and systems of opression (Bautista, 2012). Thus, when framing a concept of community, we should dispense with a notion of territory as well as with the idealist vision so often found in literature. Krause (2001), for instance, proposes three elements that help

distinguish a community from other kinds of human societies: "*belonging*, subjectively understood as "feeling part of" and "identified with"; *interrelationship*, that is, communication, interdependence, and mutual influence among the members; and *common culture*, or the notion of shared meanings" (p. 29; emphasis added, translated from Spanish).

Here, we understand a community as a group of people with shared knowledge, visions, and goals, and who are committed to clearly defined goals, and interact to achieve them. This can be possible even if the members do not inhabit the same geographical area, without face to face contact. A community is not something established beforehand, but it grows thanks to mutual relationships, a disposition to cooperate, the performance of certain roles, and the value given to individual and collective potentiality. The intricacies that arise from the relationships among individuals and collectivities foster the development of educational, learning, academic, professional, and scientific communities. We will next define the last three communities since they have been found to be the main scenarios in which the authors of the *Profile* journal interact.

Academic Communities

An academic community is usually associated to a university environment. In that regard, it consists of "a significant number of intellectually qualified individuals who undertake research and teaching activities and keep communication channels that allow them to share knowledge and control its value" (Díaz, 1997, pp. 109–110; translated from Spanish). Díaz indicates that, in establishing these communities, five main conditions must be met: (a) a command of the written language for effective scientific communication; (b) a productive mindset that is prepared for the generation of knowledge; (c) the sustained effort of the members to get to know the academic output of national peers and to objectively assess it; (d) an expansion of the sources of reference to include not just books but also specialized journals;

and (e) the capability of accessing knowledge in other languages. Regarding the first condition, Romero-Serna (2000) sees writing as the communicative tool that facilitates the rearrangement of the paradigms shared by a community. For this author, interaction through writing helps "modify and generate theory, validate existing knowledge, accept or reject theoretical arguments, and foster the preservation or transformation of dogma for future generations" (p. 21; translated from Spanish).

An academic community is a particular way of academic organization that groups certain kind of individuals (students, educators, administrators, supervisors, and directors) for whom education is the main activity (Cárdenas-Londoño, 2000). Its members have a particular view of the world and an approach to certain theories that is submitted to constant scrutiny (Romero-Serna, 2000). Furthermore, as found by Francis-Salazar and Marín-Sánchez (2010) in a study on the role of academic communities in the construction of university teachers' pedagogical knowledge, there are subcommunities within communities as a direct result of the environments inhabited by faculty members when performing their work, which is to say, based on professional, disciplinary, or work-related issues. Thus, there are groups formed around, for example, the teachers' contract type or their relationship with the institution.

Professional Communities

These types of associations seek group cohesion based on professions. Such disciplinary boundary, present in academic communities as well, allows professional communities to set themselves apart from others and to gather their members around three substantial elements: (a) institutions, (b) disciplines, and (c) recognition and prestige (Francis-Salazar & Marín-Sánchez, 2010). Such elements can be found in a community like TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), conceived by Canagarajah (2016) as a professional community focused on pedagogy, research, and theory, and with an evolution from modern to postmodern

orientations in its disciplinary discourse. This is clear in the way knowledge is made available through the *TESOL Quarterly* journal, which brings together authors from diverse geographical areas and features articles that report on a variety of studies with different research methods. We concur with Canagarajah in that, while this diversity can be perceived as a threat to the overall cohesion of TESOL, it may contribute to expanding the range of the community's knowledge base, thus fostering its growth.

From this perspective, we suggest that teachers at primary and secondary levels can improve their professional practice as well as understand the specific details of research when they belong to professional communities; which, in our case, are teaching communities (Cárdenas, 2002). These communities can emerge within the framework of professional development programs (precisely the kind in which the *Profile* journal was conceived), which may require redefining the way the latter are designed and developed. In the communities thus established, teachers with different academic backgrounds and educational contexts can converge around common interests. Wells (1999) calls this notion of collaborative collective work a "community of inquiry" or research community and differentiates it from a community of practice in that it broadens the point of view to focus not just on learning but also on knowledge building. For Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993, 1999), these are teacher-led research communities which have an impact on educational reforms. Finally, we would like to underscore that the interactive work between teachers in basic education and teacher educators was the point of departure for the *Profile* journal, which may help explain the role of scientific publications in the creation of communities within the knowledge society (Cárdenas, 2021).

Scientific Community

For Kuhn (1975), a scientific community is made up of professionals of a scientific discipline joined by common elements: permanent communication, unanimity in judging professional issues, and education. Kuhn goes on to describe the composition of a scientific community through two types of factors: (a) values and norms and (b) theoretical and methodological elements. The former shape the relations among scientists, the way they work and organize themselves, their institutional enclave, and the nature of their leadership. As for the theoretical and methodological elements, these involve shared commitments of scrutiny derived from scientific activity.

For Kreimer (1998), scientific communities gather representatives who, in general, exercise great control over most institutions involved in research, including their funding. The development and consolidation of scientific fields are usually a consequence of dynamic interactions that take place within specific contexts. Kreimer notes that many of those representatives tend to adopt conservative attitudes towards the emergence of new subject interests, research profiles, and disciplinary assignments.

From our object of research, we distance ourselves from such concepts. While publishing in a scientific journal is a challenge and may provide access to a scientific community, it does not mean that one is part of an elite. To become part, as an author, of the community of a periodical journal coincides with the interest of that journal in sharing quality scientific knowledge. Being a member of such a community implies an open attitude to be able to make contributions and accept the outcomes of making our work public. In fact, under current circumstances, indicators such as the number of studies and published articles, conference attendance and proceedings, the communication and relations with communities in the same or related fields, to name a few, are used to frame scientific communities within national and international contexts and to give faith of their existence. Scientific journals help comply with most of these indicators, and their underlying plurality in scope functions as a way to regulate the relationships that arise "within scientific communities and among them and other social systems" (Capurro, 2015, p. 17). Nonetheless, the sense of cloister and exclusion that seems to surround scientific communities indicates that relations of power are part of the scientific

ethos, which can be evident, for instance, among research groups and their impact on training researchers; in search of products that can help rate and classify scholars and their research groups; and, as indicated before, in national policies based on journal ranking systems administered by highly commercial companies.

Some of these inconveniences have been surpassed in time while others prevail and influence, with varying degrees, the classification of Colombian scientific communities as "emergent" or "under development." Furthermore, despite the perception of superiority that society usually has towards academic and scientific communities, as elites in the production and advancement of knowledge, significant efforts are needed to strengthen them for "neither market forces nor other kinds of spontaneous social forces are enough, on their own, to foster the development of structures for the production and dissemination of a nation's scientific and technological knowledge" (Forero-Pineda, 2000, p. 9; translated from Spanish). This becomes even more necessary in communities like the one where the *Profile* journal is edited, as well as in those to which the authors and readers of the journal belong.

Improvement Plan for the Generation of Communities Around the *Profile* Journal

To move forward with the creation of communities, we should bear in mind the external circumstances that can impact the achievement of said goal. Although we, as editors, may not have direct control over such circumstances, it is possible to assess the editorial and publication practices of the journal as well as the actions aimed at contributing to the communities where the authors—and, ideally, the readers—may have some influence. Therefore, we have designed an improvement plan aimed at strengthening editorial management and, thus, advance our contributions to generating and consolidating communities. Based on the protocol proposed by the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (Agencia Nacional de Evaluación

de la Calidad y Acreditación, ANECA, n.d.)[1], the plan includes five elements:

1. Identifying areas of improvement
2. Detecting the main causes of the problem
3. Defining goals for each area of improvement
4. Selecting actions for improvement
5. Scheduling a follow-up plan

The workflow of the editorial process to produce a journal issue generally comprises two great areas: editorial management and visibility. The first includes (a) a call for manuscripts, (b) manuscript review and edition, and (c) design and publication. As for visibility, three post-publication stages are taken into account: (a) launching, (b) distribution, and (c) dissemination.

In drafting the improvement plan, we resorted to the following input: (a) analysis of the editorial process and emails related to it from 2014 to the second semester of 2020 (this was carried out by the editor with the help of the editorial assistant); (b) records of institutional and national guidelines and initiatives that favored the visibility of Colombian journals; (c) interactions with authos, reviewers, and other actors involved in the production of the journal (e.g., the Editorial Center of the faculty, the University's library division, the indexing and referencing systems); and (d) the suggestions, collected via interviews and emails, made by the participants of the study on which this paper is based.

Identifying Areas of Improvement

The starting point in detecting areas of improvement includes the set of strengths and difficulties drawn from the sources indicated above. Since the editing stages are interrelated, and the strengths and difficulties were at times duplicated, these were grouped into the two great areas that make up the editorial workflow: editorial management and visibility (see Tables 1 & 2).

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[1]   ANECA suggests a support document to help universities draft improvement plans once they have completed a process of evaluation. The protocol has been adopted here for its ample institutional dissemination without implying our complete alignment with said agency.

Table 1. Areas of Improvement in Editorial Management

Stage 1: Call for Manuscripts		
Strengths	**Difficulties**	**Areas of Improvement**
• Since 2016, an average of 30 manuscripts have been submitted per issue, with an average of 12 articles being accepted for publication in each issue. • The call for manuscripts remains open on the journal website, and it has been shared via email, academic networks (e.g., ELTecs, Publindex), and bulletins from the faculty of Human Sciences and the research Vice Rectory of Universidad Nacional de Colombia. • Information about academic events and the launching of new journal editions is ongoing. • To promote the second section of the journal (dedicated to research done by novice teachers and based on their theses or dissertations), we have taken into consideration the suggestions made by some reviewers to expand the submission criteria and allow the tutors of the theses to appear as coauthors of a manuscript. There is also the possibility of submitting manuscripts based on master's theses whose authors have never published in a scientific journal.	Although tutors of undergraduate monographs have been invited to submit papers, there is still a lack of contributions for the second section of the journal (*Issues From Novice Teacher Researchers*).	Publication of articles from novice authors.
Stage 2: Manuscript Review and Edition		
Strengths	**Difficulties**	**Areas of Improvement**
• A solid team of peer reviewers has been set up. • We continue to extend invitations to possible new reviewers to respond to the growing number of submitted manuscripts. • There have been no inconveniences in the reception of manuscripts through the OJS system. • Most reviewers prefer not to use the OJS system for manuscript review. In this sense, a successful strategy has been introduced whereby the editorial assistant sends the manuscripts to the reviewers by email and then registers their decisions in the system. This has allowed the review process to run smoothly, avoding the inconveniences experienced when the reviewers themselves were registering their recommendations (e.g., lost evaluations, undelivered notices, backlogs). • A template of the letter to the editor has been useful in obtaining full and homogenous submissions.	• At times reviewers are insufficient. This is mainly due to the number of papers whose assessment usually requires more than two reviewers. • Delayed responses from some of the reviewers. • Greater awareness by authors of publishing guidelines and their compliance.	Increase the efficiency of peer review.

Stage 3: Design and Publication		
Strengths	**Difficulties**	**Areas of Improvement**
• Definition of the workflow of the editorial process with the specific tasks and schedule for the actors involved at this stage (e.g. editorial team, Editorial Center). This guarantees complying with the stated publication frequency (January, for the first issue, and July, for the second). • Designing the layout and cover of each issue following the publication style of the journal. • Steps for facilitating online reading of published contents in different formats, including PDF (of the whole issue and of each separate article), and without restrictions to downloading or printing. In this way, readers chose the contents they prefer.	Eventual delays in the tasks of the Editorial Center due to insufficient workforce or because other faculty publications require attention in dealing with a backlog.	Earlier delivery of contents for layout. *NB*: This is not regarded as an improvement area since most of the activities at this stage depend on the managament of the Editorial Center. The corresponding requests are made to guarantee the timely publication of the journal.

Table 2. Areas of Improvement in Visibility

Stage 1: Launching		
Strengths	**Difficulties**	**Areas of Improvement**
• Each number is launched in a local event (face-to-face or online): After introducing the issue, two or three authors make a brief presentation of their articles. • Starting with Vol. 20, No. 1 (January, 2018) authors are asked to submit short videos about their papers that may be viewed during the launching event. These videos are later posted on the journal webpage and on the YouTube channel (https://bit.ly/3PRlor1) • Positive response from the attendees to the launching event and from the followers of the YouTube channel.	• At times, audiences are small. • Technical issues with online streaming.	Capture a greater audience for the presentation of future editions.

Stage 2: Distribution		
Strengths	**Difficulties**	**Areas of Improvement**
• Some printed issues of the journal are available for distribution. Authors and members of the editorial board are notified when a new issue has been published online. Only one reviewer requests delivery of a printed copy. • Authors receive an email with a copy of their article in PDF format and the recommendation to share it with colleagues and through academic networks. • Readers can download from the journal website PDF files of the whole issue or of each individual article.	The accumulation of printed issues. Although the contents are freely available online on the journal website and on the databases that index the journal, some teachers still prefer the printed edition. It is therefore necessary for this option to remain available.	• In order to reduce production costs, the number of printed issues has been lowered, with the possibility of asking the Editorial Center to print more, if needed. • Promoting printed issues in different academic events. *NB:* This is not considered an area of improvement.

Stage 3: Dissemination		
Strengths	**Difficulties**	**Areas of Improvement**
• Implementation of social media outlets, including YouTube. • Registering the contents or metadata of each published issue in bibliographical databases and international index systems. • Making the articles available in the XML format so that search engines can more easily harvest their metadata.	• Creating expectation among readers on upcoming issues. • Promoting contents by linking them to the authors' professional and social networks. • Delay in updating the contents in some bibliographical databases.	Ahead-of-print publication, that is, advanced online publication of some contents prior to the final print or online edition. Alternatively, changes in the frequency of publication (from two issues per year to three).

Action Plan for Improvement

Once the four areas of improvement have been identified (publication of articles from novice authors, increasing the efficiency of peer review, capturing a greater audience for the presentation of future editions, and ahead-of-print publication or change in publication frequency), we establish the cause of the problem. Next, we define goals of improvement, the actions to be taken within certain time limits, and the expected benefits. Finally, we specify the follow-up tasks for each area with regard to the planned improvement actions. In our case, roles and responsibilities are not included since the editor and the assistant editor are in charge of all the improvement plan. In the following sections, we detail the action plan for each of the areas under scrutiny: editorial management and visibility.

Table 3. Improvement Area No. 1: Publishing Articles by Novice Authors

Problem description

For the journal, it is important to ensure the participation of teachers from different educational levels, among them, novice researchers. Across a diversity of media (e.g., fora, communications with bachelor's programs, social media), emphasis has been made on the opportunity the journal offers novice authors to publish the results of their first research endeavor in the second section (*Issues From Novice Teacher Researchers*). However, the submission rate for this section remains low. Then, it is necessary to find alternatives that may help in keeping the section, since it is integral to the vision and mission of the journal.

Cause of the problem

An overall lack of publishing culture among novice researchers (bachelor's and master's degree students). It has also been noted that it is rather uncommon for teacher educators in bachelor programs to resort to articles by novice researchers as material in research courses or as a guide for the monographs undertaken by future teachers. In contrast, the journal contents are known to be frequently used in master's degree programs, especially in the Colombian context.

Objective

To guarantee the publication of articles from novice authors in the second section of the journal.

Actions for improvement

- Extend an invitation to the coordinators of bachelor's and master's degree programs to make students aware of the publication options offered by the journal.
- Maitain assertive communication with authors who inquire about guidelines for publication or who request an opinion on the texts they wish to send for evaluation.
- Tutoring novice writers through revision of first drafts.
- Panels with former novice writers, so they may share experiences.

Expected benefits

- Maintain the three sections of the journal
- Motivate new researchers
- Increase readership for articles by novice writers

Action Plan for Editorial Management

We found two areas that require attention to optimize editorial management. The first has to do with keeping one of the distinctive traits of the journal: the publication of articles from novice authors (teachers at the end of their undergraduate or master's studies; see Table 3).

The second area refers to increasing the efficiency of peer review (see Table 4).[2]

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2   Table 4 does not include the elements of academic writing and content that were also pointed out by authors and reviewers as publishing difficulties. These are discussed in Cárdenas (2019), but they also are part of the editorial management of the journal.

Table 4. Improvement Area No. 2: Increasing the Efficiency of Peer Review

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Problem description

Each manuscript must be assigned to, at least, two peer reviewers in the initial round of review so that the evaluation process is kept to a maximum of five months (including subsequent rounds of review). It is also necessary to bear in mind that some manuscripts will need the opinion of a third reviewer to solve any discrepancy between the recommendations of the two original reviewers. However, the efficiency of the peer review process can be affected by some reviewers when they do not respond to review requests, submit their feedback late, or perform poor reviews. It has been observed that late reviewer response is usually due to difficulties in understanding the manuscripts. All this has a negative impact in the time spent on evaluation since reminders need to be sent when there is not a prompt confirmation or additional reviewers have to be assigned in the absence of confirmation or due to poor reviews. Therefore, the review process must be closely montired to ensure that authors receive opportune responses or instructions; on the contrary, the image of the journal may be affected.

Cause of the problem

- Lack of time on the part of reviewers.
- Discomfort with some authors' neglect in the organization and style of their manuscripts.
- According to the evaluation of the journal done by Scopus in 2018, when the journal was first included in this database, "academic quality is not uniform across articles." Even though this may be debatable, depending on the views of this database reviewers with regard to the diverse focus of the journal, it is something to bear in mind when assessing the overall quality of the feedback submitted by the reviewers of the journal as well as when editing the final version of the manuscripts approved for publication.

Objective

To increase the efficieny of the review process of the manuscripts submitted to the journal.

Actions for improvement

- Expand the number of reviewers.
- Send more detailed information to new reviewers on the nature of the journal and on the kind of papers expected for each section.
- More guidance for the authors regarding the type of papers the journal publishes and the guidelines for submissions.
- Supervise reviewers' performance.

Expected benefits

- A fluid evaluation process to optimize the editorial workflow
- Assertive and prompt communication with authors and reviewers

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Action Plan for Visibility

Even though the *Profile* journal has made progress in terms of visibility, we acknowledge the need for improvement in two areas: a larger audience for the launching events and earlier publication of articles. With regard to this last issue, and as detailed below, the expectations of readers and the trends in scientific publication should be analyzed to help decide whether to opt for the ahead-of-print dynamics or change the publication frequency of the journal. Tables 5 and 6 show the details of the plan for improvement in the mentioned areas.

Table 5. Improvement Area No. 3: Capturing a Greater Audience for the Presentation
of Future Editions of the Journal

Problem description

From 2000, when the journal was first launched, each published issue has been presented to the interested audience in biannual meetings and through electronic media. However, given the pedagogical interest of the journal in gathering around it the academic, professional, and scientific communities, it is a matter of concern that, even though a lot of teachers register for those launching events, the actual number of attendees is not as high as expected.

Causes of the problem

It has been observed that the invitations to attend the launching events reach the potential audience through mailing lists or other media (social networks, print flyers, or radio announcements). Nevertheless, the addressed professional communities seem to be unwilling to take advantage of academic spaces like the one offered by the journal. It is also the case that the teachers' busy agendas may have a deterrent effect, making attendance to face-to-face events difficult.

Objective

To increase visibility of the journal by ensuring the participation of members of reputed communities in the events organized periodically.

Actions for improvement

- Review the strategies to publicize events.
- Find alternatives to the dynamics of launching events.

Expected benefits

- Greater familiarity of professional, academic, and scientific communities with the publication.
- Early circulation of accepted articles.
- Keep the journal coverage active within databases and index systems.

Table 6. Improvement Area No. 4: Ahead-of-Print Publication or Change in Publication Frequency

Problem description

While the journal has a semiannual publication frequency, current trends in early publication of accepted articles lead to other options that may secure prompt circulation. One possibility is the ahead-of-print publication aproach (e.g., the electronic publication of accepted articles prior to the complete printed or online edition). Another option would be to increase the publication frequency, from semiannual to three issues per year.

Causes of the problem

As the journal gains visibility, especially within reputed communities and databases and index systems, the number of manuscripts submitted for evaluation rises. At the same time, there is greater expectation with regard to the publication of upcoming editions. Usually, such expectation is the result of pressure on the authors to display their academic output (e.g., for promotion within their institutions or as a requirement to be granted a master's or doctoral degree). Regarding the evaluation process, manuscripts are approved in a sequential manner, which can be used to publish them in less time.

Objective

To promote an earlier dissemination of the contents of each journal issue in reputed communities.

Actions for improvement

- Evaluate the relevance of resorting to ahead-of-print publication.
- Evaluate the relevance of changing the publication frequency from semiannual to three issues per year.

Expected benefits

- Exploit the advantages of online publication.
- Meet the need of providing current contents (although this may not be as urgent given the characteristics of the disciplinary area of the journal).
- Greater familiarity of professional, academic, and scientific communities with the publication.
- Less time for the authors to be able to incorporate their articles to their academic output.

Concluding Remarks

We can see that the elements included in the improvement plan demand great efforts to respond to the needs of national and international communities. Publishing in peer reviewed journals allows members of a community to establish academic contact, to keep abreast of the latest development in their area of expertise, to evaluate the quality and relevance of the work they perform, and, ultimately, to establish collaborative relationships with peers. Therefore, the job done by the editorial staff of scientific journals, as venues where communities emerge and grow, is of paramount importance, and special attention should be paid to permanently monitor specific editorial processes to identify areas of improvement and implement the necessary actions.

The improvement plan described in this paper gathers some core issues that may allow us to move forward with the sustained publication of the journal, according to current editorial practices and the results of the study done with novice writers and reviewers (Cárdenas, 2021). We can see that the areas of improvement are not just the result of the need to respond to the external metrics of journal evaluation systems. Such areas are already an integral part of good practices in academic publications. Above all, our interest is to foresee actions aligned with the journal's socio-critical vision, which is fundamental in guiding the mission of the journal as a forum that facilitates the incorporation of English language teachers' academic writing into professional, academic, and scientific communities; thus, contribute to the field of English language teaching and learning. In that regard, "our aim of enriching the professional knowledge of our authors and readers and thus, create and strengthen an international academic community around the teaching and learning of English as a foreign/second language," remains constant (Cárdenas et al., 2020, pp. 9–10).

The demanding editorial management of a journal includes complex processes that usually revolve around universal or particular publication norms. Overwhelmed by the dynamics of the manuscript evaluation process, we usually forget that communication with authors and reviewers may offer a glimpse into circumstances worthy of study. In our case, interpreting the voices and experiences of the participants allowed us to have a closer look at the reconstruction of meanings derived from their beliefs and to unveil the personal and professional circumstances attributable to publishing in a scientific journal; circumstances that are somehow connected to the scientific and professional communities in the writers' local or international contexts. We expect that the actions included in the improvement plan may also be a reference for studies on academic writing, the editorial processes of academic journals, and alternatives in supporting educators from different educational levels and geographical contexts interested in divulging their work through journal publishing.

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Contextualization of Training Input in Multi-Level Replication and Scaling-up Approach in EFL Teacher-Training

Contextualización de módulos de capacitación como estrategia para la repetición multinivel y el escalamiento en la formación de docentes de inglés

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This study deviates from the standard view of template-based training courses that have dominated the experience of in-service English teachers in Ecuador. Its purpose is to underscore the contextualization of training modules as a strategic method for duplicating and scaling up multi-level teacher training to sustain their knowledge and skills. The impact is assessed through a three-level survey administered to 394 teachers from three provinces. The results suggest that the influence of class size and the adaptability and replicability of training are factors that influence the effectiveness and sustainability of an English as a foreign language program. The study highlights the crucial role of collaboration that facilitates collective efforts to contextualize training to achieve profound insight related to classroom practices.

Keywords: contextualization, in-service, replication, scaling-up, sustainability, teacher-training

Este estudio se desvía de la postura tradicional de las capacitaciones que han dominado la experiencia de los profesores de inglés en Ecuador. Se buscó realzar la contextualización de los módulos de capacitación como un método estratégico de reiteración y ampliación para consolidar el conocimiento y habilidades de los docentes. Para evaluar el impacto del método, se realizó una encuesta a 394 profesores de tres provincias. Los resultados sugieren que el tamaño de la clase y la adaptabilidad y reiteración de las capacitaciones son factores que influencian la efectividad y sostenibilidad de un programa de inglés. Este estudio reafirma la importancia de la colaboración a fin de aunar los esfuerzos colectivos para lograr reflexiones profundas relacionadas con la práctica docente.

Palabras clave: ampliación, capacitación docente, contextualización, docentes en ejercicio, sostenibilidad, reiteración

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Introduction

The release of the *2016 Basic Education Curriculum* in Ecuador mandates that English be offered as a mandatory subject in primary education (Year 2–Year 10) and in secondary school. The mandate has resulted in a shortage of approximately 2,800 English language teachers (Constante, 2016), and this has compelled some school administrators to ask non-English teachers to teach English. Besides human capital, familiarity with the new set of teaching materials, knowledge of the pedagogical models, and better proficiency skills are pressing challenges that have confronted English and non-English language teachers alike. The apparent lack of continued professional development in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) inadvertently rendered these teachers helpless while they were struggling to achieve teaching competence, access work mobility, and take spaces for promotion.

To mitigate the shortage of teachers and respond to their concerns over content and strategies in English teaching, we submitted the project "Building Inclusive EFL Teacher Training Networks" to the Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF) in 2017. The AEIF is a global project competition in which alumni of various United States Department of State-sponsored programs participate. Our project was one of the two submissions from Ecuador, which was selected for funding out of 1,014 proposals from 125 countries (U.S. Department of State, n.d.). Our team is composed of three alumni: project leader, management point person, and the logistics head.

The goal of the project was to provide EFL teachers in Ecuador with professional development training that would serve as a mechanism to mitigate the shortage of human capital. It also aimed to offer training that responds to the pedagogical challenges of the 2016 English curriculum (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador [MinEduc], n.d.), as most teachers are unfamiliar with the teaching approaches and methods that the curriculum promotes.

Our project followed a three-phased approach that facilitates the replication of training content and capability-building of in-service teachers. Its fundamental strategy was to construct 12 modules grouped into three sets of skills—productive, receptive, and pedagogical skills. Each module has three general teaching strategies that are conceptualized based on the threads and themes of the MinEduc's (n.d.) English component of the curriculum. Furthermore, each module has three features: differentiation of instruction, accommodation of learners' different needs, and integration of information and communications technology (ICT) to respond to learners' academic needs from Year 2 in primary school to Year 3 in secondary school.

The trained teachers modified the 12 modules in the replication phase, and they assumed the trainer's role to ensure that the training responded to their needs and was appropriate to their classroom situation. When the trained teachers modified the modules (training input), and led the replication training, they contextualized their strategies.

Finding out how the contextualization of modules as training input influenced participating teachers' experience and practices during the implementation of the AEIF project constitutes the rationale of this study. The survey helped us generate data to establish the impact and influence of the project.

Specifically, this paper aims to highlight the importance of contextualizing input, such as modules, as an effective strategy in a multi-level replication and scaling-up approach in teacher training. The paper also intends to produce sets of concrete features and characteristics of training modules that can serve as essential tools for in-service teachers in transforming the pedagogical approaches espoused in the curriculum into effective techniques and practices in their EFL classrooms.

Literature Review

Status of Professional Development in EFL in Ecuador

For the last three decades, the Ministry of Education of the Ecuadorian government has promoted national strategies, created programs, and made significant investments to expand opportunities to learn English from Year 2 until Year 3 of senior high school. These initiatives aim to improve English language learning (ELL). This has been reflected in the enactment of educational policies and the creation of English programs that have resulted in more people around the country having chances to learn English. However, despite the enhancements in ELL policy and curricular reforms, studies indicate that English proficiency remains low. The educational system does not seem to produce satisfactory proficiency levels among students (Ortega-Auquilla & Auccahuallpa-Fernández, 2017). Based on the 2019 English Proficiency Index of Education First (2019), Ecuador ranks 81 out of 100 countries that took part in the study and occupies the lowest in South America. Its proficiency is considered very low against the index used to measure the different areas of the test.

In recent years, the MinEduc (n.d.) has made significant changes within its educational policies. The release of the *National Curriculum Guidelines for English as a Foreign Language* (NCGEFL) finalized the formulated policies. The guidelines introduced a series of educational innovations, and one of them is focused on implementing professional development programs for in-service English teachers.

To develop teacher competence, the MinEduc and the National Secretary of Higher Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation launched the *Go Teacher Program* as a professional development program that benefited approximately 3,000 teachers. The *Go Teacher Program* aimed to enrich the competencies and skills of teachers after an academic immersion from three to nine months in some selected universities in the United States. It provided opportunities for recipients to interact with the language in an English-speaking country and gain the knowledge and skills needed to be highly effective teachers. Despite the forceful enactment of the *Go Teacher Program*, the impact was not widespread due to a lack of cascading mechanisms where knowledge acquired by those who went abroad was not shared with and used by the larger population of teachers who remained in schools.

Through the project "Strengthening the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language," the MinEduc (n.d.) has been on the frontline of recruiting qualified English teachers. The Ministry has acknowledged the crucial role of constant professional training of EFL teachers in the in-service (MinEduc, n.d.) sector to help teachers cope with the pedagogical and content challenges in implementing the curriculum in their classrooms. Several studies have revealed the lack of professional development programs for EFL in-service teachers in Ecuador (Burgin & Daniel, 2017; Villafuerte-Holguin & Macías-Mosquera, 2020); however, the few training programs implemented lack research to determine their effectiveness. According to Calle et al. (2012, 2015), it is necessary to expand research studies on the impact of professional development and teacher training while taking diverse educational contexts in Ecuadorian classrooms into account.

Some studies have reported the need for professional development courses to be embedded in policies that recognize the importance of teachers' work and consider the educational realities they have to face daily in their contexts (Calle et al., 2012, 2015). These studies affirm that training programs must effectively carry out the pedagogical approaches spelled out in the curriculum. When teachers have insufficient knowledge about pedagogical approaches that are privileged in curricula, like the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach (Al Asmari, 2015), the teaching-learning process does not seem effective.

The mandatory offering of English to all public schools in Ecuador, which espouses pedagogical approaches in implementing it, entails professional development courses that prepare teachers for the job. Enriching professional training entails contextualizing resources such as modules or books that adjust teaching to the reality of the teachers and the nature of the learners.

Contextualization of Training Input

Teachers' professional development has become tightly connected to school improvement efforts in many different ways worldwide. The main purpose of professional development efforts is to help teachers recognize the need to reflect on their learning, and use their insight to improve practices (Avalos, 2011). English teachers need to update their teaching competence through professional training to boost students' academic performance in learning English.

Professional development training is an integral component of in-service training. Teachers are provided with activities and instruction in the field to update their pedagogical skills and enable them to respond to challenges in education such as curriculum change and the adoption of different teaching approaches. To ensure that in-service training responds to the needs of teachers, Al-Wreikat et al. (2010) underscore that "teachers who attended or are currently attending in-service training courses must be given some role in determining the training topics and activities that they actually need" (p. 24). Topics must be relevant, timely, and responsive to their needs.

In Ecuador, language institutes, publishing houses, and teacher education institutions (TEIs) provide teacher training on EFL. For instance, publishing houses have in-house trainers who offer training when sets of books they produce are selected as the main student textbook in a school. The drawback of this type of training is its lack of responsiveness to the context of teachers and students.

Schools and government institutions that request professional development courses must ensure that training considers the situation of the institution—teachers' needs, the learning environment, and the students' characteristics (Brauckmann et al., 2020, p. 2). Administrators who are sensitive to varying school contexts would most likely plan comprehensive training programs for teachers that promote collaboration and facilitate the sustainability of knowledge and skills learned from any training.

Pre-packaged training or "ready-made" courses generally provide professional updating to in-service teachers; however, not everything they have received from this type of input is translated into effective practices in EFL classrooms. Teachers may find trainers and their training exemplary and innovative; however, they do not always use what is learned when returning to their classrooms. The non-implementation of the classroom strategies can be attributed to many factors, such as teachers' perceived inability to repeat the technique as trainers demonstrated it and their inability to implement their training in the classroom. Due to their lack of understanding, their input from the training is not feasible for implementation in their school's context. Vold (2017) affirmed this when he examined teachers' sense of preparedness for teaching a subject based on curricular intentions and demands. He found out that effective teacher education programs must consider the school's context and meet the needs of students, schools, and society. This justifies the contextualization of the training input through the resources, activities, and materials shared with teachers or participants.

The limited pedagogical knowledge of the curriculum's prioritized teaching approaches impedes the successful implementation of curricular demands in EFL classes. In most of his works, Vold (2017) draws attention to the mismatch between teachers' pedagogical content knowledge or what they are expected to know (Richards, 2010) and the curricular demands may hamper the implementation of the curriculum. Bunch (2013) suggests that the concept of pedagogical content knowledge is needed to develop English purposefully. However,

this type of teaching is not widely practiced in schools. This is where the contextualization of training input in professional development programs addresses the gap between what teachers know and are prepared to teach and what the curriculum expects them to implement in their classes.

Vold (2017) emphasizes that most EFL teachers suffer from linguistic insecurity, thus making them feel less confident. Less confidence in their linguistic performance leads to textbook dependence and propensity to use traditional methods of instruction (Richards, 2010) in their teaching. Further, this lack of confidence in proficiency skills is more pronounced among novice teachers (Fraga-Cañadas, 2010) and with those who do not have a bachelor's degree in English teaching but are teaching English due to a shortage of teachers in schools.

Despite exposure to professional development programs such as teacher training, some in-service teachers have not transferred what they have learned into effective teaching practices in their EFL classes. The problems related to the transfer of knowledge can be attributed to several factors. Among these factors is the ineffectiveness of teaching techniques shared (Al-Wreikat et al., 2010, p. 18); insufficient room for collaboration in methodology; and lack of relevant approaches that sustain practices. It is essential to create effective strategies in developing in-service training programs to ensure that insight into pedagogy, content, and techniques is gained. Teachers who gain such understanding can transfer their knowledge to their colleagues and ultimately to their students. In creating the training input, the modules developed for the AEIF project factored in the pedagogical approaches espoused in the Ministry of Education curriculum.

The process of contextualizing training input in the AEIF project capitalized on collaboration as the crucial element in knowledge transfer and promoted a scaling-up approach in teacher training. Nguyen and Ng (2020) point to teacher collaboration as key in introducing change in practices characterized by having shared goals, the interdependence of key actors, willingness to participate in the process, and sustained interactions in activities. In the AIEF project, the collaboration of in-service teachers in the three phases is viewed as one of the strategic approaches that promote teacher's ownership of their training and ensures the sustainability of teaching strategies and methods at the classroom level.

Due to challenges related to pedagogy, content, and strategies, a contextualized teacher training is needed to respond to in-service teachers' varying needs; not the standard, recipe-style, and template approach in content delivery. The gap in the in-service training courses highlights the importance of contextualized and relevant training in improving EFL teachers' performance by selecting successfully implemented strategies. In this context, the previous studies indicate the importance of evaluating EFL teachers' in-service training courses through teachers' perceptions and their performance in EFL classrooms.

The incorporation of feedback of the trained participants ensures that relevant and appropriate strategies and resources are modified and adjusted to suit the context, and that the learning environment, students' baseline knowledge, and participants' profile are covered. Incorporating feedback, likewise, facilitates replication and scaling-up of the training. Context is an influential element that either facilitates or impedes the replication of training and the implementation of strategies in classrooms. Gebre and Polman (2020) view context as an attribute defined by different stakeholders such as teachers and curriculum developers. Its nature as a defined element does not render it flexible; thus, it cannot be simply changed to fit professional development programs' strategies.

A sociocultural perspective is used to overcome the limitations posed by context. It underscores the importance of incorporating trainees' experiences to modify and adjust the context that defines what can and cannot be done. Some researchers such as Gebre and Polman (2020) and Silseth and Erstad (2018) have

adopted the sociocultural perspective. This perspective entails the contextualization of teaching to incorporate authentic practices and learning into instruction. Significant input and contributions from learners and teachers are included when contextualizing teaching, and this transforms the context without deliberately changing the core elements that define it. Instead, contextualization efforts enrich the training and implementation activities in classrooms.

In a similar vein, contextualizing training entails the adjustment, modification, and adaptation of strategies and resources based on the feedback and comments of participants. When training is replicated in a multi-level approach for scaling up purposes, trained participants can adjust the sequence, modify the steps of a strategy, and adapt teaching resources to fit the school context. When strategies are implemented at the classroom level, classroom teachers may also contextualize the strategy to address the students' needs and overcome limitations concerning aspects of the learning context. The survey helped us verify the effectiveness and extent of influence of the training's contextualization, which constitutes the justification of this study.

Method

Before writing the modules, our team conducted a needs assessment. This type of assessment was carried out through document analysis, informal conversations with teachers, and classroom observations during teaching practice in selected schools. In-service teachers at cooperating schools helped determine the teaching areas they find difficult or challenging in implementing the curriculum's pedagogical approaches: content and language integrated learning (CLIL) and CLT. The needs assessment done in preparation for the training input factored in these two approaches to determine whether or not in-service teachers are adept at or familiar with them.

Based on the needs assessment results, we prepared 12 modules that served as the main strategy and content of the professional development training. To ensure that the

modules respond to the needs of the in-service teachers, our project had three phases: in-house training (Phase 1), replication of training in schools (Phase 2), and the classroom implementation of the modules (Phase 3) in the in-service teachers' schools. The in-service teachers served two roles during the project implementation: as training participants and as a lead trainers to their colleagues.

During Phase 1, the project team selected 52 out of 918 English teachers from 17 districts in three provinces of Zone 6 in Ecuador through a qualifications-based process. Through a scale-up capability-building approach in Phase 2, the 52 teachers returned to their districts and formed a training team of three teachers. All training teams from different districts gave 20 more teachers in their province the same training. One team alone trained 22 participants. In Phase 2, two types of teachers received the training: English language teachers and non-English teachers. Non-English language teachers are those whose specialization is not English, but who are tasked to teach English due to a shortage of teachers, especially in rural schools.

In-service teachers became lead teachers or teachers who spearheaded the replication training in their districts in Phase 2. They adapted and adjusted the training modules to their context. They used alternative resources if they did not have the materials used during the training as long as the strategy's essence remained. The training in districts lasted between one week and one month. After that, 342 in-service teachers were trained in the three provinces of Azuay, Cañar, and Morona Santiago.

The 342 trained teachers tried the strategies they learned from the lead teachers, and out of 342, 305 teachers (89%) implemented the 12 modules in their classrooms (Phase 3). At the classroom level, the trained teachers further adjusted and adapted the strategies to their context.

In the first and second phases, the trained teacher modified the 12 modules to respond to their situation and context. This modification served as the indicator of whether the training project impacted the teachers' professional development or not. Our team administered

a survey questionnaire to determine the impact of the modules after the completion of the two phases. The modules were evaluated against 10 indicators that served as the basis for their conceptualization and construction.

Upon completing the training project, another survey was administered that evaluated the combined overall impact of the training modules in Phases 1 and 2. It measured the effectiveness of the features and characteristics of the modules.

The study employed a quantitative approach using a survey as a data collection method to determine the modules' impact after in-house training (Phase 1), the training replication (Phase 2) in districts, and its implementation at the classroom level (Phase 3). Twelve trainers developed the 12 modules that were grouped into three skills: productive, receptive, and pedagogical.

There were 202 applications for the in-house training in Phase 1, and 52 lead trainers were selected based on three requirements: B2 proficiency level, tenured teacher of the Ministry of Education, and willingness to replicate the training in their districts. The 52 teachers answered the survey twice—after Phases 1 and 3—and 342 teachers answered the second survey after Phase 2.

Each module consists of three formulated strategies based on two principal approaches: CLT and CLIL.

The MinEduc mandates the use of these approaches. The structure consists of the curricular thread, the description of the strategy, step-by-step implementation in the classroom, and the differentiation techniques in each module. Table 1 shows the 10 parameters that were used to evaluate the modules in all phases.

The 10 parameters served as the basis for developing the 12 modules, and they were the same parameters used to evaluate the impact of the module in the three phases. The modules on productive skills focus on writing and speaking skills. Speaking skills focus on building teachers' ability to facilitate student's oral production interactively and communicatively. Writing skills develop teachers' ability to provide constructive feedback on students' sentence construction and literacy development. The modules on receptive skills highlight the development of listening and reading. Strategies for listening promote active techniques that develop teachers' capacity to understand conversations in different situations. Reading strategies help teachers follow specific techniques and use resources that facilitate students' understanding of texts and meaning. Pedagogical skills improve teachers' manner and mode of teaching in assessment, classroom management, and cooperative learning strategies that facilitate students' interaction in an EFL classroom.

Table 1. The 10 Parameters Used in Evaluating the Modules

Parameters	Descriptions
Practicability	The techniques and steps are workable.
Ease of steps	Each step leads to another in an organized way.
Skills-based	Strategies develop the specific skills (productive, receptive, and pedagogical) targeted in each module.
Flexibility	The strategy is applicable in different learning situations.
Adaptability	The resources needed to carry out the strategies are easy to make in the classroom.
Creativity	The strategies develop teacher's creativity.
Engaging	The strategies are attractive to and motivating to students.
Replicability	The strategies can easily be repeated using the resources available in schools.
Curriculum-oriented	The strategies can be adapted to the Ministry of Education English curriculum
Suitability to class size	The strategies can work well with big class sizes.

Descriptive statistics are used to describe the features and characteristics of the modules that teachers find effective when they replicated the training they received and when they tried the modules in EFL classrooms.

A scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*to a great extent*) was constructed to establish how the modules' features and characteristics had an impact on the in-house training, replication, and classroom implementation. The scale is also used to determine the extent of the overall impact of the modules on the two phases.

A three-level survey was administered after every phase of the project was finished. The 52 participants (Phase 1) and the 343 participants (Phase 2) answered the survey. In the overall impact survey, only 52 teachers answered the survey due to their involvement in all project implementation phases. There were two types of participants: the lead trainers (52 participants) and teachers (343 participants) trained by the lead trainers in Phase 2. Both types are in-service teachers from the 17 districts of the three provinces of Zone 6 of Ecuador.

Results and Discussion

After Phase 1, the 52 lead trainers evaluated the modules used in the weeklong training against the 10 parameters. Participants evaluated the modules against each parameter on a scale of 1 to 5, with five as the maximum value (see Table 2).

In general, the participants rated the modules at 4 to 4.6, which means that the modules are effective to a certain extent. Among the 10 parameters, the suitability of the techniques to the class size in public schools was rated the lowest. This can be attributed to the participants' perception that although the modules are effective, it may be challenging to implement them in big classes. Class size in most Ecuadorian classrooms typically ranges from 35 to 40.

Teachers may find training effective and relevant, but this does not automatically translate into changed classroom practices due to the perceived notion that the techniques learned are not suitable to the class sizes they deal with within their schools. The challenge that class size poses to the effectiveness of professional training is affirmed in the results of two more parameters: replicability in classrooms and whether teaching resources are curriculum-oriented or not. The potential of the modules to be replicated and applied in EFL classrooms is viewed as only useful to a certain extent since teachers who receive training would always adapt the input they receive the way it is demonstrated during training. Teachers often see training input as effective to a great extent when applied to their classroom context. They have a tendency to not modify or revise the information or input to suit their needs and class. This implies that administrators must ensure that the institution's situation (Brauckmann et al., 2020) is considered when providing training.

Table 2. Evaluation of Modules in Phase 1

Parameters	*M*
Practicability	4.6
Ease of steps	4.5
Skills-based	4.5
Flexibility	4.5
Adaptability	4.4
Creativity	4.5
Engaging	4.5
Replicability	4.1
Curriculum-oriented	4.1
Suitability to class size	4.0

Note. The survey was administered to 52 lead trainers using a Likert scale with values of (5) *to a great extent*, (4) *to a certain extent*, (3) *to a minimal extent*, (2) *to a low extent*, and (1) *not at all*. *M* denotes the mean of the computed values.

In-service teachers rated other parameters—ease of steps and flexibility of the topics to learners—higher. These features are often viewed as not necessarily tied to the implemented curriculum, or features not influenced by class size. Similarly, skills-based activities, creative strategies, and engaging features of the modules are rated with a mean of 4.5. These features are regarded as effective in module conceptualization for teachers' professional training, and this emphasizes the importance of student-driven and universal elements in activities where class size and the curriculum do not impede implementation and replication of the modules in EFL classrooms.

The practicability of the modules is a characteristic that teachers consider easy to replicate and implement in classes. Teachers view technique-oriented teacher training programs or courses as doable in their classrooms as long as these techniques are appropriate to their context, including the class size, availability of teaching resources, and practical exercises. Factoring in teachers' ideas promotes the collaboration of stakeholders like teachers (Gebre & Polman, 2020) and enables a socio-cultural perspective (Silseth & Erstad, 2018) in contextualization efforts.

The practicability (4.6) of the techniques in the training modules enriched the participants' knowledge and skills in teaching English; however, some of these techniques do not inherently render them capable of contextualizing the training resources when confronted with class size issues and curriculum-related concerns. When teachers witness excellent professional training, they have undoubtedly learned from the demonstration. However, when they are asked to replicate with their colleagues and their students the training received, they find it difficult to tailor-make the training strategy and input to their contexts.

When results from the survey are compared with the types of skills taught in the modules, the results show that productive skills are more challenging to replicate and implement in the classroom. Table 3 shows the comparative results in the three skills that categorize the three sets of the 12 modules, where each set of four modules are focused on each of the three skills: receptive, productive, and pedagogical skills.

In developing productive skills, the lead trainers rated the modules as "effective to some extent" (3.8) with respect to class size in schools. Similarly, receptive skills modules were rated almost the same (4.0)—just slightly higher under the same parameter. Both values imply that actual school class sizes should be factored in when designing and conceptualizing training modules.

The values are almost the same as the replicability and applicability parameters that developed teachers' productive and receptive skills. Among the three skills, however, the lead trainers evaluated pedagogical skills higher than the other two in all three parameters. Pedagogical modules are general strategies that develop teachers' assessment, classroom management, and collaborative techniques. Often, teachers view these strategies as embedded in teaching; thus, they are easier to adapt and adjust to their class size and classroom context.

Table 3. Evaluation of the Modules by Skills

Type of Skills	Suitability to class size	Replicability	Applicability to curriculum
	M	*M*	*M*
Productive skills	3.8	4.1	4.1
Receptive skills	4.0	4.1	4.2
Pedagogical skills	4.2	4.3	4.3

Note. The survey is administered to 52 lead trainers using a Likert scale with values of (5) *to a great extent*, (4) *to a certain extent*, (3) *to a minimal extent*, (2) *to a low extent*, and (1) *not at all*. *M* denotes the mean of the computed values.

In Phase 2, the contextualization strategy included adjustment that considered the nature of the learning environment, class size, availability of instructional materials, and the teacher's knowledge, skills, and abilities to implement the modules and their strategies.

After the month-long training in Phase 2, the 342 teachers evaluated the modules under the same parameters as in Phase 1. Table 4 shows the comparative results of the participants' evaluations of the two modules in the two phases.

After the revisions made in Phase 1, the 342 participants who received the lead teachers' training rated the modules higher than the values obtained in Phase 1. The difference ranges from 0.1 to 0.7 except in "practicability," where the value remains the same. The significant jump in the value is evident in the parameters "engaging" (0.3) and "curriculum-oriented" (0.7).

Table 4. Comparison of Evaluation Results in Two Phases

Parameters	Phase 1 (lead trainers)	Phase 2 (public school teachers)
	M	*M*
Practicability	4.6	4.6
Ease of steps	4.5	4.6
Skills-based	4.5	4.6
Flexibility	4.5	4.6
Adaptability	4.4	4.5
Creativity	4.5	4.7
Engaging	4.5	4.7
Replicability	4.1	4.3
Curriculum-oriented	4.1	4.8
Suitability to class size	4.0	4.3

Note. The survey is administered to 342 public school teachers using a Likert scale with values of (5) *to a great extent*, (4) *to a certain extent*, (3) to a minimal extent, (2) to a low extent, and (1) not at all. *M* denotes the mean of the computed values.

The improvement in the mean values in Phase 2 can be attributed to the contextualization of the modules during post-training time. In Phase 2, the lead trainers adapted the strategies and used their techniques to teach and make the training input operational without changing the nature and essence behind the creation of the modules. The contextualization of the modules refers to the adaptation in three aspects: sequence of activities, instructional materials, and teachers' techniques to adapt to the classroom context where the teachers teach. Teachers adapted the modules based on what they considered and viewed as relevant and appropriate for their classes. They changed some sequences of some strategies due to their students' age and proficiency level; they used other teaching resources based on cost and availability of resources in their schools. They changed some techniques in some strategies due to class size. The increase in the mean value from Phase 1 to Phase 2 in all parameters supports Al-Wreikat et al.'s (2010) idea that teachers must be given roles in leading replication training in their schools to facilitate the adaptation of training input.

For example, during the in-house training, one of the modules promotes role-play using total physical response (TPR). The university trainer changed the classroom into a restaurant ambiance, where participants participated in the different activities that characterized a typical restaurant. The participants were provided with all the materials and real-life tools to practice authentic conversations using TPR. When it was the replication time in districts, teachers did not create the restaurant scenario; instead, they came up with a different set-up using recycled materials and cheaper resources. They combined some of the steps to adjust to the learners' linguistic competence.

In Phases 2 and 3, the trained teachers had the "freedom" to adapt the modules based on their context as long as the crux of the strategies in the modules are not changed to a different one. This contextualization strategy was key in adapting the training modules to the curriculum's context and classroom teachers' resources.

In most EFL teacher training programs in Ecuador, the modules used and techniques demonstrated are replicated in classrooms without modification to preserve the "standard template," which is considered the factor that assures effectiveness in teacher training. However, teachers do not usually try or use strategies and activities they view as difficult and challenging to implement in their classrooms.

An institution or organization can provide exemplar and excellent teacher training. Its participants may view the input and experience provided as commendable; but there is no guarantee that what is learned is translated into practices that would significantly impact the learners as end-users. It is more challenging in the EFL area due to chronic problems related to teachers' proficiency in the English language and limitations to understanding pedagogical approaches espoused in the national curriculum. Any excellent training proves to be ineffective when teachers or participants do not develop a profound understanding of rationale and logic behind the strategies. Contextualization of the training is needed when participants are asked to repeat what they have learned to their colleagues and carry out a classroom implementation of the modules to ensure the sustainability of practices.

In the last phase or Phase 3, the replication of the modules' strategies was implemented at the classroom level. The 52 lead trainers and the 305 (89%) of the 342 public school teachers trained in Phase 2 applied the modules' strategies to their classes. The contextualization of the classroom modules was generally the same in Phase 2; however, the emphasis was on teachers' techniques and the way they implemented the strategies they deemed effective and appropriate to their classroom and their students.

After a month, the 52 lead trainers were asked to evaluate the overall impact of the modules. They were selected in the final impact evaluation due to their involvement in the year-long professional training program. Moreover, they assumed two roles: participant and lead trainer, which allowed them to gain a more profound insight into how contextualized training input can benefit teachers in their practices and ensure that the knowledge, skills, and abilities are sustained at the classroom level.

In evaluating the modules' overall impact in all phases, three aspects were used as parameters: improvement of teacher's English language teaching (ELT) skills, adaptability of the modules to the curriculum of the MinEduc, and usefulness of EFL strategies (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Overall Impact Evaluation of the Modules in the Three Phases
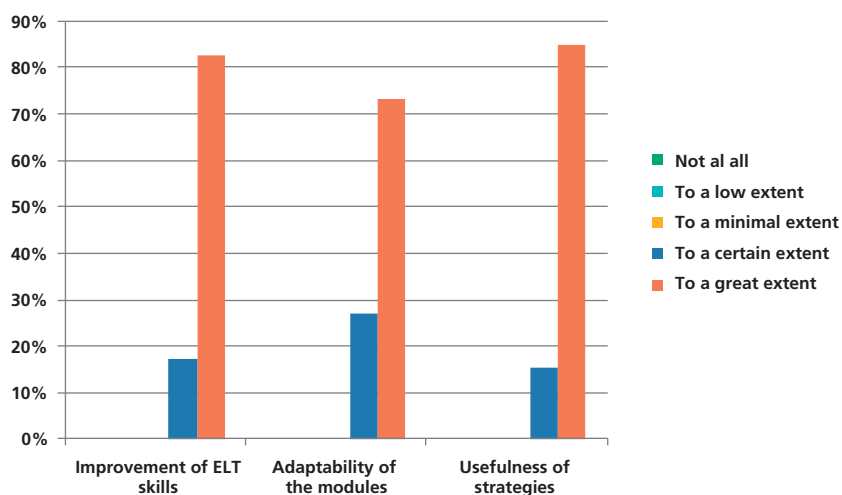
Based on Figure 1, 84% of the teachers find the usefulness of the strategies in the modules as effective to a great extent, and only 15% view the strategies as effective to a certain extent. Improvement of ELT skills is another aspect that teachers consider effective (83%) to a great extent. The improvement can be attributed to the modules constructed and prepared to help teachers improve their pedagogical knowledge and abilities to develop students' receptive and productive skills in learning EFL.

Further, most teachers find the adaptability of the modules to the context as effective to a great extent (73%). Adapting modules to teachers' context and understanding how input from professional training should be carried out in classrooms is challenging. In Phases 1 and 2, lead trainers were allowed to tweak and adjust the strategies to ensure that they were appropriate and relevant to the teaching-learning process. By contextualizing the training modules, the content is adapted to the curriculum, which results in a learning environment where the activities become more relevant, appropriate, and doable. This reinforces the importance of contextualizing training input and professional development programs by providing opportunities for teachers to "transform their knowledge into practice" (Avalos, 2011, p. 10) to maximize students' potential to learn a foreign language. Despite the scale-up approach in the AEIF project, where the quantity of teachers trained is important, the usefulness and purpose for which the modules were created did not get lost in the replication process. This is due to the contextualization of training input as a strategy in professional development training.

Conclusions

The impact of professional development projects such as teacher training rests primarily on their effectiveness in classroom instruction that benefits students as end-users. Furthermore, the sustained character of professional development projects is transferred not just to those who were trained but also to others who need it the most. Teachers who need it the most are those who feel and are conscious that their pedagogical knowledge is insufficient. They are the ones who think they do not have a firm grasp or profound understanding of the strategies needed to bring the curriculum demands to fruition.

Our project implemented a three-phased replication strategy anchored on capability building and a scale-up approach in training. The 12 modules, which are the primary strategy and input of the training, facilitated teachers' knowledge, skills, and abilities to teach EFL in three key language teaching skills: productive, receptive, and pedagogical skills. The replication strategy was a mechanism for determining the value of the modules used by the lead teachers in their training. Furthermore, its effectiveness was also measured when implemented at the classroom level by those who were trained during the replication phase. This strategy emphasizes the crucial place of collaboration among teachers to assume roles as trainers for their colleagues. When teachers assume the lead trainer's role, they use their lens in adapting the modules. Changes in roles pave the way for teachers to gradually become independent implementers of the strategies with less reliance on outside experts. Assuming different roles in any teacher-training program encourages teachers' mobility, as they do not remain participants but can become trainers as well.

The scaling-up approach in professional training does not always refer to an increase in the number of beneficiaries. In this study, the approach considers the sustainability of innovative practice through collaboration among teachers as pivotal. Contextualization of the training modules was the strategic approach to ensure what Coburn (2003, p. 3) refers to as the scale of training which includes "depth, spread, shift and sustain, and sustainability" of projects.

In Phase 1 of the project, three features of the 12 modules were evaluated comparatively lower than the

others, namely, replicability of the strategies, orientation to the Ministry of Education curriculum, and suitability to class size. While teachers generally recognize the quality of the content and the usefulness of the strategies of training modules, the factors that influence their decision to help their colleagues use the strategy is the extent of replicability, suitability, and affinity to the curriculum they are mandated to use. Teachers have the penchant to copy what was demonstrated to them during training, and if they feel that such a strategy poses challenges when tried in real classrooms, they would most likely not use it.

When the evaluation results from Phase 1 are compared with the results in Phase 2, the evaluation of the modules increases in all 10 parameters. The increase can be attributed to the contextualization of the modules where lead teachers modified and adjusted the modules to suit their training needs and their colleagues' professional needs. The results show that when professional development projects such as teacher training incorporate the participants and empower them to own the training as their mandate, the impact is more relevant and knowledge transfer is more sustained.

As part of professional development, teacher training is always conceived of as a place for teachers to update and improve their baseline knowledge, skills, and abilities; however, in most cases, what teachers often get from this training is a "template" of what and how to do the strategy or technique. They tend to view training input as a set of strategies and activities that have to be followed without considering the context that influences the effectiveness and impact of training when it lacks the adjustment, modification, or revision that the classroom teacher needs to do.

Another aspect reaffirmed through the AEIF project and evaluated through the survey is that productive skills are generally more challenging to develop in EFL teacher training than receptive and pedagogical skills. The challenge in providing training input that helps teachers build students' productive skills in learning English is usually influenced by class size. Teachers find it difficult to imagine using the strategies they have learned from the training to develop students' writing and speaking skills when the number of students is overwhelming. When teachers view class size as a hindering factor, the replicability of the input, such as strategies learned from the training, is considered difficult to implement at the classroom level. Teachers' views about the implementation potential of strategies learned from professional development projects are always associated with the teachers' opinion of their capability to do it in the context that inadvertently influences their teaching. There seems to be a lack of understanding of the basic tenets and the logic behind strategies learned during professional development training. It is not the repetition of the strategy that poses a problem. It is how teachers understand the logic and the essence of the strategy and apply what they have learned in their classes.

The usefulness and the improvement of the ELT skills are two important features of the module strategies (Figure 1) responsible for the success of the training contextualization process. After introducing contextualization strategies in two phases, the lead teachers witnessed the improvement in their teaching practices in the classroom through the modules they revised, adjusted, and modified to suit students' needs and to respond to the challenges of EFL teaching.

The contextualization of teaching practices and input is notably done in administration-related courses (Brauckmann et al., 2020), science topics integration in schools (Gebre & Polman, 2020), and incorporation of cultural resources (Silseth & Erstad, 2018) in instruction, all aimed at providing appropriate resources and activities. In this study, the contextualization shifts to training input to help English teachers appreciate the influence of context in replicating professional development courses.

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EFL Teachers' Professional Identity: A Narrative Study With Colombian Graduate Students

Identidad profesional de docentes de inglés: un estudio narrativo con estudiantes colombianos de posgrado

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This paper reports a qualitative narrative study that explored the trajectories of English language teachers' identities before and after their participation in a master's program in English language teaching at a Colombian public university. After analyzing the data gathered through oral narratives and narrative interviews, results showed that teachers' identities are part of an endless process nurtured by experiences at the academic, pedagogical, and personal levels. We found that such experiences were constantly cultivated and analyzed in the master's seminars, which positively influenced the development of the participants' identities by making them more reflective and critical practitioners. Most teachers reported developing higher levels of social commitment, critical-reflective engagement, and research-oriented practices due to their graduate academic experience.

Keywords: professional development, reflective teaching, teacher education, teacher identity

Este artículo reporta los hallazgos de un estudio cualitativo narrativo que exploró las trayectorias de las identidades de profesores antes y después de su participación en un programa de maestría en enseñanza del inglés en una universidad pública colombiana. Tras analizar los datos recolectados mediante narrativas orales y entrevistas, los resultados mostraron que la identidad profesional es un proceso interminable, continuamente nutrido por experiencias académicas, pedagógicas y personales. Encontramos que dichas experiencias fueron constantemente cultivadas y analizadas en los seminarios de la maestría, lo cual influyó positivamente en el desarrollo de las identidades de los maestros al hacerlos más reflexivos y críticos. La mayoría de los docentes reportaron mayores niveles de compromiso social, envolvimiento crítico-reflexivo y prácticas orientadas hacia la investigación debido a su experiencia académica de posgrado.

Palabras clave: desarrollo profesional, educación docente, enseñanza reflexiva, identidad docente

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Introduction

Historically speaking, language teacher identity (LTI) has been associated with the overall set of practices, beliefs, and behaviors that characterize educators immersed within the language teaching field. Nevertheless, the recent insertion of other theoretical perspectives into LTI theory, particularly those drawing from psychology, sociolinguistics, and even philosophy, has made the theorization of LTI more complex (Varghese et al., 2005). For Norton (2017), LTI "indexes both social structure and human agency, which shift over historical time and social context" (p. 81), whereas to Barkhuizen (2016) and Beauchamp and Thomas (2009), LTI is related to the gradual and constant negotiation of language teachers' identity markers inside and outside the classroom contexts (Gee, 2000; Kumaravadivelu, 2012). That is to say that the sociocultural and contextual experiences they go through in their lives as teachers help them reflect upon who they want to become (van Lankveld et al., 2016).

In Colombia, academics such as Macías-Villegas et al. (2020) have held that LTI is a process of construction that occurs within academic and non-academic contexts. When LTI takes place within the first setting, language teacher education programs as well as continuous professional development programs gain relevance (Freeman, 1989). This is reasonable bearing in mind that language teacher education programs represent the place where preservice teachers are first exposed to their teaching experiences. Alternatively, LTI construction can also take place within the framework of the second scenario, where social interactions and community involvement play a fundamental role.

Bearing that in mind, this research study seeks to contribute to the body of scholarly literature revolving around the field of LTI in Colombia by reporting how a master's program with an emphasis on English language teaching (ELT) influenced the identity trajectories of a group of four English language teachers. In doing so, we set the following research objectives: (a) to explore four English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' identities trajectories before and after their participation in a master's program in ELT and (b) to describe the role of the master's program in ELT in the shaping or reshaping process regarding EFL teachers' professional identities.

Literature Review

Developing a Language Teacher Identity

Scholars from varied settings have long suggested that LTI develops based on individuals' constant academic experiences during their time as preservice teachers within the framework of language teacher education programs (Freeman, 1989; Trent, 2010). In the international scenario, Crandall (2000) has manifested that LTI constitutes the space where preservice teachers' contact with learning and teaching methodologies shape not only their initial professional development dimension and their initial teaching repertoire as language instructors, but also their initial LTI. This makes sense considering that teacher education programs represent the place where preservice teachers are exposed to their initial teaching experiences. In Colombia, authors such as Macías-Villegas et al. (2020) have held that pedagogical, methodological, sociocultural, and community-based experiences contribute to the development of initial language teachers' identities, beliefs, and teaching practices (Freeman, 1989; Trent, 2010). These aspects are reaffirmed by Hernández-Varona and Gutiérrez-Álvarez (2020) who found that, when engaged in community- and social-based projects, preservice language teachers were able to develop other dimensions of their teaching selves.

Crandall (2000) also suggests that teachers' previous experiences become essential to understand how these might contribute to shaping their views towards learning and teaching processes and their overall identity. Borg (2004) and Freeman (1989) have also supported the idea that teachers' early learning experiences do not only

allow them to envisage their practices as future novice teachers, but also to recognize the kind of individual they would like to become, suggesting that LTI is not a linear process that necessarily develops based on college- and academic-related experiences. It also emerges from non-linear experiences embedded in the social, cultural, contextual, and personal dimensions. In view of this, LTI involves analyzing "how a person understands his/her relationship to the world, and how that relationship is constructed across time and space" (Norton, 2013, p. 45).

In the international spectrum, LTI has been widely examined under several lenses. While some scholars have used Bakhtinian and Vygotskyan frameworks, others have followed principles of critical position-ing theory and communities of practice (Kayi-Aydar, 2019) to understand how language educators integrate their experiences into the classroom setting. Abednia (2012) established that LTI develops from continuous participation in professionalization programs. He found that, after constant exposure to critical EFL theories, the participants (seven Iranian English teachers) were able to gradually move from their roles as "passive technicians" (Kumaravadivelu, 2003) to what Kumara-vadivelu (2003) regards as "reflective practitioners" and "transformative intellectuals." This occurred because of the exposure to critical theories and the opportunities the participants shared to detach from hegemonic/neoliberal perspectives.

Similar findings were reported by Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (1999), who analyzed the self-representation of a group of non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) and established that these usually subor-dinated themselves to their counterpart, the native speakers. Yet, through the constant integration of critical theory into the classes these teachers were enrolled in, they found that deficit discourses (Hayes et al., 2017) about nativeness were dismantled and abandoned. Thus, participants were able to develop a collective consciousness regarding their condition as NNESTs as well as their own transformed professional voices.

Other studies have centered on areas such as the negotiation of language teachers' sociocultural identities and their context (Ajayi, 2010; Duff & Uchida, 1997), the relationship between the working life and construction of professional identities of EFL/ESL teachers through life history narratives (Johnston, 1997; Simon-Maeda, 2004), the intersection between race and LTI (Amin, 1997; Golombek & Jordan, 2005; Motha, 2006), and the combination of LTI and narrative inquiry (Liu & Xu, 2011; Tsui, 2007). These studies have made important contributions to the LTI field and have demonstrated that it is an area of interest that has been growing within the last few years.

In Colombia, scholars' interest in LTI has also gained increasing attention. To ratify this, we carried out a categorization exercise within the framework of five ELT specialized journals and two specialized databases. We specifically searched for articles revolv-ing around the themes of "identity," "language teacher identity," and "language teacher identity in Colombia." This task led us to conclude that research studies in Colombia have explored LTI in diverse scenarios, that is, the intersection between LTI and undergraduate education (Hernández-Varona & Gutiérrez-Álvarez, 2020; Macías-Villegas et al., 2020); queer LTI (Lander, 2018; Ubaque-Casallas & Castañeda-Peña, 2021); LTI negotiation within the context of deterritorialized spaces (Guerrero & Meadows, 2015); the identity of indigenous English language teachers (Arias-Cepeda, 2020); and the intersection between LTI and autoeth-nography (Castañeda-Trujillo, 2020). These studies contribute to a wider understanding of how LTI has been integrated into the field of language education in the Colombian context.

The literature review allowed us to determine that, although undergraduate education has been a recurrent scenario for exploring and understanding LTI construction processes, more recently, the area of professional development as well as components inherent to it have been gaining increasing interest. Therefore, this

study may reduce the existing gap on teacher's identity shaping in the context of professional development programs; and more specifically, within the framework of postgraduate education with an emphasis on ELT.

Method

In this study, firstly, we followed the principles of qualitative narrative research, which allowed us to explore, analyze, and understand experiences embedded within the socio-educational dimension (Flick, 2009; Saldaña, 2011; Stake, 2010). Secondly, we applied principles of narrative inquiry because eliciting individuals' stories constitutes an excellent source of knowing and making meaning of their experiences (Dwyer & Emerald, 2017), and provides the chance to understand them from within (Bell, 2014; Kramp, 2004). In this regard, authors such as Barkhuizen (2016) and Merriam (2009) contend that narratives constitute an essential element for understanding identity.

Participants and Context of the Study

We chose the participants of our study using a judgment sampling technique. The judgement or purposeful sampling technique consists of selecting the "most productive sample to answer the guiding research question" (Marshall, 1996, p. 523), which implied recruiting participants (in this case, English language teachers) who had attended and successfully graduated from a master's program in ELT from a local university in southern Colombia. Bearing these considerations in mind, we initially invited, via email, 30 English teachers to participate: four of them accepted. To protect their real identities, we assigned some pseudonyms. "Julio" was the name given to the only man of the group, while "Daniela," "Angela," and "Fernanda" were assigned to the three female participants. Below we provide a richer description of the participants' profiles.

Julio is a 28-year-old teacher who currently works in a rural school in Garzón, Huila.[1] He pursued his bachelor's degree and master's degree in ELT in the region of Huila. Julio has been an English teacher for eight years and his research interests lie in rural education and material development; this, because of his proximity to this context.

Daniela is 29 years old and works in a public school in Teruel, Huila. She completed her undergraduate studies in 2013 and, by 2014, she decided to continue her studies in the master's degree in ELT. She graduated from the program in 2017. She has six years of teaching experience in the private and public sector and her interests are the development of communicative skills and didactics.

Angela is a 30-year-old teacher who pursued her bachelor's and master's degree in English education in Huila. Angela is a full time English teacher at a public school in Garzón, Huila, and her research interests revolve around professional development, teacher identity, and primary teacher practices in relation with ELT.

Fernanda is a 28-year-old EFL teacher who finished her bachelor's degree in 2015 and her master's degree in 2017. She has been an English teacher for eight years and her main research interests deal with the incorporation of multimodal tasks into EFL processes.

Characteristics of the Master's Program in ELT

This specific master's program in ELT is a postgraduate educational level offered by a public university located in Huila. Typical candidates who enroll in the program are English language teachers. Yet, individuals whose educational backgrounds are different can be accepted if they meet a very specific requirement: having at least a demonstrable B2 level of English proficiency (according to the Common European Framework of

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1 Huila is one of the administrative divisions of Colombia. It is in the southeast of the country.

Reference). In general, the master's lasts four semesters and its overall curriculum contents cover specific subjects within the fields of second language acquisition and English language teaching and research.

Researchers' Positionality

By the time we conducted the study, we were two EFL teachers with different roles: one of us was an active EFL public rural school teacher and a IV semester student of the master's program we referred to previously, while the other was an EFL teacher educator with an MA in ELT. Since we had been involved in the same academic experience, we intended to minimize possible biases by checking for alternative viewpoints regarding the study. In doing so, we consulted a colleague who specializes in qualitative research and, based on the discussion revolving around LTI and narrative inquiry we had with him, we refined some sections of the study to increase its degree of trustworthiness.

Even though we did not know the participants personally, our own participation as former MA students in ELT seems to have been one of the vital elements for triggering their interest in enrolling in this research, as they acknowledged being concerned about their teaching selves (Danielewicz, 2014) before and after such academic experiences. Overall, their acceptance was beneficial because they showed a very high level of commitment and openness towards the research. We believe, though, that having a larger sample of participants in future studies would be favorable to keep shedding light on other aspects regarding LTI, including LTI construction either as researchers or as language teacher educators.

Data Collection Instruments and Analysis

Two data collection instruments were used for this study: oral narratives and narrative interviews. Overall, narratives elicit stories in order to explore one or several moments in the participants' lives (Barkhuizen, 2016) and can be collected in different formats (written or oral). Understanding this, and given the participants' availability, we decided firstly to gather their narratives orally. Secondly, we implemented narrative interviews because of the opportunities they provide to "[reconstruct] social events from the point of view of informants" (Muylaert et al., 2014, p. 185). According to Kartch (2017), "in a narrative interview, the researcher is not looking for answers to questions; rather, he or she is looking for the participant's story" (p. 1073). Consequently, both oral narratives and narrative interviews were conducted interchangeably to complement the information gathered from each instrument and thus increase the grade of detail in each participant's story.

In this order of ideas, we collected oral narratives and performed interviews at three instances: first, we explored participants' initial contact with English during their childhood, their school time as primary and secondary students, and their (if there were) English learning experiences in language institutes. Second, we examined participants' experiences as preservice English language teachers in the undergraduate program, their experiences abroad, and their first formal jobs as language teachers. Finally, we delved into participants' experiences as candidates and then as students in the master's in ELT.

The data collection process took place in the last semester of 2019 and the first trimester of 2020. For data analysis we followed the principles of the paradigmatic approach. This approach recommends the proposition of categories (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 14) and encourages the identification of particular occurrences within the data to relate them with the established categories to make sense of the stories. Consequently, we followed a four-step analysis: Step 1 consisted of becoming familiar with participants' experiences; Step 2 was related to the initial process of coding the narratives in the software Atlas.TI; Step 3 centered on expanding the initial categorization and analyzing data stemming from the oral narratives along with the narrative interviews; and Step 4 focused on illustrating the research categories emerging from the overall process of data analysis (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Data Analysis Steps

Step 1	• Initial reading of the narratives (no categorization or coding) • Becoming familiar with participants' experiences.
Step 2	• Initial steps of the process of coding oral narratives following principles of paradigmatic analysis • Creation of a Word document to have a detailed register for possible modifications
Step 3	• Analysis between data generated in the oral narratives against data generated in the interviews • Expansion of the initial categorization
Step 4	• Illustration of the research categories • Organization of the document

Findings

In this section, we present the results obtained from the analysis of the collected data aimed at exploring four EFL teachers' identities trajectories prior to and after their participation in a master's program. Two main categories emerged (see Table 1) which were paramount in understanding that identity construction is a dynamic process continuously developing from the experiences lived by the educator (even before becoming one) and is not limited to a particular event. Additionally, the categories show that postgraduate education promotes opportunities for further identity development, enabling teachers to reflect upon and think critically about their role in education.

Table 1. Research Categories and Subcategories

Research Question	Main Categories	Subcategories
How does EFL teachers' participation in a master's program in ELT shape their professional identity?	EFL Teachers' Professional Identity: Influences From the Past	Initial Experiences as English Language Learners
		The Teacher Education Program: Incubator of EFL Teachers' Identities
		Deployment of Teaching Identities: An Endless Path Towards Professionalization
	Contributions of the Master's Program in ELT to EFL Teachers' Professional Identity	Finding Value in the Other
		Becoming Empowered Critical Reflective Educators
		Widening the Spectrum: Understanding Teaching From a Renewed Perspective

EFL Teacher Professional Identity: Influences From the Past

LTI construction is regarded by some professionals as a process that begins when individuals formally enroll in language teacher education programs and begin to receive methodological and pedagogical influences to become teachers. This first category elicits the process participants went through since the very first contact they had with ELT methodologies from their positions as primary and secondary students. It also unveils their initial educator's identity construction in their undergraduate program.

Initial Experiences as English Language Learners

This subcategory shows that participants' previous learning experiences in primary and secondary education played a determining role in the reflection made around their initial practices as language teachers. Positioning themselves in their former role as pupils, participants intrinsically identified common teaching characteristics and behaviors enacted by their school teachers and made connections with their subsequent decision to become teachers.

> I had two spectacular teachers; one [of them] was a very special person and educator. I loved her classes. The other teacher's classes were spectacular. I think that is one of the reasons why I like English. (Daniela, Narrative Interview 1)[2]

> My mother is a primary school teacher. She has worked in rural zones. My cousin also studied English in the teacher education program. I have another cousin who studied child pedagogy. I was raised in an environment of teachers . . . I consider that growing in such environments makes you feel attracted to the profession. The context in which one grows is important. (Julio, Narrative Interview 1)

In the previous excerpts, the two participants reflect upon their experiences as English language learners during primary and secondary school where

they acknowledge having been influenced directly or indirectly by their former EFL teachers. About this aspect, Borg (2004) highlights that "the apprenticeship of observation describes the phenomenon whereby student teachers arrive for their training courses having spent thousands of hours as school children observing and evaluating professionals in action" (p. 274). Likewise, Freeman and Richards (1996) stress that novice teachers replicate classroom practices gained from apprenticeship of observation, which leads us to suggest that previous experiences with educators and the teaching context (in general) constitute a fundamental element in the construction of a prospective EFL teacher's identity. Considering this, EFL teacher's identity embraces a multifaceted process which begins to be shaped from students' passive roles as language learners and which is equally influenced later by other social, educational, and cultural settings related to formal ELT processes.

The Teacher Education Program: Incubator of EFL Teachers' Identities

This subcategory exemplifies the identity consolidation of EFL teachers resulting from their enrollment in a language teacher education program. Codes such as "initial experiences in the undergraduate program," "experiences with classmates and professors," and "ELT in situ" strengthen the notion of preservice education programs as seedbeds for their initial teacher professional identity construction.

> At the beginning, I did not see myself as a teacher. I saw myself only as someone who was learning EFL. (Julio, Oral Narrative 1)

> At first, I was not fully aware of my future as a teacher. (Daniela, Oral Narrative 1)

> Having [name-of-teacher] as my first professor in the teacher education program motivated me because I saw in her a successful woman, who was teaching English at a university. I wanted to be like her. I think that the professor's image was beneficial to my formation and made me feel more secure about my decision about the program. (Angela, Narrative Interview 1)

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2   Excerpts have been translated from Spanish.

Although participants did not see themselves initially as teachers, most experiences they had as university students did change this perspective, and cemented their own teaching images, which means that undergraduate programs represent adequate scenarios for preservice teacher identities to emerge because of their academic, social, and pedagogical dimensions (Pianta et al., 2012; Vermunt, 2014). Although the academic and social dimensions play a determining factor in the initial consolidation of teachers' identity, in-situ teaching experiences and exchange encounters also triggered these formation processes, as seen in the following excerpt:

> We had to make class observations for the university. All of them were oriented by the teachers. There was an objective behind each observation. Also, we had to reflect upon what we had seen. After this, we analyzed the methodology employed by the teacher, the thematic unit, and the objectives of the class. Then, you had to create a class, I mean some short classes for a period of time before the teaching practicum. . . . Now that I recall having been in [the US], having listened to varied accents, and having learned different vocabulary, I consider it fundamental for the development of language educators. I was not the same before and after that trip. (Julio, Narrative Interview 1)

As evidenced previously, Julio suggests that his first approximations to language teaching allowed him to put into practice certain methodological procedures, which gave him the opportunity to reflect and work on what he had studied. Following Wenger's (1999) view, identity formation "begins when it takes place in the doing" (p. 3), which indicates that in-situ experiences provide student teachers with valuable approximations to the teaching field, thus forging views on methodologies and approaches as well as the decision-making behind a class. Additionally, Julio suggests that his identity changed after a trip to the US. In this regard, authors such as Medina et al. (2015) and Martinsen (2011) have noted

that multicultural and traveling abroad experiences are essential for student teachers' preparation because these foster a more positive attitude toward language learning and teaching.

Deployment of Teaching Identities: An Endless Path Towards Professionalization

We found that participants faced other circumstances after finishing the undergraduate program. Being in shock with reality and implementing context-sensitive teaching practices were some of the most reported situations.

> The first formal job I had as an EFL teacher was at a private institution. It was a very small private school located in the city of Neiva. I had to teach third, fourth, and fifth graders. In fifth grade there were 15 students. In fourth grade there were nine students. Student population was small. I remember that the kids learned very fast. (Julio, Narrative Interview 2)

> When I began to teach, I implemented strategies such as designing posters and using stickers in order to keep classroom management. I implemented this strategy mainly with preschoolers and first graders. At the beginning, I used sad and happy faces; however, after some time, I began to use only happy faces with the students, and I noticed that this worked much better than using sad faces. (Daniela, Narrative Interview 2)

The participating teachers suggest that the experiences they underwent in their respective jobs allowed them to rely on classroom management strategies along with more situated practices. They remark that these actions were beneficial for the development of their teacher identity. Concerning this, Castañeda-Trujillo and Aguirre-Hernández (2018) have suggested that the teaching practicum helps student-teachers develop a more sensitive understanding of their own classroom. Regarding teacher's reality shock, Bridges (1980, as cited in Caires et al., 2009, p. 17) describes entering the profession as a "normal process of disorientation and

reorientation, which marks the turning point in the direction of growth." Consequently, teachers' adaptability and renegotiation of their teaching practices gains importance in the ongoing construction of their identity as EFL educators.

Equally important, participants expressed becoming aware of the need for continuous professionalization and provided distinct characterizations of themselves as EFL teachers before the master's in ELT.

> I decided to do the master's program because one needs to continue gaining knowledge. Pursuing master's studies also contributes to one's professional development, living status, and life quality. . . . I was less critical about education in general. I have learned that, as a teacher, you have to show students the reality, the truth. I think that English becomes a point of reference for students; if they see a critical person in front of them, they will indirectly learn to be critical and generate social awareness. (Daniela, Narrative Interview 2)

> I consider I was a less confident teacher. I was also less reflexive. Before, I could get frustrated much more easily as preconceptions created in my time as a university student did not allow me to see other things. (Angela, Narrative Interview 2)

We perceived that participants had several reasons for enrolling in a master's program. Professional development opportunities along with better job chances were some of the most common among them. This is evidenced in Daniela's and Angela's comments who posit that they were less critical and reflective about education in general before their postgraduate academic experience. For Viáfara and Largo (2018), teachers' participation in master's programs is beneficial because this postgraduate experience can provide them with new methodological and instructional trends. Furthermore, the overall master's degree experience appears to have helped teachers move from what Kumaravadivelu (2003) called "the passive technician" period to what he also named as the "reflective" stage, since continuous

exposure to updated trends in the language teaching field also allowed the participating teachers to develop more critical/reflective skills in relation to their own teaching roles.

Contribution of the Master's Program in ELT to EFL Teachers' Professional Identities

This second category deals with the contributions derived from studying a master's program in ELT in relation to the identities of participating teachers. The analysis was carried out based on the information gathered from the second and third oral narratives and interviews with the participants.

Finding Value in the Other

All teachers underscored the inherent value of their interactions with other classmates (former students of the master's program), their professors, and other professionals within the ELT community of their programs. They referred to experiences lived in different contexts, through diverse strategies and teaching practices of their colleagues. Part of this enabled them to shape their own identities as language educators and professionals. The following excerpts exemplify the aforementioned points:

> Getting to know other contexts is good as, in that way, I could notice I was not alone. There are other people facing the same difficulties as me. That experiential issue was enriching as a professional. (Julio, Narrative Interview 2)

> When I talked to my classmates, I could also see the reality they were living in their schools, what they did, and the kind of students they had. (Daniela, Narrative Interview 2)

Based on Gee's (2000) view, teachers' continuous sharing of contextual experiences influence others' identities as educators in what he calls institutional identity. This was reflected in all participants' claims as they admitted that their colleagues' experiences had

influenced them to the point that they had begun to become aware of the challenges, needs, and lessons other teachers had in their own immediate teaching contexts. Likewise, the participants referred to experiences with professors and classmates from the master's program that they found beneficial for their academic and professional growth.

> My thesis advisor was an excellent professional. She was always willing to collaborate with the simplest and with the most complex doubts I had about the project. I think having selected her as my thesis advisor was a factor of motivation to continue working on the project. (Julio, Oral Narrative 2)

> I think that sharing with the professors was fundamental regarding our teaching identity. Although the first experience with one of the professors in terms of research was kind of shocking as she was not fully aware about the context of the master's, I think that the human quality of most of the professors was high. (Fernanda, Narrative Interview 2)

The participating teachers highlighted the human quality of their professors, often reflected through cordiality and willingness to teach, and by clarifying their doubts in and out of the classroom. Although there were also a few accounts of negative situations with some of them, all experiences draw on the impact that such events generated on the participants' motivation and learning attitudes. Positive experiences with their professors made them feel more comfortable and confident to learn, to ask questions, to participate more actively in class. On the other hand, negative experiences triggered lack of motivation and uncertainty towards the process, making them more reflective of the need for good traits and the importance of an appropriate classroom environment.

Becoming Empowered Critical Reflective Educators

Teachers claimed that they became more reflective educators, eager to take action and change the realities of their own contexts. Part of this eagerness was also promoted by the orientation received in their courses and the influence that these generated in their perceptions as language educators. Participants' insights suggest that witnessing their professors' pedagogical strategies in the classrooms led them to be actively involved in pedagogical processes at their university (as students) and in their respective workplaces (as teachers).

> Most of the courses allowed us to reflect upon our context in a more profound way. Also, they enabled us to see things we did not see before. (Angela, Narrative Interview 2)

> Some courses were related to language learning, bilingualism, how languages interact within the social dimension, and how research contributes to the development of society. Others were related to curriculum, how it works within the classroom [as well as] assessment with its components: self-assessment, peer-assessment. (Julio, Narrative Interview 2)

Participants acknowledged that the influence exerted by these courses impacted their teaching practices positively and encouraged them to design and implement new ones in their local contexts. Such implementations not only transcended traditional classroom procedures, but also equipped them with new views of their teaching realities. As suggested by Angela, although certain things had always been present, they had not been visible to them in the past. Thus, experiences of this kind made participants engage in more critically self-oriented reflections, as they could "begin to see" aspects which had never been noticed before.

A robust body of academic literature supports the idea that continuous teacher's professionalization does not only contribute to improving teaching practices, but also allows teachers to be in contact with the newest trends within the ELT field (Coldwell, 2017; Farrell, 2013; Freeman, 1989). In this case, teachers' renewed practices are prone to combine global elements with

local needs, resulting in what Kumaravadivelu (2008) called "glocalized" practices. This is especially portrayed in Julio's and Angela's data where they comment that the readings they made, along with other class related experiences, led them to analyze their own immediate contexts in light of their newly acquired knowledge.

Widening the Spectrum: Understanding Teaching From a Renewed Perspective

In addition to the aspects explained above, we found that teachers developed a renewed perspective on language teaching and research in education. They recognized themselves as agents of social change and developed other dimensions of their teaching identities. The following excerpts display "a renewed sense of teaching and the teacher persona," which presents teachers' insights on their participation in the master's programs and situations which made them change their views on teaching and their own self as educators.

> When I finished the master's program, I had more experience in terms of teaching, I had known more contexts, I had already overcome many of the difficulties I had at the beginning. Also, my level of commitment is higher. I feel that being a teacher is not only a job, but also a responsibility. (Angela, Narrative Interview 2)

> I feel as a more experienced teacher, a person with a higher level of expertise in terms of qualitative, quantitative research. Now I know how to do research, how to formulate a research question, how to contribute to my educational context, and [I have] the desire to continue growing as a professional. (Julio, Narrative Interview 3)

It is worth noticing that participants do not make distinctions between the teacher and the persona they are. Instead, they combine both elements, suggesting that the influence of the master's program impacted more than one of their identities as individuals. This goes in line with Davis's (2011) assertions, who claims that the teacher persona (understood as the role that individuals assume when they actively perform their

role as teachers in educational contexts) is directly influenced by other experiences at the social, cultural, and academic levels. In addition to this, part of the data gathered from participants denotes situations where they exteriorize their social commitment at their institutions as part of their now reinforced social consciousness.

> The teacher is also an agent of social change because you do not only teach about your subject, but you also transform your students' lives. You educate, which makes your students change their way of thinking. Teachers show other realities, things that occur in the world, things that exist, and objectives that you can achieve. (Daniela, Narrative Interview 2)

> English teachers not only teach English, but we also have an advantage over other teachers: having the capacity to read research in other languages, studies conducted in other contexts, and adapt them to our context. We have a big advantage as we work in all areas of knowledge through English and we are more receptive to difference, but we have not done enough. However, I believe that all the English teachers have the capacity to transform social realities. (Angela, Narrative Interview 2)

The previous excerpts show how participants reinforce the idea of English language teachers as agents of social change who contribute to education and social improvement in general. Indeed, participants have assumed a more critical-reflective position, where social related issues have gained relevance from their teaching perspective. They have moved from what Kumaravadivelu (2003) called "the reflective practitioner" to what he later came to call "teachers as transformative intellectuals." Interestingly, teachers also recognized the importance of research as an essential component in education.

> Doing research within the master's was a very complex and nice experience. The project allowed me to become aware of the characteristics that primary school teachers have when teaching English. Also, through this experience, I learned to be more organized. (Angela, Narrative Interview 2)

> When I come across a problem, I immediately think of how I could address it from research. (Angela, Oral Narrative 3)
>
> Doing research for me was an enriching experience because it allows you to see things differently. Gathering and analyzing the data is a very interesting process. Nowadays, I keep doing research, but with a different scope. (Fernanda, Narrative Interview 2)

In support of this analysis, Barkhuizen (2016) argues that teacher's identity is a fluid and negotiated complex process which is constantly evolving based on varied experiences. Thus, participation in academic contexts becomes crucial to widen teachers' understanding of their teaching selves as these are subject to be reshaped based on their immediate academic lessons (as students and with their own students; Barkhuizen, 2017; Danielewicz, 2014). Opportunities given by the master's program in ELT and by the participants' own working settings set a pathway for them to explore and understand language methodologies, research interests, and educational theories.

Conclusions

Firstly, the study shows that early educational experiences allowed teachers to recognize and develop similar behaviors to those of their previous teachers. However, as they gained more experience, they were able to detach from these practices to develop their own (authentic) pedagogical philosophies. Thus, providing constant exposure to teaching opportunities, methodologies, and procedures is essential for the initial teacher's identity construction. Likewise, we established that, although constant exposure to academic experiences played a fundamental role in LTI's initial construction process, sociocultural and community-based involvement permeated other dimensions of the participants' teaching selves. In view of this, examining these elements inside and outside formal and informal contexts, and the relation these

play in connection with LTI construction, is an aspect that deserves more attention.

Another conclusion is that although the participants believed their education at the level of undergraduate level did not contribute to generate a profound understanding of English teaching among indigenous and vulnerable communities, the MA in ELT provided them with new scenarios to share and reflect upon professional experiences, constituting therefore a turning conceptual shift by means of constant debates, exchange of ideas, mini-talks, paper discussions, and oral presentations. Hence, continuous exposure to socio-academic experiences was one of the most remarkable aspects that exerted greater influence on their identities.

Finally, the study also demonstrated that the participants' level of reflection increased based on their participation in the master's. This was portrayed in several instances (especially in the second and third oral narratives and narrative interviews) where participants manifested having learned about new trends within the ELT field, which subsequently triggered their interest in continuing learning about these elements to combine them with their own practices.

Implications for Further Research

This study sets the ground for other researchers to explore changes in teachers' perceptions concerning the adoption and implementation of bilingual policies in Colombia, the construction of critical-reflexive perspectives towards language teaching, the understanding of interculturality and multimodality, and the promotion of professional development programs in other school contexts. These themes are paramount to develop a better understanding of the ongoing identity construction we all face in our teaching careers, the role played by postgraduate education in the consolidation of our teaching practices, and the pedagogical contributions that these programs provide to the teaching community in general.

In this line of thought, we would like to end by inviting other researchers to delve into the contributions in EFL teachers' professional development process resulting from their participation in doctoral programs. We think the reasons that motivate EFL students to become language educators are also worth exploring. Studying these realities can give us a better outlook of an individual's identity consolidation prior to or after becoming an educator.

To sum up, the implementation of this research project evidenced that teacher identity is not a fixed element, since continuous exposure to classroom experiences and social and academic interaction (Cooper & Olson, 1996) enrich teachers' ongoing negotiating identities (Barkhuizen, 2016). Thus, much more research needs to be done at the level of this area of knowledge as there are teacher identity dimensions which remain unexplored.

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The Factors Contributing to Language Teachers' Effectiveness in an EFL Learning Context: A Questionnaire Validation Study

Factores que contribuyen a la eficacia de los docentes de idiomas en un contexto de aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera: estudio de validación de un cuestionario

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This mixed-methods study explores the factors contributing to the language teachers' effectiveness in the context of English as a foreign language. Through a systematic review of the literature, six main factors were extracted: assessment literacy, content and pedagogical content knowledge, experience, oral proficiency, personality type, and self-efficacy. In the first phase of the study, 13 experts in the field shared their attitudes towards these factors through a semi-structured interview. The data obtained from the interviews was analysed thematically to develop a questionnaire. Ninety-three language teachers participated in a pilot study to validate the newly developed questionnaire. The results were factor analysed. After the required modifications based on the factor analysis were introduced, a questionnaire with 19 items entitled "EFL Language Teachers' Effectiveness" was developed.

Keywords: assessment literacy, content and pedagogical content knowledge, effectiveness, EFL teachers, experience, oral proficiency, personality type, self-efficacy

Este estudio de diseño mixto explora los factores que contribuyen a la eficacia de los docentes de idiomas en un contexto de aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera. De una revisión sistemática de la bibliografía, se extrajeron seis factores principales: conocimientos en evaluación, conocimiento del contenido y del contenido pedagógico, experiencia, competencia oral, personalidad y autoeficacia. En la primera fase del estudio, trece expertos opinaron sobre estos factores en una entrevista semiestructurada. Los datos de las entrevistas se analizaron temáticamente para desarrollar un cuestionario que fue validado en un estudio piloto con 93 docentes. Después de las modificaciones necesarias, basadas en el análisis factorial de los resultados, se diseñó un cuestionario con 19 ítems titulado "Eficacia de los docentes de inglés".

Palabras clave: autoeficacia, competencia oral, conocimiento del contenido y del contenido pedagógico, conocimientos en evaluación, docentes de inglés, eficacia, experiencia, personalidad

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Introduction

Due to the essential role of language teachers in the teaching profession, researchers have focused on the crucial factors that would improve their performance and, consequently, their effectiveness. Hence, it is of primary importance to identify factors contributing to language teachers' effectiveness (Pishghadam et al., 2011).

In teaching literature, the word *effectiveness* seems to lack an explicit, straightforward, and robust definition. Hunt (2009) defined effective teachers as those who can teach their learners to be good and effective citizens in the future. Galluzo (2005) defined teachers' effectiveness in relation to students' success. If we focus on foreign language teachers, as this study does, there is at least one more variable to consider: teachers' effectiveness is associated with the students' competence in the foreign language. For Galluzo, teachers' effectiveness plays a significant role in the students' academic achievement and linguistic performance. He argues that effective teachers finish a course where the majority of students succeed in achieving the course's goals. Therefore, the course's objectives are important, and teachers' effectiveness may vary in different courses and contexts and from one objective to another.

Therefore, exploring the characteristics of teacher effectiveness is essential for improving the quality and productivity of foreign language teacher's training courses. Hence, the present study investigates the factors contributing to language teachers' effectiveness in improving teacher's training courses, leading to successful language learning programmes.

Literature Review

To date, researchers have investigated teacher's effectiveness from different perspectives to shed light on the factors which play a key role in promoting teachers' productivity and efficiency. Zamani and Ahangari (2016) defined effectiveness as what is perceived by a language learner in an English as a foreign language (EFL) context. Their definition focuses primarily on the quality and kind of relationship that teachers have with language learners. Furthermore, they concluded that effectiveness helps teachers have discipline in their classrooms, which is a fundamental aspect of teachers' effectiveness. According to their study, discipline and the teacher–learner relationship come to the fore when investigating language teachers' effectiveness. Similar research has been done on effectiveness, but none has provided a comprehensive definition of the construct that would involve all its contributing factors (e.g., Mitchell & Bradshaw, 2013; Pane, 2010).

Liakopoulou (2011) sees a good teacher as someone who is effective in how he or she teaches. She searched for the qualifications that contribute to a good teaching; however, she rightly argued that an explicit definition of a good and effective teacher is neither possible nor desirable because, essentially, it varies from one context to another. One of the factors that she mentioned, and which was absent in other studies, was the teachers' experience. She claimed that experience could facilitate, to a large extent, their task and guarantee their effectiveness. Goodwin et al. (2019) acknowledged the importance of experience in language teachers' effectiveness. However, in a longitudinal study, they concluded that experience and its effect on teachers' performance were more significant in the first years of teaching. Afterwards, its significance decreases in an unprecedented scale. However, they found that language learners favour experienced teachers, and, in many situations, they see experienced teachers as the most effective ones.

An issue closely related to language teachers' effectiveness is their assessment literacy and practice. Language teachers' assessment literacy has recently received much attention (for a recent comprehensive review, see Coombe et al., 2020; Giraldo, 2021; Levi & Inbar-Lourie, 2020; Vogt et al., 2020). In a recent study, Kremmel and Harding (2020) highlighted the need for promoting language teachers' assessment literacy. They also emphasised the need for further research in this field. Hao and Johnson (2013) investigated the relation-

ship between the teachers' use of different classroom assessment types (such as multiple questions, short answers, and paragraph writing) and oral communication across several classes in different countries. They observed that teachers' assessment literacy helps them provide their class with an appropriate assessment frame that suits their objectives. Thus, their interpretation of the learners' performance may be more valid in their evaluation of learners. More precisely, it seems that the teachers' experience and education affect their assessment literacy and, consequently, their effectiveness (Asl et al., 2014).

When it comes to teacher's effectiveness, content and pedagogical content knowledge is another issue that should not be neglected. Shulman (1987) first discussed pedagogical content knowledge and asserted that teachers needed to have curricular knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, subject matter knowledge, knowledge of students, knowledge of the school, and pedagogical content knowledge. Since then, many researchers have investigated these factors in various teaching contexts to develop measurement instruments (e.g., Han-Tosunoglu & Lederman, 2021). Three decades after Shulman's seminal study, Grieser and Hendricks (2018) defined pedagogical content knowledge considering two subcategories: in-field and out-of-the-field pedagogical content knowledge. Out-of-the-field pedagogical content knowledge is when teachers' preparation does not correspond to their teaching assignments. To have pedagogical content knowledge, teachers should be aware of the context and social norms that may contribute to the topic and to the subject matter they teach (Liakopoulou, 2011).

The construct of experience and its effect on students' achievement has been examined in different contexts. However, considering experience as one of the effective teachers' features is controversial. Harris and Sass (2011) studied the various types of teacher's training courses and their productivity in promoting teachers' effectiveness and students' achievement. In their study, they equated teachers' effectiveness with their productivity. The result of their study revealed that pre-service and in-service teachers' productivity increases with experience; interestingly enough, it was observed that the increase was significant in the first few years.

Chambless (2012) claimed that many teachers whose content knowledge was sufficient were experts in the subject matter. However, their oral proficiency and their expertise in the content area were not evaluated, and this may affect the way that language learners welcome teachers. Therefore, it goes without saying that the teachers' speaking skills is what makes the first impression on language learners. In a recent study, Faez et al. (2019) conducted a meta-analysis to examine the potential relationship between language proficiency and teaching ability. They observed a moderate relationship between language proficiency and teaching self-efficacy. Therefore, they concluded that self-efficacy should not be limited to the teachers' language proficiency.

Moreover, the teachers' personality in the classrooms has been considered a critical factor for success in their work (Santilli et al., 2011). To date, different subcategories of teachers' personality have been studied (e.g., Akyıldız & Çelik, 2020; Li & Li, 2019; Oryan & Ravid, 2019; Sato, 2020).

Self-efficacy is another factor contributing to language teachers' effectiveness, which has been extensively investigated in recent years (e.g., Choi & Lee, 2016; Moradkhani et al., 2017). As Wang and Sun (2020) rightly highlighted, since Bandura's publication on self-efficacy in 1977, we have witnessed a growing body of research in this field. According to the research to date, self-efficacy is distinguished from teachers' effectiveness, for self-efficacy is defined as the beliefs teachers hold about themselves. Therefore, it may be considered as a subcategory of language teachers' effectiveness. The research findings support the pivotal importance of self-efficacy in teachers' effectiveness (e.g., Hoang & Wyatt, 2021; Thompson, 2020; Thompson & Dooley, 2019; Thompson & Woodman, 2019).

The Study

As the literature indicates, language teachers' effectiveness has always been a controversial issue in language teaching research. This issue is more critical in EFL contexts as there are few opportunities for practicing new languages. Although many people who live in EFL contexts may not find any opportunity to use English or any other foreign language, they are still willing to learn them. Due to an increase in the willingness to learn new languages, especially English, institutes and educational systems are looking for effective language teachers. They welcome teachers who can be categorised as successful and effective by their institutes (Noorbakhsh et al., 2018). That is why this study aims to explore language teachers' effectiveness in an EFL context (Iran). We hope this study's findings may shed light on the importance of effective language teachers in such contexts and how they are evaluated as effective. To this end, the following research question guided this study: What are the factors contributing to language teachers' effectiveness in the Iranian language learning context?

Method

The present study was a mixed-methods study aimed at exploring the factors contributing to foreign language teachers' effectiveness. The study was conducted in two phases. The first phase employed qualitative methods (theme analysis and interviews), and the second phase used a quantitative method (factor analysis) to answer the study's research question.

Participants

In the first phase of the study, directed at extracting and verifying the factors contributing to teacher effectiveness, 13 EFL lecturers, as experts in applied linguistics, participated in this research project (one woman and 12 men). They were required to have a PhD, to have graduated from state universities and have at least three years of teaching experience at universities. These lecturers came from four state universities in Iran. They were considered experienced lecturers for their teaching experience at universities ranged from 5 to 40 years.

In the second phase of the study, which validated a teacher's effectiveness questionnaire, 93 EFL teachers participated, ranging in age from 20 to 45 years. About 26.9% were men, and the rest were women. All of them had academic English degrees and were teaching in private-sector language institutes. Seventeen participants held a BA in English, and 76 held an MA in English language teaching. They were asked to report their years of experience in language teaching in institutes. The majority had less than five years of experience (about 34.4%). Twenty-nine per cent had between five to eight years of experience, 25.8% between nine to 12 years, less than 6% between 13 to 16 years, about 2% between 17 to 20 years, and the rest (around 2%) more than 20 years. They took part in the study through an online questionnaire shared in specialised groups on different social media outlets, namely Telegram and WhatsApp.

Procedure

Relevant Studies

The first instrument used to identify the factors contributing to language teachers' effectiveness was the relevant studies. We tried to find the most recent and relevant studies published in the refereed journals in the field. The studies were reviewed and subjected to thematic analysis to extract the items related to the language teachers' effectiveness to be judged by the experts.

Expert Questionnaire (Semi-Structured Interview)

Based on the thematic analysis of the literature review, 40 items were developed to be rated by the experts. These 40 items included statements about language teachers' effectiveness. The constructs underlying this questionnaire (see Appendix A) were labelled as assessment literacy (Items 6, 12, 20, 24, 27, 29, 35),

content and pedagogical knowledge (Items 2, 9, 11, 22, 31, 34), experience (Items 1, 17, 21, 30, 33), oral proficiency (Items 3, 5, 16, 26, 28, 39), personality type (Items 7, 8, 10, 13, 14, 15, 18, 23, 25, 37, 40) and self-efficacy (Items 4, 19, 32, 36, 38). We identified the major categories and their corresponding subcategories. The participants were asked to respond on a 5-point Likert-type scale (from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*). One open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire asked the respondents to provide additional comments.

Language Teachers' Effectiveness: The First Draft Questionnaire

Based on the responses collected in the first step of the study, we came up with a 21-item questionnaire in the Likert scale format. Two new items were added: creativity, which was grouped under personality type, and first language (L1) use when considered necessary, classified as a subcategory of experience following the experts' suggestions and comments obtained from the interviews. The experts' comments and suggestions were also considered in reviewing items and their wording. Overall, 24 items were prepared at this stage. Then, the items were distributed among the English language teachers working at different institutes at this stage. The new questionnaire also included six constructs (see Appendix B). However, the number of items in each construct changed as follows: assessment literacy (Items 3, 10, 19), content and pedagogical knowledge (Items 4, 7, 15, 18), experience (Items 11, 17, 24), oral proficiency (Items 1, 2, 13, 14, 22), personality type (Items 5, 6, 8, 12, 21, 23) and self-efficacy (Items 9, 16, 20).

Results

An extensive and intensive review of the literature was conducted to extract a comprehensive list of factors contributing to language teachers' effectiveness to address the study's goal. After performing the review, six main categories were extracted (see Table 1).

Table 1. Factors Qualitatively Extracted From the Literature and From Interviews

Factors	Example Study
Assessment literacy	Teachers' assessment literacy will help teachers use more valid information about their learners to teach more effectively (Pastore & Andrade, 2019).
Content and pedagogical content knowledge	Teachers should be aware of the context and the appropriate instruments and techniques they might need for more effective and transparent lesson presentations (Liakopoulou, 2011).
Experience	The role of experience in teachers' effectiveness is more significant in the first years of teaching (Staiger & Rockoff, 2010).
Oral proficiency	Language teachers' oral proficiency is considered to be the first impression on learners. It can affect the way learners welcome a teacher (Chambless, 2012).
Personality type (subcategories: creativity, extrovert vs. introvert, discipline, gesture, flexibility)	Personality is an indivisible part of the effects that teachers have in any educational system, and it is one of the key factors in their effectiveness (Penner, 1984).
Self-efficacy	In many studies, researchers have tried to find factors contributing to teachers' self-efficacy and, therefore, to their effectiveness. For instance, the effect of the teachers' language proficiency on their self-efficacy (Choi & Lee, 2016).

After the experts rated the items presented to them, those items obtaining more than 80% agreement from experts (Items 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 13, 19, 20, 21, 25, 26, 28, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39) were selected to be included in the first draft of the questionnaire, which would be distributed to the EFL teachers. Besides these 21 items, three items were also added following the experts' suggestions and comments. They were about teachers' creativity and the L1 use in classrooms. About 10 (out of 13) experts suggested teachers' creativity be included, and eight mentioned that appropriate L1 use in language classrooms should be considered in an EFL context. In Appendix B, creativity (Items 6 and 23) and selective use of L1 (Item 24) have been added to the 21 previously extracted items. The main categories of these two items were also discussed with the experts suggesting them. Creativity was then defined as one of the subcategories of the personality type and selective use of L1 was considered one of the subcategories of experience. A Chi-square analysis was conducted to obtain the Iranian EFL teachers' attitude towards factors contributing to the effectiveness of language teachers (see Table 2).

Based on the analysis, the agreed sample adequacy is 0.6 or above. According to Table 2, sampling ade-

quacy was about 0.57, close to the one agreed upon (0.6). Regretfully, because of the situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it was impossible to collect more data during this phase. Subsequently, we decided to accept this value and continue with the study. Additionally, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity value should be 0.05 or smaller; Table 3 shows that it was .000, that is, Bartlett's test was significant, so the factor analysis was appropriate.

Table 2. The Construct Validation

Sample adequacy	Approx. Chi-Square	*df*	Sig.
.568	623.317	276	.000

Table 3. The Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	*N*
.755	24

Table 3 verifies a good level of reliability for the questionnaire. Accordingly, the reliability of the items was .775, which is acceptable. Figure 1 confirms that nine factors were above one. Therefore, it can be concluded that the nine factors were extracted. In Table 4, the item's loading factor is also provided.

Figure 1. The Scree Plot for the Item's Factor Load
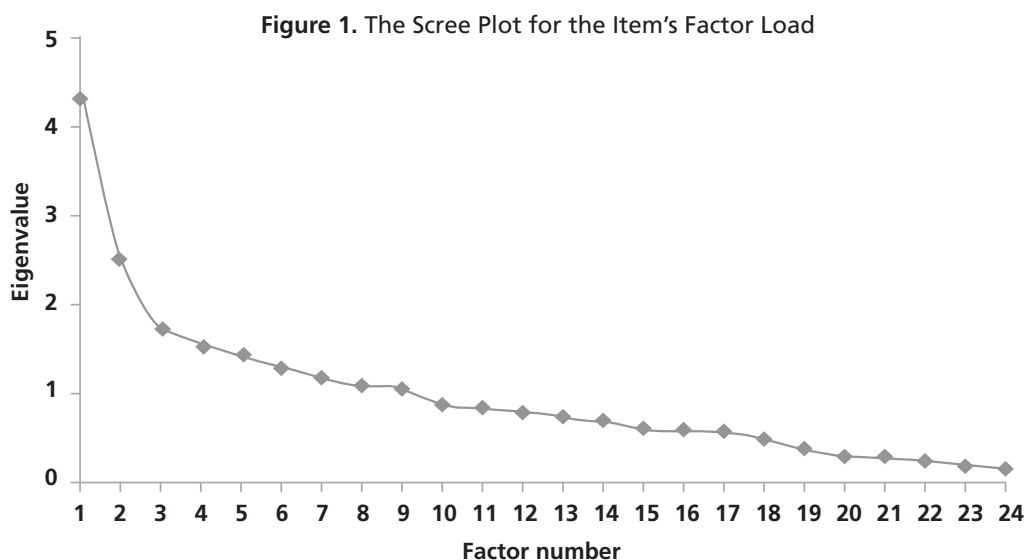
Table 4. Results From Factor Analysis of Language Teachers' Effectiveness Questionnaire

Language teachers' effectiveness items	Factor loading								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Factor 1: Oral proficiency									
1. I communicate well in English	**.34**			-.32					.33
2. I pronounce words clearly	**.69**		-.36	-.47					
13. I consider my oral proficiency as one of the first factors that impress my students	**.37**								
14. I adjust my speaking speed to the level I am teaching	**.44**	.39						.32	
22. I emphasise my oral proficiency as one of the main input tools for language learners	**.50**								
Factor 2: Personality									
5. I am punctual	-.49	**.39**							
6. I am creative in using tasks and activities	-.32	**.46**							
8. I am aware of my gestures in the classroom	-.32	**.33**							
21. I am open to using various techniques	.30	**.42**							
23. I am creative in presenting lessons	-.40	**.33**							
Factor 3: Content and pedagogical content knowledge									
4. I am prepared for questions in the content area				**.45**			-.32		
15. I know the social norms of the class where I teach				**.44**					
Factor 4: Self-efficacy									
16. I use my experience to improve my self-efficacy					**.45**				
9. I am self-confident	-.47				**.61**				
Factor 5: Experience									
11. I use my learning experience as well as my teaching experience	-.54					**.34**			
17. I use my colleagues' experience						**.33**			
Factor 6: Assessment literacy									
3. I assess my students fairly		-.39						**.32**	
10. I consider course objectives when assessing my students								**.44**	-.35
19. I use assessment results to improve classroom productivity	-.34	.30						**.32**	

The items excluded from Table 4 (Items 7, 12, 18, 20, and 24) were not found appropriate for the questionnaire. According to the results, Items 7, 12, and 18 had no loading in any factors or in any other items. Item 20 loaded negatively only in Factor 5, and Item 24 loaded in three factors, all negative. In this table, the factors and their items were confirmed. We then concluded: factor one included Items 1, 2, 13, 14, and 22 for oral proficiency. Factor two included Items 5, 6, 8, 21, and 23 for the personality type. Factor 3 was eliminated because only two items were loaded negatively (Items 4 and 15). Factors 4 and 5 included two items (9 and 16 in Factor 4; 11 and 17 in Factor 5), which measured the content and pedagogical content knowledge and self-efficacy. Factor 7 was also eliminated because only one item was loaded negatively. Factor 8 included Items 3, 10, and 19 related to assessment literacy. Item 1 loaded in Factor 9, but as it was loaded in Factor 1 and was related to the other items loaded in the same factor, it was decided to ignore it and finish the table with six factors: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 8. We finally developed the final questionnaire with 18 items (Appendix C).

Discussion

This study attempted to explore the factors contributing to language teachers' effectiveness in an EFL context and develop a questionnaire involving constructs in this definition. After developing 40 statements according to the literature review, personality type had the most items. Eleven items were included for personality type, seven for assessment literacy, six for content and pedagogical content analysis, six for oral proficiency, five for experience, and five for self-efficacy. In the following questionnaire, which included 24 items, most items pertained to personality type (personality type = 6; oral proficiency = 5; assessment literacy, experience, and self-efficacy, each got three; and content and pedagogical content knowledge = 4). According to the literature, it was expected that more items would be devoted to personality type. However,

in the final questionnaire (see Appendix C), with 18 items selected after factor analysis, the number of items for personality type and oral proficiency was the same. Each had five items. Evidently, based on the results, teachers' personality is arguably an indivisible part of teacher's effectiveness (Santilli et al., 2011).

The interesting point about personality type is that two items of creativity remained in the final questionnaire. Therefore, it confirms Li and Li's (2019) point that creativity is an essential factor for language teachers' effectiveness. It may be concluded that language learners and language institutes should look for innovative teachers regarding teaching activities and strategies. Such innovation allows teachers to be more prepared for their classroom, and to offer students attractive and motivating lessons. Otherwise, they might be considered boring teachers with no specific techniques and strategies. As Li and Li have mentioned, creative teachers can produce creative language learners; those who can think outside the box (Akyıldız & Çelik, 2020).

Oryan and Ravid (2019) see good teachers as those who are open to new methods and strategies. While developing the questionnaire, we realized that two important teaching strategies, often overlooked, have to do with the teacher's body language (gestures) and discipline management. As many researchers (Bowcher & Zhang, 2020; Fatemi et al., 2016; Sato, 2020) rightly argue, teachers' care of their gestures and nonverbal behaviour is strongly associated with their success and effectiveness. Moreover, another factor under this category is the teachers' discipline, presented as teacher's punctuality. It has benefits for students, but it also helps teachers manage their classrooms effectively (Jeloudar & Yunus, 2011). The only remaining point in teachers' discipline and personality type is the teachers being "extrovert vs. introvert." According to Fatemi et al. (2016), students favour extroverted teachers, those who show their care for students through verbal and nonverbal behaviour. However, the results showed that teachers

are not so interested in considering this aspect as part of their effectiveness. The item developed for this aspect did not obtain enough agreement to be included in the final questionnaire.

Regarding teachers' oral proficiency, and as Bateman (2008) has shown, the recent passion for developing speaking skills when learning new languages has affected attention to oral proficiency in teachers and learners. Further, Chambless (2012) has mentioned that teachers lacking oral proficiency, but being experts in the content area, may be less welcomed by language learners. This result shows a similar finding and shows that teachers are aware of the need of language learners to be proficient speakers. Oral proficiency obtained five items in the final questionnaire (the same as personality type).

The next factor with three items is assessment literacy. In the pilot phase of the questionnaire, none of its items was deleted. It shows that the respondents believe they have enough knowledge of this factor and that different approaches are vital for a language teacher's effectiveness. Considering the factors agreed upon by experts and language teachers, three aspects of assessment have been included: teachers' fairness, course objectives and mutual relationship between assessment and class productivity. According to Hao and Johnson (2013), if teachers take into consideration course objectives in their assessments, their interpretation shall be more valid, and their class productivity improved. These items have been validated in the final questionnaire. Teachers' fairness is affected by their experience (Asl et al., 2014). Due to the relationship between experience and assessment, when considering experience items in the questionnaire, we observed that using colleagues' experience and teaching and learning experience help language teachers to be fair and effective.

In the relevant literature, teaching experience was considered a controversial factor for language teachers' effectiveness. Harris and Sass (2011) hold that experience positively affects teachers' effectiveness during the first years of their profession. Henry et al. (2011) confirmed

that it derives from a sense of satisfaction that preservice language teachers feel as they obtain a wider experience during the first years of teaching. However, one point should be kept in mind. The number of years is important for a teacher to be considered experienced, and so is the number of classes and courses they have held. A teacher with two years of experience having had a maximum of six sessions per week is not the same as a teacher having the same years of experience but 18 sessions per week. We therefore decided to include teaching experience in the questionnaire, but no clear criterion regarding the number of teaching years was provided. Only Item 24 in Appendix B was eliminated after the pilot. Considering the remaining items, it may be concluded that experience and its effects are not limited to the first years of teaching. One of the items is "using colleagues' experience" because even experienced teachers may use their colleagues' experience for teaching new classes.

Content and pedagogical content knowledge, self-efficacy, and experience had the same number of items (two items each). In the literature, content knowledge and the ability to effectively present that knowledge to audiences was considered necessary. It was mentioned that teachers have many sources from which to obtain content knowledge, such as preservice training and in-service courses, to name but a few (Grieser & Hendricks, 2018). Interestingly, content and pedagogical content knowledge lost two items during the pilot phase. Since the research's target was language teachers' effectiveness, this is a point that should be further analysed. One reason for this loss may be the easy access to many sources to obtain knowledge, such as websites and educational applications. Therefore, if teachers are not sure about some aspect of language, such as idioms or similar issues that are mainly cultural, they may ask students to research them or develop a project, and even devise some tasks. Thus, we believe that easy access to content knowledge explains why this factor did not obtain many questionnaire items. However, this does not apply to knowledge of words and

grammar; they are the basis of the content knowledge that each language teacher should have.

Finally, we identified the self-efficacy factor. According to the literature review, language teachers' self-efficacy is directly and indirectly affected by many factors (Afshar et al., 2015), such as teaching experience and language proficiency. Based on Moradkhani et al. (2017), we initially decided to include one item related to the relationship between reflective thinking and self-efficacy. Item 20 in Appendix B represented this relationship, but, interestingly, this item was deleted during the pilot. This seems to show that language teachers did not see reflective thinking as an integral part of their self-efficacy and, consequently, of their effectiveness as a whole.

Conclusions

The main output of the present study was to validate a questionnaire on language teachers' effectiveness that other studies may use to address this issue in similar contexts. Furthermore, the main contribution of the present study to the growing body of research on the promotion of teacher training courses is that it develops an understanding of language teachers' effectiveness from their own point of view. This study was an attempt to make language teachers look at their effectiveness and to promote their vocation. The data collected from this study, highlighted in the literature, investigated factors related to language teachers' effectiveness and tried to categorise them into major themes. The relatively high number of items for oral proficiency shows the importance of this factor in language teaching. Oral proficiency and language teachers' ability to speak and communicate the target language well is fundamental for effectiveness. Furthermore, to be effective, a language teacher not only should be competent in one area like language usage, but also should care about personality, verbal and nonverbal behaviour, assessment literacy, self-efficacy, oral proficiency, and other factors that may be needed in the particular teaching context. In most

factors, professional experience plays a role. However, the number of years by itself cannot predict teacher's effectiveness, for it depends largely on the person's engagement. A teacher might be in this profession for a short period of time but be more committed, while another might have been teaching for a long time but is less engaged.

Primarily, this study attempted to encourage teachers to be aware of the multiple aspects effectiveness in their profession has. This study's findings can be informative and useful for language teachers and stakeholders directing institutes, teacher training courses, and teacher education programs in academia. As seen in the review of the literature, language teachers' effectiveness is a multi-faceted construct, and teachers should not improve one aspect at the cost of others. They should think about their effectiveness and try to improve their weak aspects. According to the findings of this study, it is highly recommended that teachers develop their speaking skills, as it is the one skill that leaves a lasting first impression on their learners. Meta-cognition is also recommended so that teachers are more responsible in their evaluations and consider how they affect their classrooms' productivity. Furthermore, educational institutions can use a teachers' self-evaluation to compare it with their classroom achievement results. Such comparisons may be used to improve the productivity of training programs, teachers' effectiveness, and language courses.

It is suggested that future researcher investigates the validity of our questionnaire in an array of similar and different educational contexts. We need more studies on the contextual and ecological variables that shape teachers' effectiveness. We also need mixed-methods longitudinal cross-sectional research to have a more complete and accurate picture of teachers' effectiveness in the long term. The outbreak of COVID-19 tested teachers' computer literacy as online platforms made education possible. Accordingly, this research field should also include technological pedagogical content knowledge as a variable, for it is considered a crucial

skill required from teachers who use digital technologies (Schmid et al., 2021; for a recent review, see Njiku et al., 2020). It is suggested, therefore, that researchers study foreign language teacher's effectiveness in various contexts as research in this field is still in its infancy in terms of conclusive findings.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire to Obtain Experts' Opinions

Dear Professor,

It would be appreciated if you, as an expert, participate in this data collection process for an MA thesis entitled *Language Teacher Effectiveness: Contributing Factors* (Nosrati, 2020), at Iran University of Science and Technology. Your attitudes and identity will be kept confidential.

Regards.

I. Please enter your information

Name:

Years of teaching at university:

The university you teach at:

II. You shall find 40 statements about effective language teachers. Please mark with an asterisk (*) the option that best represents your opinion regarding each statement.

	Effective language teachers should:	Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
1.	Be experienced					
2.	Have a high level of topical knowledge					
3.	Speak English well					
4.	Believe in their ability					
5.	Pronounce words appropriately					
6.	Assess students fairly					
7.	Treat students in a friendly manner					
8.	Be flexible in their discipline					
9.	Be prepared for possible questions in the content area					
10.	Be punctual					
11.	Know how to present the content					
12.	Use different methods of assessment					
13.	Be aware of their gestures in the classroom					
14.	Care for their physical appearance					
15.	Be aware of the negative and positive effects of distance between them and their students					
16.	Be a good oral proficiency model for learners					
17.	Abstain from teaching at course levels in which they have no experience					

18.	Have a sense of humour
19.	Be self-confident
20.	Consider course objectives in their assessment
21.	Use their learning experience as well as their teaching experience
22.	Know how to react when their preparation does not correspond to their teaching assignments
23.	Give regular assignments to their students
24.	Know and use different interpretation models in assessments
25.	Be motivational for language learners
26.	Work on their oral proficiency as one of the first impression factors on learners
27.	Assess all aspects of language
28.	Adapt their speech to the level of teaching
29.	Use dynamic assessments to help students learn while being assessed
30.	Increase their experience in the first years of teaching as much as possible
31.	Know the social norms of the class
32.	Use their experience to improve their self-efficacy
33.	Use their colleagues' experience
34.	Consider the context for effective lesson presentation
35.	Use assessment results as a tool for improving class productivity
36.	Practice reflective thinking to improve their self-efficacy
37.	Be open to using new and various strategies
38.	Have a high level of emotional intelligence
39.	Work on their oral proficiency as one of the main input tools for language learners
40.	Show their emotions (such as interest, enthusiasm, and anger) to students

Appendix B: Pilot Questionnaire

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
1. I communicate well in English well					
2. I pronounce words appropriately					
3. I assess students fairly					
4. I am prepared for questions in the content area					
5. I am punctual					
6. I am creative in using tasks and activities					
7. I know how to present the content					
8. I am aware of my gestures in the classroom					
9. I am self-confident					
10. I consider course objectives in my assessment					
11. I use my learning experience as well as teaching experience					
12. I can motivate students					
13. I consider my oral proficiency as one of the first factors that impress my students					
14. I adjust my speaking to the level at which I am teaching					
15. I know the social norms of the class in which I am teaching					
16. I use my experience to improve my self-efficacy					
17. I use my colleagues' experience					
18. I consider the context for effective lesson presentation					
19. I use assessment results to improve classroom productivity					
20. I practice reflective thinking to improve my self-efficacy					
21. I am open to using various teaching techniques					
22. I emphasise my oral proficiency as one of the main input tools for language learners					
23. I am creative in presenting a lesson					
24. I use the students' native language if necessary					

Appendix C: Validated Questionnaire. EFL Language Teachers' Effectiveness

Items of language teachers' effectiveness	Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
1. I communicate well in English well					
2. I pronounce words appropriately					
3. I assess students fairly					
4. I am prepared for questions on the content					
5. I am punctual					
6. I am creative in using tasks and activities					
7. I am aware of my gestures in the classroom					
8. I am self-confident					
9. I consider course objectives in my assessment					
10. I use my learning experience as well as teaching experience					
11. I emphasise my oral proficiency as one of the main tools of input for language learners					
12. I adjust my speaking to the level at which I am teaching					
13. I use my experience to improve my self-efficacy					
14. I know the social norms of my class					
15. I use my colleagues' experience					
16. I use assessment results to improve classroom productivity					
17. I am open to using various techniques					
18. I am creative in presenting lessons					

Self-Efficacy of English Language Teachers With Low and High Curriculum Literacy in Indonesian Schools

La autoeficacia de docentes de inglés con niveles de conocimiento curricular altos y bajos en escuelas de Indonesia

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This study explores the difference in self-efficacy between high school English language teachers with two levels of curriculum literacy. The data were collected using a curriculum literacy test and a self-efficacy scale that were delivered online to 251 English teachers in Indonesia. The respondents were split into two groups based on their curriculum literacy scores. The findings show that teachers with higher curriculum literacy levels were more self-efficacious than those with a lower level of curriculum literacy. This implies that curriculum related courses in preservice teacher programs need to be improved, and in-service teacher training should focus on curriculum knowledge.

Keywords: curriculum implementation, curriculum literacy, English language teachers, self-efficacy

Este estudio explora las diferencias de autoeficacia entre docentes de inglés con dos niveles de conocimiento curricular. Los datos se recolectaron a partir de una prueba de conocimiento curricular y una escala de autoeficacia que fueron distribuidas en línea a 251 docentes de inglés de secundaria en Indonesia. Los participantes se dividieron en dos grupos de acuerdo con sus puntajes de conocimiento curricular. Se encontró que los docentes con mayores niveles de conocimiento curricular son asimismo los más eficaces. Esto implica que se deben mejorar los cursos sobre el currículo en los programas de preparación inicial docente, así como dar mayor énfasis al conocimiento curricular durante la formación continua de docentes en ejercicio.

Palabras clave: autoeficacia, conocimiento curricular, docentes de inglés, implementación curricular

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Introduction

Self-efficacy is the belief held by a person that they can achieve a certain task. It influences a person's thoughts and emotions, which can affect motivation. The concept of self-efficacy was first popularized by Albert Bandura in the second half of the 20th century. It was developed based on the concept of behavioral change (Bandura, 1977). Following the establishment of a self-efficacy scale, much research involving self-efficacy was conducted in many fields (Berg & Smith, 2016). In the field of teaching, it is one of the most important factors which determines the success of teachers in motivating their students and improving their academic achievement. Research in the field of teacher education shows that teachers with high self-efficacy tend to be more committed to teaching (Wolters & Daugherty, 2007), more excited about teaching (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010), and more satisfied about their profession as teachers (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014). Research has also confirmed that self-efficacy is developed and improved during preservice training and is resistant to change in spite of negative experiences during teaching practice (Bandura, 1997). In addition, professional development has been found to also improve teachers' self-efficacy (Zonoubi et al., 2017).

Previous research has extensively explored teacher self-efficacy in relation to job satisfaction and student performance (Oliveira-Fernandez et al., 2016), teacher burnout (Fathi et al., 2021; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010), and teaching motivation (Barni et al., 2019). These studies found that self-efficacy is associated with those variables. In addition, the sources of self-efficacy have been popular subjects for research, such as mastery experience, physiological and emotional states, vicarious experience, and social persuasion (Bandura, 1997). Previous research dealt mostly with meta sources influencing self-efficacy. Among those meta sources are tutoring provided during preservice training (Clift & Brady, 2009), academic qualification and experience (Shazadi et al., 2011), personal values (Barni et al., 2019),

the quality of preservice teacher training, colleague and principal's support, mentor support, and characteristics of teaching assignments (Çapa, 2005). However, little information is available on how self-efficacy and curriculum literacy interact to help teachers perform their tasks effectively. Therefore, in this study, data on English teachers from one Indonesian province was utilized to identify whether teachers with different levels of curriculum literacy have different measurements of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy was measured in terms of teaching accomplishment, skill development in teaching, social interaction with students, parents and colleagues, and coping with stress in teaching. The results of this research could be used by teacher training institutions to develop curriculum and training for both preservice and in-service teachers. The results may also fill a gap in the literature regarding the relationship between self-efficacy and curriculum literacy.

Literature Review

Self-Efficacy and Its Dimensions

The belief of how well or poorly a person will perform a task is believed to determine whether the task is performed at all. This belief is based on the fact that "people who are aware of being able to make a difference feel good and therefore take initiatives" (Flammer, 2001, p. 13812), which is the basis for self-efficacy under the concept of social cognitive theory developed by Bandura. Self-efficacy has been used to predict personality (Kong et al., 2021), learning interest (Oppermann & Lazarides, 2021), whether a person leads a healthy lifestyle (Bektas et al., 2021), and even daily smoking intention (Wang et al., 2021). The productive use of self-efficacy to predict behavior has led to the development and validation of the self-efficacy scale (Chen et al., 2001; Nel & Boshoff, 2016). Although studies in self-efficacy and its relation to behavior and performance are abundant, gaps in the research are still present, and many studies are being conducted to fill these gaps.

The variability of self-efficacy falls on three dimensions: magnitude, strength, and generality, as originally proposed by Bandura (1977). Therefore, the measurement of self-efficacy should be based on these three dimensions (van der Bijl & Shortridge-Baggett, 2001). Magnitude, or level, represents the difficulty of the task. When a task can be done easily without it being too challenging or having too many risks, most individuals show an ability to perform the task successfully. Thus, a self-efficacy scale should be constructed to "identify the level of challenge or impediment to successful performance of the required activities" (Bandura, 1997, p. 43). The second dimension—strength—refers to the confidence of an individual to successfully perform a task. According to Bong (1997), people with a lack of confidence due to low-perceived competence are more likely to withdraw from a task. Finally, generality refers to "the extent to which magnitude and strength beliefs generalize across tasks and situations" (Chen et al., 2001, p. 63). A developed sense of self-efficacy to perform a certain task results in strong self-efficacy toward other related tasks due to a feeling of mastery over the original task. This experience may also affect self-efficacy towards less related tasks (Bandura, 1977).

Teacher Self-Efficacy

Teacher self-efficacy relates to how much teachers believe in their competence as teachers (Perera & John, 2020). This belief influences a teacher's behavior in how well they perform their teaching duties (Van Gasse et al., 2020). The significance of teacher self-efficacy is also reflected in their attitudes toward approaching problems that the students may have. Teachers with negative self-efficacy have a higher level of motivation depletion, burnout, and stress (Fathi et al., 2021). They also tend to report more student problems (Caprara et al., 2003) and are skeptical about their students' success in learning (Bandura, 1997). Meanwhile, teachers with positive self-efficacy tend to use more teaching methods to address students' learning problems (Riggs & Enochs, 1990) and

are more tolerant of students' negative behavior (Zee & Koomen, 2016), and consider that they, as teachers, contribute to a student's failure in learning (Woodcock et al., 2019). Thus, students taught by teachers with positive self-efficacy tend to have more motivation to learn (Burić & Kim, 2020) and better academic achievement (Caprara et al., 2006). The use of innovative teaching methods in the classroom by self-efficacious teachers has been found to positively influence student self-efficacy, which also increases their motivation and learning achievements (Boroumand et al., 2021).

Previous research has explored the factors which positively influence self-efficacy among teachers, and the findings seem to be uniform. Preservice teacher training, such as university education, was found to be the most influential factor, and self-efficacy was shown to improve significantly during these programs (Gurvitch & Metzler, 2009; Malmberg & Hagger, 2009). However, short-term professional development training also improves the self-efficacy of elementary and secondary school English teachers (Lee & Davis, 2020). Research also reported that the self-efficacy of practicing teachers is higher than that of preservice teachers. The improvement of self-efficacy at this stage is caused by the development of knowledge related to teaching and teaching experience. In fact, an analysis conducted by Lauermann and König (2016) showed that in-service teachers' pedagogical knowledge is significantly correlated to their self-efficacy. In the field of language teaching, a teacher's English proficiency level is positively correlated to their self-efficacy both when English proficiency is self-reported (Ghasemboland & Hashim, 2013; Hoang & Wyatt, 2021; Yilmaz, 2011) and when tested using a standardized test (Sabokrouh, 2013).

Self-efficacy is measured using a self-efficacy scale based on the theory of social cognition (Bandura, 1977). The construction of this scale is based on the construct of efficacy expectations, which are "performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal" (Bandura, 1977, 1997). The general self-efficacy scale, as used by Schwarzer and Jerusalem

(1995), is flexible and can be adjusted to a specific situation. A more general teacher self-efficacy scale has been constructed through adaptation and consists of 10 items (Schwarzer et al., 1999). A more detailed scale is the 24-item Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale designed and validated by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001). A more recent scale is the Norwegian Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale, which consists of 24-items and was developed and pilot-tested by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007). All of these scales use the Likert scale with points between 4 and 6. In this study, a 10-item scale was used to compare the teachers' curriculum literacy.

Curriculum Literacy

The term *curriculum literacy* or curriculum knowledge refers to the understanding of the concepts of a particular curriculum (Steiner et al., 2018). It is independent of pedagogical content knowledge (Hashweh, 2005) but is a part of overall pedagogical knowledge. This subcomponent of pedagogical knowledge is a very significant factor which contributes to the success of curriculum implementation (Sural & Dedebali, 2018). Previous studies have revealed that the implementations of curriculum in India, Pakistan, and Argentina were limited because of teachers' lack of knowledge of the implemented curriculum concept (Ali & Baig, 2012; Carrera et al., 2003). Teachers who have low curriculum literacy have also been found to be more conservative with regards to new curriculum and chose to continue using the old curriculum instead (Carrera et al., 2003).

Knowledge significant to implementation of the curriculum includes: (a) general knowledge regarding the implemented curriculum (Mandukwini, 2016), (b) standard of content, (c) standard of process, and (d) standard of assessment specified by the curriculum (Gani & Mahjaty, 2017). General knowledge of the curriculum includes the general concept of curriculum and the concept which underlies the establishment of the target curriculum (Su, 2012). Standard of content is the scope of the materials to be taught and the level of knowledge of the materials to be achieved by the students (Shulman, 1986b). The standard of process is the approach used to deliver the materials. An example of this would be the scientific approach, which comprises the stages of observation, questioning, data collection, associating, and communicating (Gani & Mahjaty, 2017). This standard also includes the knowledge of how to design lesson plans that cover the content area, as well as how to format the lesson plans. The standard of assessment determines how the standard of content is assessed, such as through authentic assessment (Lund & Tannehill, 2014). The general concept of a curriculum is learned during the preservice teacher training program, and it is during this training that teachers are also equipped with comprehensive knowledge of the latest curriculum (Osamwonyi, 2016). Other knowledge is received through curriculum socialization and training prior to and during the implementation of the curriculum (Mandukwini, 2016).

The Present Study

This research aims to find scientific evidence to prove whether teacher self-efficacy is significantly different between teachers with differing levels of curriculum literacy. Four major areas of expected job skills within the teaching profession, as appeared in Schwarzer and Hallum (2008), were used as the framework for this research. This study focused on the self-efficacy dimension of strength, which is defined as the belief that a task with a certain difficulty level can be performed successfully (Chen et al., 2001), as suggested in Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995). Those areas include (a) job accomplishment, (b) skill development on the job, (c) social interaction with students, parents, and colleagues, and (d) coping with job stress (Schmitz, 1998).

Job accomplishment is associated with dealing with difficult students because it poses the greatest challenge in a teaching profession. In addition, teachers are expected to be innovative in their teaching approach, and such

innovations are sometimes met with disapproval by skeptical colleagues. Teachers need to be able to motivate themselves in order to develop their skills regardless of constraints. The third skill, social interactions, is the fundamental basis of teaching. Social interactions in the educational context do not only involve students, but they also include colleagues and students' parents. Finally, the profession also expects that teachers deal with work difficulties in a stress-free manner to create a learning-conducive experience for the students.

Method

We used a quantitative method to answer the research question, and data were analyzed using inferential statistics for hypothesis testing. The data were displayed to show descriptive statistics in order to provide a general overview of data characteristics prior to further statistical analysis.

Instruments

This research utilized two instruments: a test of the teachers' knowledge of the currently implemented curriculum in Indonesia and a teacher self-efficacy scale. The test was designed to include a general concept of the curriculum, a standard of content, standards of process, and a standard of assessment in the curriculum. The test

consisted of 55 questions in the form of a four-option multiple choice test with one correct answer. The test was piloted to 25 teachers. The test was revised considering the item difficulty index, the discrimination index, and the distractor analysis. The revised version of the test achieved an internal consistency of 0.71, which was calculated using Cronbach Alpha at a significance level of 0.05. The teacher self-efficacy scale—taken from Schwarzer et al. (1999)—consists of 10 items. It uses the four-point Likert scale, which ranges between *exactly true* (4) and *not true at all* (1). The scale covers four major areas: job accomplishment, skill development, social interaction, and coping with job stress.

Participants

The target participants for this research were 1,000 high school English teachers (about 50% of all high school English teachers) from Aceh, the westernmost province of Indonesia. The participants who completed the test were 288 (29% of the target participants), and 380 (38%) target participants completed the self-efficacy scale. Twenty-five percent of the target population (251 participants) completed both assessments: 216 women (86%) and 35 men (14%). The detailed figures for each region of the province are presented in Table 1, and the CONSORT participant flowchart in Figure 1.

Table 1. Distribution of the Participants Who Completed Both Assessments (*N* = 251)

Level	Men	Women
Eastern region		
Senior high school	3 (7%)	40 (93%)
Junior high school	5 (11%)	47 (89%)
Central region		
Senior high school	9 (25%)	27 (75%)
Junior high school	0	9 (100%)
Western region		
Senior high school	9 (11%)	73 (89%)
Junior high school	9 (31%)	20 (69%)

Figure 1. CONSORT Participant Flowchart
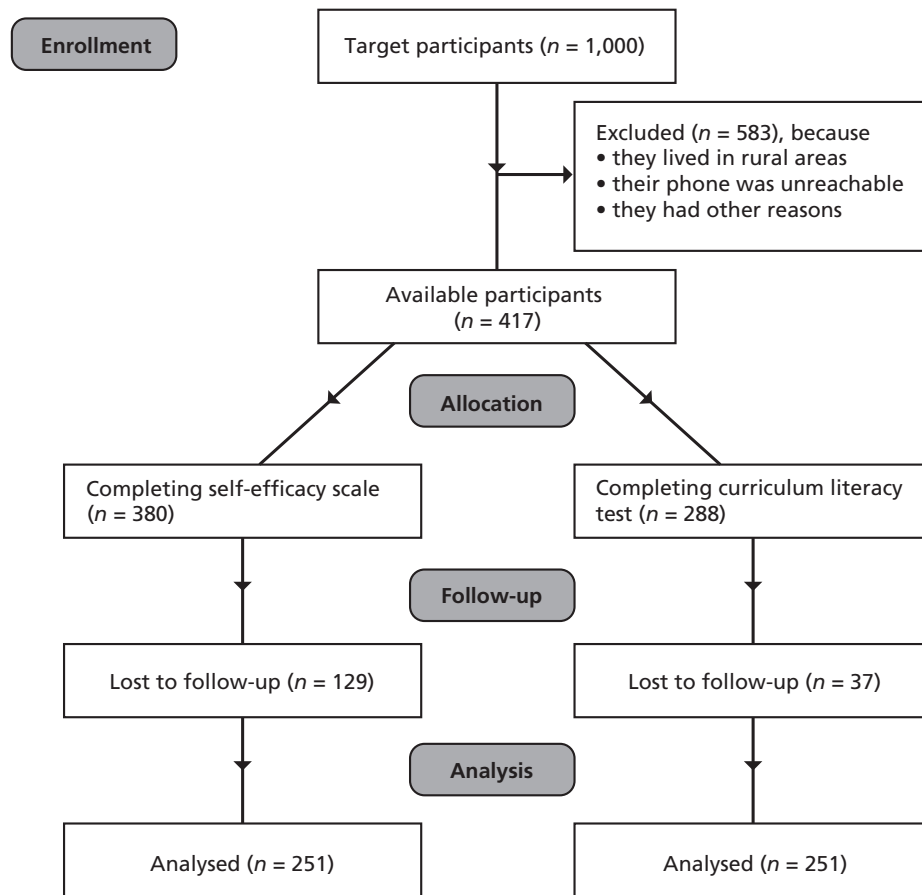
Data Collection

The self-efficacy scale was delivered via Google Forms to the target participants through the head of a teacher forum, which is similar to a district-level teacher association, in each district and municipality. The teachers were informed that the test and self-efficacy scale would both be used for the research purpose. Only those teachers who agreed to participate ($N = 251$) were allowed to complete each instrument. The self-efficacy scale was delivered prior to the test because it is easier and does not take much time to complete. This was done because it was expected that more teachers would complete the self-efficacy scale than the test. The teachers were given three weeks to complete the self-efficacy scale. In the next step, the same procedure was followed to distribute the curriculum literacy test. Teachers were able to view their scores upon completing the test. The questionnaire was distributed online because the research was conducted during the COVID-19 outbreak when travel restrictions and social distancing policies were being enforced in the province. This also made it less likely that teachers consulted one another on completing either the self-efficacy scale or the curriculum literacy test due to the work-from-home rule set by the Education Department in Indonesia.

Data Analysis

To test the hypothesis, we utilized inferential statistical analysis. The analysis was divided into two steps. First,

the data were split into two categories: the first category was based on the median, where the participants were split into a lower group consisting of participants whose curriculum literacy was lower than the median, and a higher group for participants with curriculum literacy higher than the median. Thus, 106 participants were allotted to the higher curriculum literacy group and 120 to the lower curriculum literacy group. Participants with a score similar to the median were removed (25 participants, approximately 1% of the total participants), and they serve as a gap between the higher and lower group. The second category was based on the quartiles Q1 and Q3, to give a wider gap between the lower and higher groups. The lower group consisted of participants with a score lower than the first quartile (Min. to Q1) and the higher group comprised of participants with a score higher than the third quartile (Q3 to Max.). The gap between the higher and lower curriculum literacy groups was wider in this category, with 45% of the participants curriculum literacy scores being higher than the lower group but lower than the higher counterpart. Using both group categories allowed for a more confident interpretation and conclusion. Further group splitting was not possible due to small sample sizes in both groups, which would prevent inferential statistical analysis.

In the second step, the self-efficacy of teachers in the lower group was compared to that of the higher group. The analyses were repeated for each group category. Because the data were categorical, the Mann Whitney U test was used. The hypothesis was set to be rejected at the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis that self-efficacy of teachers with lower curriculum literacy is significantly different from self-efficacy of teachers with higher curriculum literacy is accepted if the *p*-value is lower than 0.05. However, a *p*-value of higher than 0.05 was considered and interpreted with caution.

In addition to calculating the *p*-value for each category, effect size was also calculated by computing the value of the correlation coefficient *r*. Effect size is commonly defined as "the size of an effect in a population" (Privitera, 2018, p. 523), which provides information on how meaningful the difference provided by the *p*-value is. Unlike *p*-value, effect size is much less influenced by sample size (Fan & Konold, 2010). We used the following formula to calculate the effect size for the Mann Whitney U test, as suggested by Tomczak and Tomczak (2014).

$$r = \frac{Z}{\sqrt{n}}$$

In the formula, *Z* refers to the *Z*-score obtained from the Mann Whitney calculation, and *n* is the sample size.

Findings

The objective of this research was to find out whether self-efficacy levels were different between teachers with higher and lower curriculum literacy. The data analyses were divided into two steps, namely, descriptive analysis and inferential analysis.

Curriculum Literacy Scores

The test was completed by 288 teachers, but scores from 37 teachers were removed because they did not complete the teacher self-efficacy scale. The scores obtained by the 251 teachers are visualized in Figure 2.

Figure 2 shows that the data were evenly distributed, where the number of participants who obtained a lower score were approximately similar to those who obtained higher scores. The density line (curved line) is plotted to show the distribution of the data. The median of the data was 52.72 out of 100. For the purpose of the first analysis, the participants were split using the median as the cutoff point, which resulted in 120 participants with lower curriculum literacy and 106 participants with higher curriculum literacy. In the second analysis, the participants were divided into two groups where the first group consisted of teachers whose scores were lower than 70% of all teachers (54 teachers) and the second group consisted of teachers whose scores were higher than 75% of all teachers (58 teachers).

Figure 2. Scores of the Curriculum Literacy Test
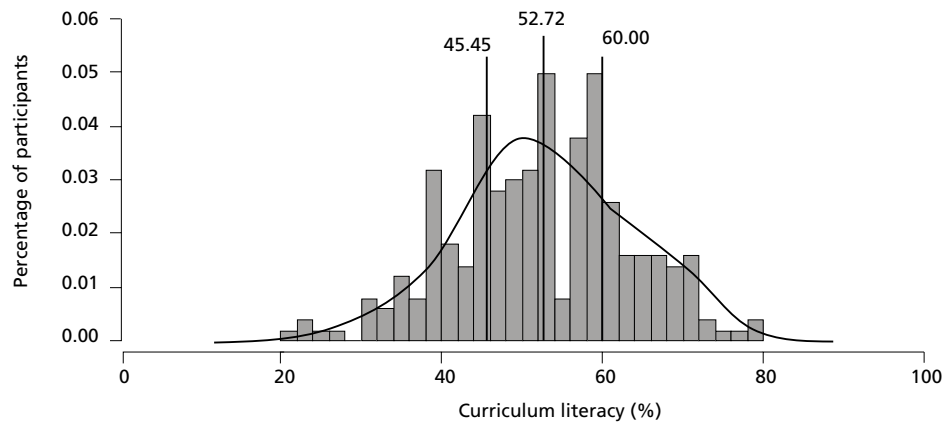
Figure 3. Self-Efficacy of Teachers in Four Curriculum Literacy Groups
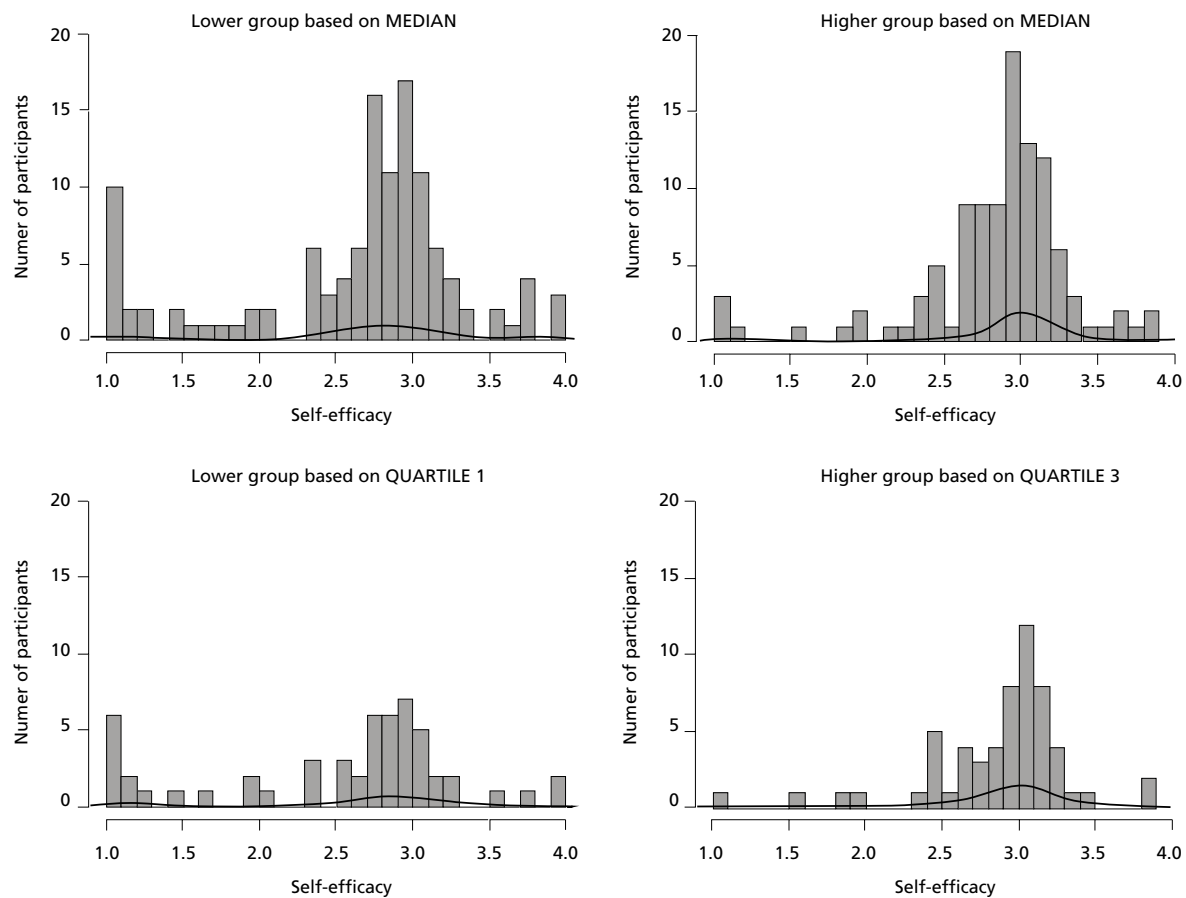
Teacher Self-Efficacy

There were 380 teachers who completed the self-efficacy scale, more than those who completed the curriculum literacy test. Therefore, the scores from 129 participants (34%) were eliminated due to their absence from the curriculum literacy test. The participants were then split based on the median and quartiles of their curriculum literacy scores. The self-efficacy of all groups is illustrated in Figure 3.

The bar charts and density lines in Figure 3 show that the self-efficacy of teachers with higher curriculum literacy is more populated to the right compared to that of teachers with lower curriculum literacy. The detailed description of self-efficacy of both teacher groups based on both categories is presented in Table 2. The description covers five-number summary and standard deviation.

Table 2 shows that the means of self-efficacy between the lower group and the higher group based on both median and quartile were different. Table 3 presents the same information for each job skill related to the teaching profession.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Self-Efficacy of Teachers in Two Curriculum Literacy Groups

Test	n	Min.	Q1	Med.	Q3	Max.	Mean	sd
Based on median								
Lower group	120	1.00	2.48	2.90	3.10	4.00	2.68	0.74
Higher group	106	1.00	2.73	3.00	3.20	3.90	2.89	0.53
Based on quartile								
Lower group	54	1.00	2.17	2.80	3.00	4.00	2.57	0.81
Higher group	58	1.00	2.73	3.00	3.20	3.90	2.92	0.48

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Each Part of Teacher Self-Efficacy in Two Curriculum Literacy Groups

Test	n	Min.	Q1	Med.	Q3	Max.	Mean	sd
Based on median								
Lower group JA	120	1.27	2.31	2.76	2.76	4.00	2.44	0.57
Higher group JA	106	1.00	2.32	2.76	2.80	4.00	2.57	0.50
Lower group SD	120	1.91	2.98	3.41	3.41	3.89	3.08	0.59
Higher group SD	106	1.91	2.98	3.41	3.41	3.89	3.22	0.46
Lower group SI	120	1.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	2.74	0.91
Higher group SI	106	1.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	2.91	0.63
Lower group CJS	120	1.37	2.80	3.01	3.01	3.85	2.80	0.65
Higher group CJS	106	1.37	2.89	3.01	3.01	3.85	2.94	0.50
Based on quartile								
Lower group JA	54	1.27	2.00	2.32	2.76	3.27	2.35	0.61
Higher group JA	58	1.00	2.33	2.76	2.81	4.00	2.58	0.51
Lower group SD	54	1.91	2.98	3.41	3.41	3.89	3.01	0.67
Higher group SD	58	1.91	2.98	3.41	3.41	3.89	3.26	0.39
Lower group SI	54	1.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	2.63	0.96
Higher group SI	58	1.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	2.88	0.62
Lower group CJS	54	1.37	2.42	2.96	3.01	3.85	2.72	0.66
Higher group CJS	58	1.37	2.96	3.01	3.01	3.85	2.99	0.48

Note: JA = Job accomplishment, SD = Skill development, SI = Social interaction, CJS = Coping with job stress

Table 3 shows that the means of self-efficacy for each scale section between the lower group and the higher group, based on both median and quartile, were different with some similarities except for mean and standard deviation. The next subsection presents the results of inferential statistical analysis to show whether these differences are significant.

Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis to be tested was: "The self-efficacy of teachers with lower curriculum literacy is not significantly different from the self-efficacy of teachers with higher curriculum literacy." Because self-efficacy is a categorical variable, the Mann Whitney U test was used to test the hypothesis. The result of the hypothesis testing is presented in Table 4.

The results of hypothesis testing show that the hypothesis was rejected for both group categories because the p-values are lower than the significance level of 0.05. The effect size, however, is greater in the groups determined using quartiles (Min. to Q1, and Q3 to Max.). Therefore, there is statistical evidence that the self-efficacy of teachers with lower curriculum literacy is significantly different from the self-efficacy of teachers with higher curriculum literacy, and the higher the gap between levels of curriculum literacy, the larger the difference in self-efficacy.

Further analyses were conducted for each different job skill within the teaching profession: job accomplishment, skill development, social interaction, and coping with job stress. The results of the hypothesis testing for each area are presented in Table 5.

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing for Self-Efficacy and Curriculum Literacy

Groups	Mean	Median	Statistic	p-value	Effect size
Based on median			5234	0.02121	0.154
Lower group	2.68	2.90			
Higher group	2.89	3.90			
Based on quartile			1096.5	0.00610	0.260
Lower group	2.57	2.80			
Higher group	2.92	3.00			

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing for Self-Efficacy and Curriculum Literacy in Each Self-Efficacy Construct

Groups	Mean	Median	Statistic	p-value	Effect size
Based on median					
Job accomplishment			5564.5	0.09825	0.11
Lower group	2.44	2.76			
Higher group	2.57	2.76			
Skill development			5643.5	0.1058	0.108
Lower group	3.08	3.41			
Higher group	3.22	3.41			
Social interaction			5968	0.3432	0.0631
Lower group	2.74	3.00			
Higher group	2.91	3.00			
Coping with job stress			5391	0.03711	0.139
Lower group	2.80	3.01			
Higher group	2.94	3.01			

Based on quartile					
Job accomplishment			1246	0.05841	0.180
Lower group	2.35	2.32			
Higher group	2.58	2.76			
Skill development			1294	0.07721	0.167
Lower group	3.01	3.41			
Higher group	3.26	3.41			
Social interaction			1396	0.2367	0.112
Lower group	2.63	3.00			
Higher group	2.88	3.00			
Coping with job stress			1125.5	0.007164	0.254
Lower group	2.72	2.96			
Higher group	2.99	3.01			

The results of Mann Whitney U test for each part of the teacher self-efficacy scale show that the hypotheses were rejected for teacher self-efficacy of coping with job stress at the significance level of 0.05 for both group classification (median and quartile), and mastery experience, or job accomplishment, at the significance level of 0.1. Since the significance level used in this research was 0.05, the significance level for mastery experience was treated with caution. The effect sizes were greater for the group determined using the quartile than those using the median.

Discussion

This research can be treated as confirmation or as empirical evidence that there is a relationship between curriculum literacy and self-efficacy, which had been qualitatively predicted in previous studies (see Gurvitch & Metzler, 2009; Lee & Davis, 2020; Malmberg & Hagger, 2009). It also adds to what is previously known regarding the correlation between a teacher's pedagogical content knowledge and self-efficacy. Grossman (1990) divided pedagogical content knowledge into knowledge of subject matter, knowledge of curriculum, knowledge of instruction, and knowledge of purpose of teaching. Previous research studies have found that a teacher's knowledge of the subject matter and knowledge of instruction influences their self-efficacy (Eslami & Fatahi, 2008; Lauermann & König, 2016). In this study, it has been revealed that knowledge of curriculum is also correlated to a teacher's self-efficacy. This result was expected because knowledge of curriculum or curriculum literacy comprises knowledge of how materials are "organized and packaged for instruction" (Shulman, 1986a, p. 26), and it is part of a teacher's duty to know how to translate this organized material into a lesson plan. In addition, curriculum literacy is also a reflection of knowledge of a subject matter (Gess-Newsome & Lederman, 2002), which has been found to be correlated with self-efficacy.

The results of this study also provide an explanation for a prediction made by Mahler et al. (2017) in that teachers develop their self-efficacy during preservice university education. Preservice teachers learn and obtain pedagogical content knowledge, including curriculum knowledge, at university. The development of that knowledge results in the development and improvement of self-efficacy. Thus, teachers with higher levels of curriculum literacy are expected to show higher levels of self-efficacy. This explanation is also highlighted by Schipper et al. (2018) who found that teachers who participated in professional development training showed improvements in their self-efficacy.

Based on further analyses, teachers with high curriculum literacy believe that they are more likely to succeed

in accomplishing a difficult teaching-related task than those with lower curriculum literacy. Bandura (1997) claims that the reason for this perceived higher sense of self-efficacy was due to a belief that they had adequate knowledge to guarantee their success in teaching. Another important component of teacher self-efficacy, which is different among teachers with different curriculum literacy, is the ability to cope with job stress. Studies have found that job stress is associated with teacher burnout (Kyriacou, 2015; Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008). Thus, the ability to cope with job stress is very important to prevent job dissatisfaction among teachers. The current study has revealed that teachers with better curriculum literacy are likely to cope with job stress better than their lower curriculum literacy counterparts.

The results also show that two groups with a large difference in curriculum literacy also exhibited a larger effect size than those with a smaller difference. Effect size refers to "the magnitude and importance of the result obtained" (Tomczak & Tomczak, 2014, p. 19), and it allows for the conclusion of the extent to which the difference provided by the *p*-value is meaningful. The results suggest that teachers with very high curriculum literacy levels have different levels of self-efficacy than their low curriculum literacy counterparts, and this difference is more meaningful than the difference in self-efficacy among teachers with almost the same levels of curriculum literacy. These results emphasize the importance knowledge regarding the curriculum has with regards to possessing better self-efficacy, which also leads to better student achievement and perception as proposed by Oliveira-Fernandez et al. (2016).

Pedagogical Implications

The results of this study provide significant pedagogical implications for preservice and in-service teacher training. Studies have found that teachers develop their self-efficacy during preservice training. However, based on the results of the current study, the teachers' knowledge regarding curriculum was low and moderate.

This alarming result should be treated as a suggestion to improve courses on curriculum at teacher training departments in universities. The National Qualification Framework-based curriculum is uniform across all universities in Indonesia. Thus, the results of this study have revealed that the curriculum courses offered at Indonesian universities are not adequate in terms of quality and quantity. Only 12 credits (out of 140 credits) were associated with knowledge of curriculum spread across five courses, and only two credits (one course) were intended for general concepts of curriculum, while three credits were offered for other curriculum related courses. Therefore, universities should offer more credits for curriculum courses, and credits for the general concept of curriculum and teaching practices need to also be added. These courses are fundamental in helping preservice teachers translate the content of the curriculum into their instruction, which in turn helps to improve their self-efficacy (Syamdianita & Cahyono, 2021). Noorollahi (2021) has found that an improvement in self-efficacy is followed by an immediate improvement in academic achievement. In addition to preservice teachers, in-service teachers also need to be provided with training about knowledge of curriculum. The current professional development programs in Indonesia only emphasize lesson planning (knowledge of instruction) and assessment, while training on curricular knowledge was rarely offered. This same case was also found in Malaysian schools. This is also evident from a study conducted by Albakri et al. (2021), which found that in-service teachers who were assigned to supervise other in-service teachers could not perform their jobs properly due to a lack of pedagogical knowledge. With improvements in preservice and in-service teacher training, teachers will have more positive self-efficacy, which has been found to contribute to better academic achievement from their students.

Limitations of the Study

A quantitative study is intended to make general-izations out of the results, which can then be applied

to a larger context. However, the generalizability of the results in the present study are subject to some limitations. First, the sample size used for this research was rather large and included participants from many different areas and levels of high schools around Indonesia. However, most participants had low and moderate levels of curriculum literacy. The results might have been different if more teachers with better curriculum literacy were involved. During the time this study was conducted, access to such participants was not available. Therefore, it is recommended that a large-scale research study be conducted in the future that involves participants with more heterogenous curriculum literacy.

Second, both the curriculum literacy test and self-efficacy scale were delivered online. There is a small possibility that teachers cheated in completing the test, and it is suspected that some teachers were not serious in their attitudes toward the test and rushed to complete it. Had the test been conducted in classrooms where the researchers could supervise the participants, then they might have taken the test more seriously, and the results would have been more accurate. If a future study was able to deliver the questionnaire in-person, then the accuracy of the research results would be assured.

Finally, there is also a possibility, although small, that the teachers misunderstood the self-efficacy scale questionnaire because each item on the questionnaire was not explained to them. In addition, many of the teachers, especially those teaching in rural schools, were not accustomed to participating in a self-efficacy survey, so there is a possibility that they over-reported their self-efficacy. Therefore, further studies can confirm our results by using larger sample sizes or involving more urban school teachers who have better access to curriculum training. It is also suggested that future studies deliver both the self-efficacy scale and curriculum literacy test in a classroom, where teachers can ask questions to the researchers when necessary and cheating is less likely to occur.

Conclusion

This research attempted to determine whether the self-efficacy of teachers with higher curriculum literacy levels was different from that of teachers with lower levels of curriculum literacy. The objective was to determine if self-efficacy was associated with curriculum literacy among teachers. A curriculum literacy test, which included general concepts of curriculum, standards of process, standards of assessment, and standards of content was administered to 251 English as a foreign language teachers in all regions of Aceh, Indonesia, along with a self-efficacy scale. The results show that the self-efficacy of teachers with a higher level of curriculum literacy was significantly stronger than that of teachers with a lower level of curriculum literacy, which suggests that teachers with higher curriculum literacy tend to be more self-efficacious. Therefore, it is recommended that future professional development training programs for in-service teachers focus on all constructs of curriculum literacy in order to improve teachers' self-efficacy. Further research can help to inform whether such professional development programs can improve teachers' self-efficacy by using empirical data from an experimental research study.

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Evaluating Teachers' Practices Beyond Content and Procedural Knowledge in a Colombian Context

Evaluación de las prácticas docentes más allá del conocimiento de contenido y procedimiento en un contexto colombiano

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This article reports on a qualitative case study that explored the use of Kumaravadivelu's "Knowing, Analyzing, Recognizing, Doing, Seeing" model as a teacher evaluation tool to identify critical and reflective aspects of teachers' practices for their professional development. The participants were nine English language teachers and their students at a Colombian university. Teacher survey responses, journals, observations, and students' perceptions were collected and thematically categorized and analyzed under the model. Results suggest that teachers have strong procedural knowledge and self-perceptions but struggle with recognizing unique opportunities for critical approaches to their practice, indicating that the model provides more efficient ways of analyzing teachers and focusing on more specific contextual areas in the teachers' professional development.

Keywords: English language teaching, KARDS model, language teacher education, professional development, teacher evaluation

Este artículo reporta un estudio de caso cualitativo que exploró el uso del modelo "Saber, analizar, reconocer, hacer y ver" de Kumaravadivelu como evaluación docente para identificar aspectos críticos y reflexivos de la práctica docente. Participaron nueve profesores de inglés de una universidad en Colombia y sus estudiantes. Las respuestas a encuestas, diarios de los profesores, observaciones y las percepciones de los estudiantes se categorizaron y analizaron temáticamente teniendo en cuenta las áreas del modelo. Los resultados sugieren que los profesores, si bien tienen un fuerte conocimiento procedimental y una autopercepción como profesores, encuentran difícil reconocer oportunidades para adoptar enfoques críticos en su práctica. Esto indica que el modelo ofrece formas eficientes de análisis y de enfocar áreas contextuales más específicas para el desarrollo profesional.

Palabras clave: desarrollo profesional, educación de docente de lengua, enseñanza del inglés, evaluación docente, modelo KARDS

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Introduction

Teacher education has shifted from teachers' learning as observable behavior, to the cognitive mental processes in which they are involved, to the interaction of teachers in their contexts with other educational agents and processes (Grossman et al., 2009; Johnson, 2009; Oosterheert & Vermunt, 2003; Putnam & Borko, 2016; Tsui & Law, 2007). Teacher education emphasized prescriptive concepts about how and what teachers should learn, a perspective informed by the "dualistic understandings of the relationship between thought and action which seeks proof of the transfer of learning through the evident application of knowledge" (Ellis et al., 2010, p. 1). Thus, teachers' practices are often determined by their behavior through perceptions and knowledge, work environment, and institutional policies (Goh et al., 2005; Richards & Lockhart, 1994).

More recently, Kumaravadivelu (2012) held that changes in society, such as globalization, make restructuring and re-conceptualizing teacher education imperative, particularly English language teacher's education. Also, in order to empower teachers to become strategic thinkers who can theorize from their practice, it is important to design comprehensive teacher education programs.

The literature available also considers teacher's education to include learning as cognition, reflection, and construction of identity as mainstays for better in-service teaching practices (Borg, 2015). This occurs with novice teachers through shifts in identity during practice (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Quintero-Polo & Guerrero-Nieto, 2013; Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011), by working in different cultural settings (Block, 2015), or through social negotiations, knowledge and action, as well as ideological, political, and cultural inclinations (Fajardo-Castañeda, 2011).

The British Council (2019) proposed the continuing professional development (CPD) framework for teachers, consisting of four stages and 12 professional practices. These include activities such as planning, managing, and assessing learning and taking responsibility for professional development. CPD depends on teachers' self-motivation and awareness of their professional needs to engage in appropriate professional growth opportunities. This could be problematic if professional development is seen by teachers, especially in the public-school sector, as a self-financed burden (Maussa-Díaz, 2014).

In Latin America, Chile has established the standards for English language teacher education (*Estándares para carreras en pedagogía en inglés*) focusing on two dimensions: disciplinary and pedagogical. The disciplinary standards focus on knowledge of the language and second language learning theory (Ministerio de Educación, República de Chile, 2014). The pedagogical standards center on theoretical knowledge of teaching-learning processes, including planning, teaching, and reflecting on classes, and curriculum-related aspects such as evaluation and design of materials.

In Colombia, similar attempts to establish a professional development framework for pre-service English language teachers started in 1991 with the Colombian Framework for English (COFE) project, a joint initiative between the Colombian government and the British Council. The project provided a group of universities with curricular reforms and standards for language proficiency, preparation in methodology through observation, co-teaching and internships, theoretical foundations for teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), and evaluative processes (Rubiano et al., 2000).

However, González et al. (2002) concluded that EFL schoolteachers' needs for professional development went beyond theoretical knowledge and language proficiency. Paradoxically, teachers' conception and sources of professional development center on optional training led by experts, training received in undergraduate studies, professional conferences, and publishers' sessions (González, 2003), which are sources of professional and procedural knowledge. Similarly, Cárdenas et al. (2010) concluded from their review of professional development in Colombia that teachers need more reflective teaching practices rather than training. The authors also urged

professional development for EFL teachers to be guided by post-method theories and meaningful practice.

Colombian researchers suggest a more critical professional development is needed (Buendía & Macías, 2019; Cárdenas et al., 2010; Cote-Parra, 2012; Cuesta-Medina et al., 2019; Insuasty & Zambrano-Castillo, 2010; Olaya-Mesa, 2018; Rodríguez-Ferreira, 2009; Viáfara & Largo, 2018). However, evaluations of in-service language teachers' practice do not reflect this, nor allow reflective aspects of teacher practice to be identified. As expected, literature on in-service teachers' evaluation in Colombia is scarce, with a few studies centered on public school teachers' theoretical knowledge and classroom management (Figueroa et al., 2018; Lozano-Flórez, 2008; Novozhenina & López-Pinzón, 2018).

In this study, we shall try to identify specific critical and reflective aspects of teaching practices that respond to the previously highlighted needs in professional development in Colombia, by taking an already suggested critical teacher education model and applying it to teacher's evaluation from the classroom level outwards. By doing so, we may understand what teachers are doing and why, and how they and others perceive their practice.

Literature Review

In this section, we introduce the "Knowing, Analyzing, Recognizing, Doing, Seeing (KARDS)" model (Kumaravadivelu, 2012) and its relevance to teacher evaluation by comparing and contrasting its constituent elements to other teacher evaluation models, focusing on those currently in use in Chile and Colombia.

KARDS Modular Model

In this section, we describe each of the components of Kumaravadivelu's (2012, p. 125) modular model of language teacher education for a global society: KARDS.

Knowing

Knowing is the process whereby teachers are capable of acting upon r and reflecting upon their actions based on the combination of professional, procedural, and personal knowledge. Professional knowledge is discipline-related, and it encompasses knowledge about language learning and teaching. Procedural knowledge represents the teachers' ability to manage classes efficiently. Lastly, personal knowledge is the teachers' ability to transform their identities and beliefs as a result of reflection, experiences, and observation of their context.

Furthermore, the TESOL's standards for ESL/EFL identify eight performance-based standards that "represent the core of what professional teachers of ESL and EFL for adult learners should know and be able to do" (Kuhlman & Knežević, n.d., p. 6). These are planning, instructing, assessing, language proficiency, learning, identity in context, content, commitment, and professionalism. Likewise, TESOL standards for K–12 teacher evaluations include content knowledge (language and sociocultural knowledge), pedagogical knowledge (instruction and assessment), learning environments, and professional knowledge (Kuhlman & Knežević, n.d.).

In Colombia, the Ministry of Education's evaluation of primary and secondary in-service teachers in public schools focuses on professional, personal, and procedural knowledge. This mandatory evaluation process focuses on functional competencies (pedagogical knowledge, curriculum related duties, design, and evaluation) as well as behavioral competences (values, leadership, teamwork, social and institutional commitment, interpersonal relationships; Ministerio de Educación Nacional [MEN], n.d.). The moments where the evaluations take place are entry to the system, trial period, and yearly performance and promotion led by the schools' principals. Class videos, students' evaluation of teachers, and observations account for the teachers' competences, and their compliance with their duties and the school's policies. This evaluation aims at identifying weaknesses and strengths that favor the development of work and pedagogical competences that guarantee the permanence of the ideal teacher (MEN, n.d.).

Analyzing

Analyzing is the teacher's skill to recognize and determine learner's needs, motivation, and autonomy. Learner needs is what students want, need to achieve, and have not been able to achieve. Learner motivation is the students' drive to learn a second/foreign language, whether this comes from a desire or a need. Learner autonomy is the students' agency in their own learning process.

One system that may uncover aspects of analyzing is Chile's system for the evaluation of professional teaching performance (*Sistema Nacional de Evaluación del Desempeño Profesional Docente*, SNED) for public primary and high school teachers. SNED is aligned with the national standards and consists of a portfolio, a third-party recommendations report, a three-question interview with a trained evaluator (peer) and a self-assessment report (Ministerio de Educación, República de Chile, n.d.). This latter instrument includes 12 yes-no questions about the students' critical and reflective thought, self-assessment, curiosity, and autonomy, and whether and how teachers' practices foster them. However, yes-no questions might elicit expected answers and not classroom realities regarding autonomy and motivation.

Recognizing

Recognizing indicates the teacher's standpoint regarding the classroom. It is the ability to recognize the teaching self (composed of identities, beliefs, and values) and to renew it. Teacher identity is the persona displayed in the classroom and to other people in the teaching context. Teacher beliefs refer to conceptual ideas and theories on teaching that tell the teacher what a "good class environment" or a "good teaching of grammar" are. Finally, recognizing includes teacher's values, which are related to the teachers' moral agency and the challenges posed by rule compliance and caring for students. In our review, we have not found an in-service teacher evaluation system that focuses on this crucial dimension.

Doing

Doing refers to "classroom actions"; the teachers' choices when approaching a classroom situation. It is a critical response process to the constant changes, multiplicities, and possibilities to create meaning. Doing encompasses theorizing, dialogue, and teaching. Theorizing indicates the teachers' sensitivity to introducing appropriate changes to issues arising in the classroom. It is the antithesis of one-fits-all solutions to classroom issues. Dialogue is the ongoing and analytical processing and discussion of practice with oneself and with others that leads to personal and professional growth. Teaching refers to the ability to magnify and multiply the opportunities for students to learn, and to foster growth beyond textbooks and knowledge of a second/foreign language.

Chile's SNED interview with a peer is meant to evaluate teachers' ability to reflect on their practice, using scenario-like questions grounded on procedural and professional aspects of the teaching-learning context (e.g., what do you do when one of your students is not interested in your class?). However, the questions' orientation toward the *whats* and not the *whys* may be favoring an orientation of teaching to outcomes (Garcia-Chamorro & Rosado-Mendinueta, 2021; Pinar & Irwin, 2004).

Seeing

Seeing is "perceptual knowledge," the application of knowledge to connect agents to action and vice versa (i.e., the lived experiences). Seeing encompasses the teacher's, the learner's, and the observer's perspectives. Teachers' perspective is their evaluation of what happens in the classroom from a multifaceted position of control. The learner's perspective provides information about the learning experience from an active position in the learning process. Finally, the observer's perspective provides a critical outlook on teachers' practices and how these impact the students' learning.

Boraie (2014) noted that teacher effectiveness could be determined through observations, students' evaluations,

self-report systems, and evidence of learning. Hence, the multiplicity of factors included in successful teaching and the need for multiple instruments with various evaluation scales and perspectives should be recognized.

Thus, as checklists become longer, and expectations broader, teacher evaluation systems, such as the MEN's, tend to scare teachers into passivity and accommodating behaviors of compliance, rather than challenging them to continuously work on their personal and professional development. Although a set of evaluative factors is important to include inside larger-scale evaluation systems that center on student learning, it is likely that such systems become top-down reflections only of the macro-level's mostly punitive visions and missions. Similarly, self-motivated and less punitive systems such as the British Council's CPD might fail to identify critical aspects of teachers' practice since they lack the students' and others' perspectives, which are considered essential in successful teacher evaluations (Boraie, 2014). Instruments like Chile's SNED interviews, with simulated situations of teacher's practice, may be eliciting rehearsed command of procedural knowledge and failing to represent tokens of critical teaching practices.

Therefore, we believe that by adapting the KARDS language teaching framework and by creating an evaluation tool using the key ideas in these three perspectives (teacher, observer, and student), we could identify more specific areas for teacher professional development in Colombia. Thus, our research question is: How can the KARDS model be used as a teacher evaluation tool for reflective and critical practice?

Method

This interpretative case study examined the practices of in-service EFL teachers through observation, reflection, and student evaluation. Case studies allow researchers to expand and generalize theoretical propositions (Yin, 2018); our case study was directed at exploring, from different perspectives, the pertinence of the KARDS model as a teacher evaluation tool.

Research Context and Participants

The participants in the study were EFL teachers and their students at a private university in Colombia. An email that introduced the project and its commitment level was sent to all the English language faculty (*N* = 90) encouraging participation in the study, to which nine teachers agreed. These teachers' academic and professional experience ranges from one to over 20 years, with various master's degrees including English language teaching, TESOL, applied linguistics, and other areas of humanities (see Table 1). In total, the nine participating teachers imparted lessons to 121 students. These students were also contacted (by email) and informed about the nature of the study.

Table 1. Participating Teachers' Academic and Professional Experience (*N* = 9)

Highest academic degree	Country where the degree was obtained	*n*
MA Applied Linguistics	USA	1
MA TESOL	USA	1
MA TEFL	Puerto Rico	1
MA ELT	Colombia (enrolled)	2
MA ELT	Colombia	1
LIS	USA	1
MA Applied Linguistics/TESOL	USA	1
MA Communication	Canada	1
Years of teaching		
0–5		3
6–10		4
16–20		1
21+		1

Note. TESOL = Teaching English to speakers of other languages, TEFL = Teaching English as a foreign language, ELT = English language teaching, LIS = Library science.

Data Collection Instruments

The instruments used for data collection and analysis were the following:

Teachers' Survey. The survey contained closed and open-ended questions (see Appendix A) regarding their academic and professional experiences. The open-ended questions included what the teachers considered their greatest strengths, areas for improvement, their theory of practice or approach to language teaching, and their self-perceptions within the classroom.

Teacher Reflective Journal. Participants worked freely on the journal procedure and reported either every other Friday for eight weeks or every third Friday for 12 weeks. For convenience's sake, each participant shared a Google Drive folder with researchers. The questions aimed at eliciting information on the teachers' day-to-day practice that reflected each of the modules of the KARDS model. Knowing and doing were placed together to encourage full answers (see Appendix B).

Students' Questionnaire. This questionnaire aimed at capturing the students' perception of the learning process and how the teacher fostered it. It included eight statements related to learning and teaching processes in their English class, along with a scale with five levels of frequency (see Appendix C) and an open-ended question on the students' perception of their classroom learning experience.

Observations. Classroom observations lasted one or two hours. The teachers were observed at least twice during the eight weeks. We encouraged the teachers to plan classes as usual. The goal was to identify specific features in the teachers' practices and determine whether they reflected or not traits of the KARDS model in the classroom.

KARDS Rubric. The data collected were analyzed through content analysis using the *a priori* categories provided by the KARDS model. The three perspectives (teacher, learner, and observer) were the methods of collection and triangulation of the data indicated by S (Seeing; see Appendix D). To help us meet the study's objectives, we created a checklist that incorporated the components in each KARDS's module, based on the three principles of the post-method pedagogy: (a) practicality, which refers to the practice of teacher-generated theory; (b) particularity, or the understanding of the political and sociocultural particularities of the learning context; and (c) possibility, associated with critical pedagogy that contributes to raising sociopolitical awareness among participants (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). Criteria were established to quantify the degree to which each trait or behavior of the component was met. A high degree of reliability was found among the raters' measurements. The average measure interrater correlation coefficient was .909 with a 95% confidence interval from .779 to .976 ($F(8,56) = 11.00$, p < .001).

Procedure

First, teachers completed the survey and kept their reflective journal. The observations were made concurrently during the semester, depending on the teacher and the observers' availability. Each teacher originally sent specific dates and class times to the observers, and the observers agreed upon who and when they were going to observe. Observations of teachers were categorized quantitatively and additional notes detailed further key aspects of the teachers' practices and aspects of the KARDS' model that checking the boxes would not have provided.

Findings and Discussion

This section shows and discusses the results of the data analysis from the three perspectives: teachers, observers, and learners. We shall highlight patterns of elements of KARDS found in each one of the perspectives.

Teachers' Perspective

Teachers' Survey
Knowing and Doing. Teachers articulated explicitly their representation of teaching and learning. T1, T2,

T5, T6, and T8[1] reported eclectic, combined practices in which the communicative approach was the most prominent. They also adopted a humanistic approach prioritizing students' feelings toward the class and towards them as teachers. According to T7, her socio-linguistic perspective helps her understand her students. T2 and T6 mentioned that they struggle with managing their "teacher speaking" time, classroom setup, structure, and discipline, issues already identified by Novozhenina and López-Pinzón (2018).

T4 mentioned that his concern for the students encourages him to "continuously seek ways to improve my classes and teaching practice, whether this means picking up a new book about teaching pedagogy or opening up dialogues, in person or online, with colleagues and fellow TESOL professionals about our teaching."

Recognizing. All teachers described themselves as dedicated, passionate, friendly, and approachable. T1, T4, T5, and T6 expressed their advocacy for students' autonomy, as facilitators, and not as the center of the knowledge experience. T4, T5, and T7 mentioned a disconnection with students, needing more patience to lower the students' anxiety and not to rush them.

T1 said she provides students with opportunities for language learning and personal growth, and for the co-construction of a positive and safe classroom environment as a means to encourage effective language learning. T2, T3, T4, and T7 gave a similar answer.

Analyzing. Overall, teachers stated that their practice was focused on student motivation, autonomy, and needs. Good rapport, flexibility, adaptability, patience, and perseverance are the strengths that contribute to the attainment of the student-related aspects. Some teachers reported weaknesses such as prioritization of syllabus fulfillment, which undermined students' autonomy and needs. As for rapport, there were difficulties establishing personal connections with students, in the case of

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1   The participating teachers are identified with the letter "T" followed by a number.

T4, due to cultural factors (Chirkov, 2009), managing teacher speaking time, and discipline (Novozhenina & López-Pinzón, 2018).

Teacher Reflective Journals

Knowing and Doing. Regarding professional knowledge, the intellectual content of the discipline was clear for the teachers mentioned various approaches to classroom teaching of skills and transfer of knowledge. T5 and T6 alluded to the inductive approach and scaffolding, but most teachers demonstrated methodological and goal-oriented approaches. Concerning procedural knowledge, most teachers seemed task-oriented in the management of their classrooms, with few shifts in action. T1, T4, and T8 reported adapting, changing pace, or using different methods of student interaction depending on the context's particularities. Regarding personal knowledge, we detected mostly goal-based discussion which seemed to reflect a more procedural and practical attitude to teaching. Teachers wrote reflections rooted upon beliefs about what had worked and what had not, resourcefully connecting to their intellectual and procedural knowledge (Farrell & Ives, 2015; Goh et al., 2005).

> Activities seemed to have gone well, at least from my perspective and from students' claims. I think they learned because they said they had, and I gave them some Kahoot quizzes, which showed learning. Again, I cannot state they learned it in class because they could also have studied the material at home or outside the class. (T8)

Some teachers are responding to needs and shifting responsibility, but most of them are not reaching a dialogic approach in their classroom, an aspect which has been widely identified in the literature (Buendía & Macías, 2019; Cárdenas et al., 2010; Cote-Parra, 2012; Cuesta-Medina et al., 2019; González et al., 2002; Insuasty & Zambrano-Castillo, 2010; Olaya-Mesa, 2018; Rodríguez-Ferreira, 2009; Viáfara & Largo, 2018). Teachers do, however, offer innovative ways to

learn English through the social, political, and cultural contexts as shown before by Kumaravadivelu (1994) and Fajardo-Castañeda (2011). Teachers chose statements such as adapting to fit learning style, using phones and game playing as resources, which seems to indicate the existence of contemporary identities to help construct ludic spaces for generating an encouraging learning environment. Others contextualize and personalize content to connect it to the students' lives.

> They wrote their paragraphs and we checked one of them by highlighting the parts together. Yet this is not the way I like to have my classes; I must point out that at least they seemed to understand the topic and solve a task based on what they were supposed to learn. (T7)

As for maximizing learning, most teachers mentioned providing opportunities, feedback, and safe spaces for motivation and affectionate communication. Teacher inquiry, however, was not mentioned often in the discussion. Only T4 referred to using research or even consulting friends to help students attain or "grasp" the concepts being discussed in class, which Putnam and Borko (2016) have concluded to be forms of critical, reflective teaching practices.

Analyzing. Analyzing learners' needs, motivation, and autonomy appears to be a challenging competence for these teachers. The skills and knowledge required for doing so effectively intersect with the demanding nature of the context. We found that the teachers' abilities to analyze are mainly imbued with procedural skills and knowledge (Goh et al., 2005). Accordingly, the teachers mentioned that learners needed guidance, support, and directedness to focus on tasks. They also mentioned the need for encouragement towards autonomy, to relate learning contents to their lives and to enhance their language accuracy.

> Then the next time I taught the class I got a particularly unresponsive group, which made me realize that I needed to make sure I had various forms of scaffolding in place to ensure all students were successful, which is ultimately

what I want to see: Every student experiencing success at the level they are ready for. (T4)

An associated idea identified was the teachers' tendency to focus on learners' needs by observing and acting, but they never mentioned including the learners themselves, by asking them to identify their needs, or by engaging students in metacognitive practice.

> I have never asked the students if they felt that listening in this way helped them later [in their] exams so maybe that is a mistake that I can remedy going forward and making sure that I do this. This is a positive aspect of this kind of reflection because it forces me to think about why and what I am doing instead of moving along in my own comfort zone. (T3)

The analysis of learner motivation is presented mainly as an all or nothing construct. The verbs the teachers chose to describe their class activities suggest this underlying belief: I asked, helped, pushed, made them participate (Farrell & Ives, 2015; Goh et al., 2005). Students were either motivated and demonstrated it by being involved in activities and showing enjoyment or not. However, teachers' relation to learners' motivation and needs seems to be perceived as "caused by the teacher." Only T1 and T4 analyzed motivation in a more interactive manner as a condition resulting from the student's investment in the class. In this regard, there is a retrospective view of motivation, not a prospective, dynamic one.

Recognizing. Concerning teachers' ability to embrace and adapt their identity, beliefs, and values, some teachers are more aware of their teaching self, and are willing to let the realities of their classes reshape it (Fajardo-Castañeda, 2011; Williams & Power, 2010).

> Some of the difficulties were engaging all the students one on one to make sure each had a bit of individual feedback. It took a long time to do this but, in the end, it helped make a successful hands-on lesson because the students had a stronger understanding of what was expected of them, and how to put together a good paragraph. (T1)

Others struggle with adapting to the realities of the classroom and seem to have strict expectations of time management, interaction with students, ways of providing feedback, and on students' behavior and participation in class (Farrell & Ives, 2015).

> Some of the difficulties during the activities are time management on my part and on the student's part. How much time do they really need for an assignment? Should I be stricter and really push them to finish within a reasonable allotted time, or because I give them more time if necessary they are just goofing off or working slowly? (T1)

As for beliefs, T2, T7, and T8 strongly consider that the students and the system (explicitly or implicitly stated administrative and academic norms) are to blame for underachievement. They attributed their students' low English levels to a deficient level placement, lack of interest in the class and in studying, and even laziness, as T1 mentioned; however, there is little reflection on why these situations occur and on how to fix them. We can assume, from the teachers' statements, that there is almost conformity towards the students' lack of performance, level placement, and the pass/fail system (as found also by Quintero-Polo & Guerrero-Nieto, 2013).

Regarding values, T3 expressed not wanting to expose students to class embarrassment, which indicates sensitivity towards students' feelings. Another example is T4's commitment to engage all the students in class, regardless of their language level, which, for other teachers, is an unavoidable consequence of their placement and pass/fail system.

Students' Perspective

Student Evaluation of Teachers

Knowing and Doing. From students' answers, we identified and categorized the following aspects in these modules: positively changed perception of students towards language learning, teachers' interest in students' learning, opportunities for students to learn from mistakes, and pleasant class environment. Overall, students see appropriate methodologies and teaching strategies and relate those to their learning of the language. All the teachers provide them with motivation, opportunities to learn, support with error correction, and interesting topics for their future professional life. However, noticeably, T4 was not as highly praised as the rest of the teachers, which might be explained by, in his own words, "a disconnection" with his students. T4 considers that being a foreigner and being used to teaching older adults are the reasons for this disconnection. However, this recognition also comes with a reflection for improvement, in which he says: "so this disconnection I have experienced is something I am working on."

One student said the class positively changed their perceptions on the benefits of learning English. Five students praised their teachers' (T1, T2, T5, T7) interest in their learning and their efforts to facilitate it and create a good class environment.

Analyzing. Salient aspects found in students' answers were teachers' skills to fulfill students' needs for improving accuracy, motivation, and participation in class through fun activities and games, and including relevant, enriching topics in class. Three students referred to T2 as "the best," because the class contributes to the students' active learning and constant participation. They also valued their teachers' skill to teach and correct grammar through fun activities. Two students highlighted T5 for teaching context appropriate topics and promoting their skills and a well-rounded education. However, students also expressed needs for T4's classes to be more dynamic. Similarly, one student asked T1 more balance between home and in-class activities, and another student suggested that T3 pay more attention to the students who are not doing well.

Recognizing. From students' answers, two teachers' identities were prominent: teachers as a source of fun and teachers as warm human beings who connect

emotionally with them. Most of the students highlighted their teachers' ability to create fun and what they called dynamic classes. T4's students, on the other hand, highlighted the need for these. Similarly, except for T4, the students mentioned how there is affection, respect, and kindness in T1, T2, T3, T5, and T7's classes. As expected, this closeness, as students stated, inspires, motivates, and helps them to better understand topics and perform through their learning process (Gruber et al., 2012).

Observers' Perspective

Observation of Teachers

Knowing and Doing. Consistently with teachers' and students' perspectives, we saw devotion to the students, evident in the teachers' attempts to provide constant guidance. T1, T2, T3, T4, and T7 evidenced a personal approach in their interactions and a strong investment in creating a friendly and engaging environment for their students. T4 and T8 used humor, and provided interactive, ludic opportunities for fun and play through game-like activities, which reflect their belief in the positive impact of an emotional connection on learning (Farrell & Ives, 2015). As for maximizing learning opportunities, although we saw time and space as input for the class, there were few cases of delving into or taking critical stances on cultural or political topics, when the opportunity arose (Fajardo-Castañeda, 2011).

Analyzing. Overall, there was a marked focus on the textbook and lack of encouragement for autonomy and maximizing learning opportunities. This contradicts what T6 and T4 stated in their journals. Additionally, T6, T7, T8, and T9 did not show responsiveness to the context and to students who deviated from the expected language level of the class, which they consider an irreparable flaw of the system they do not attempt to change (Farrell & Ives, 2015; Quintero-Polo & Guerrero-Nieto, 2013). This was coherent with a students' answer in the teacher evaluation.

Recognizing. This aspect was not observable because class observations were non-participatory, and thus, there was no interaction between the observer and the teachers.

Conclusions

We shall discuss the conclusions from the different teacher evaluation instruments developed around KARDS for each one of the three perspectives (teachers, students, observers) to propose an answer to our research question and, finally, draw some implications thereof.

The Teachers' Perspective

By using survey questions and reflective journals with guiding questions based on the tenets of the KARDS model, and by performing content analysis under the same framework, we could observe that the teachers have strong procedural and professional knowledge and clear perspectives on who they are in their humanistic, affective dimension. They guide their practice on the belief that emotional connection with students promotes effective learning (Farrell & Ives, 2015; Gruber et al., 2012), which could be more fruitful if used to listen and tend to the students' learning needs. Additionally, the model allowed us to unveil teachers' beliefs on motivation and autonomy. For teachers, it seems, motivation is rooted in providing students with fun activities in class that also elicit correct answers. Similarly, teachers refer to autonomy as the class moments that students have to complete a task without surveillance. Likewise, teachers' understanding of their own autonomy is limited to decision-making based on procedural and professional knowledge conditioned by compliance with the syllabus, as opposed to the essence of autonomy for post-method teachers, who "act autonomously within the academic and administrative constraints imposed by institutions, curricula, and textbooks" (Kumaravadivelu, 2012, p. 10). We also observed that some teachers did not encourage the students' autonomy or critical stances when opportunities arose. We suggest that

such orientation towards procedure limits the students' agency. Using KARDS, we discovered the inadequacy of the way motivation, autonomy, and learner needs are analyzed and understood in a society that calls for change (Kumaravadivelu, 2012).

The Students' Perspective

Students' responses framed on the KARDS model allowed us to understand their perception of their teachers' practice and its impact on their learning process. Additionally, we found convergence points between teachers' and students' perceptions. For instance, both students and teachers see motivation narrowly constructed as an externality, usually provided by games and good rapport with the teacher. Consequently, students' standards for good teaching practices involve games and entertainment. This can divert professional development from meaningful teaching practices, and it could also become an unfair evaluation of teachers whose approach does not involve games, more so if the evaluation consists of a checklist, such as the MEN's (n.d.) questionnaire for students to evaluate their teachers.

The Observers' Perspective

Observing teachers through the core features of KARDS, and focusing on their practice beyond the "whats," we found not only that the teachers have strong professional knowledge instantiated in goal-oriented actions and reflections, but also that their *analyzing* converges towards students' needs and motivations from a procedural orientation. Analyzing, for these teachers, follows linear views of teaching and learning or learning caused by teaching. However, some teachers lack responsiveness to the context or to students who are below their expectations. Needs seemed derived from the predetermined syllabus in response to macro factors; paradoxically, at the micro level (i.e., the classroom), our analysis did not unveil any indication of teachers responding to the students' particular needs and motivations. This could be problematic, as failing to

do so could affect the learners' motivation (Benesch as cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2012). Through KARDS, we could see the teachers' lack of dialogic approach toward their classroom and little inquiry orientation towards decision making, reflected also on their lack of participation in communities of practice.

Implications

This study sought to explore the KARDS model as an evaluation tool from a classroom external perspective (teachers, students, and observer) that would help identify the specific teachers' professional development needs for a more critical and reflective teaching, something that has already been highlighted in the Colombian context by several studies (Buendía & Macías, 2019; Cárdenas et al., 2010; Cote-Parra, 2012; Cuesta-Medina et al., 2019; Insuasty & Zambrano-Castillo, 2010; Olaya-Mesa, 2018; Rodríguez-Ferreira, 2009; Viáfara & Largo, 2018). Although the small number of participating teachers and the students' lack of elaboration on the answers about their teachers were evident limitations, the application of the KARDS model as an evaluative tool for in-service teachers seems promising. Its comprehensive and non-prescriptive nature allowed us to identify a mismatch between the understanding students and teachers have of autonomy and motivation and the meaning these concepts should have in a society that calls for change (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). These are results and analyses that other teacher evaluations tools fail to elicit due to their prescriptive nature and their main focus on procedural and professional knowledge.

Two main sets of interrelated implications resulted from this study: those associated with the application of the KARDS model as an evaluative tool, and those related to teacher education and professional development needs that stem from its application. As for the application of this model as a teacher's evaluation tool, its comprehensive nature poses challenges to its application and to stakeholders. First, its operationalization would require professional development to promote

the necessary conditions and abilities "for teachers to know, to analyze, to recognize, to do, and to see learning, teaching, and teacher development" (Kumaravadivelu, 2012, p. 122). Thus, not only will teachers theorize from their practice and practice what they theorize, but they will also become adequate observers that could facilitate a sustainable, reliable application of KARDS as a teacher's evaluation tool.

Additionally, teacher education and professional development should reshape the understanding of motivation and of teacher and learner autonomy to abandon the perpetuated limited and procedural concepts that focus on the teacher as the main source of both motivation and autonomy. Finally, teacher education and professional development should promote critical, creative, contextual, reflective learning spaces that can reshape the relationship between theory and practice by finding an "alternative to method rather than an alternative method" and "principled pragmatism" (Kumaravadivelu, 1994, pp. 29–30).

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Appendix A: Teacher Survey

Please take a few minutes to provide the following information prior to beginning the reflective narrative process.

1. Gender
2. Highest degree obtained. Place
3. Years as a language teacher
4. Institutions you have worked for. Time at each
5. What would you say are your greatest strengths as a language teacher?
6. What would you say are your areas for improvement?
7. Describe your personal theory of practice or approach to language teaching
8. Describe how you are as a language teacher inside the classroom

Appendix B: Reflective Journals

Deadline: Every other Friday for eight weeks or every third Friday for 12 weeks.

Knowing and doing: What were some of the activities you did during the week? How did you do them? Why?

Analyzing: What did you notice about your students' interest, needs, and autonomy during these activities? How did you notice? What did you do about it? Why?

Recognizing: What were some of the difficulties during the activities? How did you react to them? Why?

Seeing: How did the activities go during the week? Did the students learn? How do you know? Were there any special changes you did to make the experience better? What were they?

Appendix C: Student Questionnaire

This questionnaire aims to understand your perspective as a student about the learning and teaching process in your current English classes at Instituto de Idiomas; answering it will not take longer than five minutes. Your answers will be used in a study, and your identity will remain confidential. Thank you in advance for your time.

	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Hardly ever	Never
My teacher:					
Understands the learning context and respects it.					
Knows and uses a broad set of activities and methods in class.					
Encourages discussion through activities that are appropriate for our context.					
Listens to our needs and adjusts classes correspondingly.					
Seeks to help us learn as individuals and as a group.					
I:					
Feel motivated in my English classes.					
Feel motivated to study and work on my own even without the teacher telling me so.					

Briefly write how you feel in relation to the learning-teaching in your current English class at Instituto de Idiomas. You can write as much as you want in the back of this paper.

Note. This survey was translated into Spanish for students' convenience.

Appendix D: KARDS Rubric

Scale:

5 = The teacher obviously demonstrates the traits or behaviors incorporated into the category.

4 = There were remarkable demonstrations of the traits or behaviors incorporated into the category.

3 = At times there were demonstrations of the traits of behaviors incorporated into the category.

2 = The traits or behaviors incorporated into the category were rarely noticed.

1 = None of the traits or behaviors were noticed in the category.

		5	4	3	2	1	Seeing
Post-methods							Making connections between what happens and "Knowing" with clarity
• *Particularity*	Situational understanding: the holistic interpretation of situations and identifying how to improve them						*Observer perspective*
• *Practicality*	Theory and practice/producer and consumer						
• *Possibility*	Classroom reality is socially constructed and historically determined						
Knowing	Process and product						
• *Professional*	Intellectual content of discipline						
• *Procedural*	The teacher manages classroom teaching and learning						
• *Personal*	The endeavor of teaching: The teacher has a sense of what does and does not work						
Analyzing	The shift in cognitive psychology, post-modern thoughts, and critical pedagogy						
• *Learner's needs*							
• *Learner's motivation*							
• *Learner's autonomy*							
Recognizing	Teacher from teaching						
• *Identities*	Construction						
• *Beliefs*	Disposition						
• *Values*	Intrinsic perspective …moral judgment						
Doing							
• *Theorizing*	The teacher offers learners innovative ways to approach social, political, and cultural identities						
• *Teaching*	Maximizing learning opportunities						
• *Dialogue*	Professional development						

Building EFL Preservice Teachers' Professional Identity: Does Gender Matter?

Construcción de la identidad profesional docente de futuros docentes de inglés como lengua extranjera: ¿importa el género?

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This study explores the beliefs of English as a foreign language preservice secondary education teachers regarding the construction of teachers' professional identity. A questionnaire was used to obtain the opinions of 131 future teachers in the 2014–2020 academic years. Results showed that the participants understood teachers' professional identity to be connected to the ability to motivate students, manage the classroom, and care about interpersonal relations. Women and men think differently regarding the effect of the acquisition of new methodologies, the psycho-pedagogical training, and a longer placement period in the construction of teachers' professional identity. To conclude, this study provided the chance to reflect on the importance of strengthening the professional identity of English as a foreign language teachers while considering the gender perspective to introduce changes in the curriculum.

Keywords: English teacher education, identity, preservice teacher education, teaching profession

Este estudio explora las creencias de los futuros docentes de educación secundaria de inglés como lengua extranjera sobre la construcción de la identidad profesional docente. Se aplicó un cuestionario a 131 futuros docentes durante el período 2014–2020. Los resultados muestran que los participantes relacionan la identidad profesional docente con la capacidad de motivar al alumnado, gestionar el aula y la preocupación por las relaciones interpersonales. Mujeres y hombres piensan diferente acerca de la influencia de la adquisición de nuevas metodologías, la formación psicopedagógica y un mayor período de prácticas en la construcción de la identidad profesional docente. Para concluir, este estudio permite reflexionar sobre la importancia de fortalecer la identidad profesional de los docentes de inglés como lengua extranjera considerando la perspectiva de género para introducir cambios curriculares.

Palabras clave: formación docente de inglés, formación inicial docente, identidad, profesión docente

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Introduction

Numerous studies on teacher cognition have shown that preservice teachers have diverse ideas, attitudes, and motivations regarding teaching, learning, and other aspects related to the teaching profession that significantly influence the construction and development of their teachers' professional identity (TPI; Beijaard et al., 2004; Garner & Kaplan, 2019). Therefore, the importance of preservice teachers building their TPI is being recognized at an international level (Schaefer & Clandinin, 2019; Suelves et al., 2021). Throughout this learning-to-teach process, it is important to make them reflect and wonder about who they are and how they see themselves as teachers in the immediate future (Keary et al., 2020).

Thus, the scientific and educational grounding of this study is mainly based on the constructivist approach to teacher education because it defends the idea that learning occurs only when preservice teachers are thoroughly engaged in the process of meaning and knowledge construction (Harfitt & Chan, 2017). Moreover, there is evidence to prove that mastery experience substantially contributes to preservice teachers' constructivist teaching beliefs (Cansiz & Cansiz, 2019). Furthermore, they develop an understanding of this approach so that they can apply it to their future practice in real educational contexts as an alternative to more traditional-oriented teaching approaches. In other words, future teacher needs to avoid reproducing the traditional teaching strategies they experienced as students in their early education (Flores, 2020).

Moreover, the reflective approach to teacher education has also been a reference for this study since it focuses on preservice teachers' beliefs. Therefore, this approach provides the study with a solid justification because it highlights the importance of thinking about one's teaching experiences in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and introduce variations when needed to improve the learning outcomes (Blackley et al., 2017). Thus, it is necessary to introduce activities into the preservice teacher training curriculum that enable them to reflect on diverse aspects connected to the teaching practice and the promotion of metacognition (Pérez-Garcias et al., 2020).

In line with the abovementioned, most research on teacher education has mainly focused on subject matter, teachers' competences, and traditional and non-traditional approaches over the past decade (Cañadas, 2021; Özcan & Gerçek, 2019; Werler & Tahirsylaj, 2020). However, "scholars have begun to highlight additional important factors that shape teachers' conceptions of and actions in teaching that should be incorporated into teacher professional learning frameworks" (Garner & Kaplan, 2019, p. 8). These other factors refer to teachers' conceptions about themselves as teachers and their TPI since it has been proven to have an influence on their success in their careers.

Considering that, this study examines how English as a foreign language (EFL) preservice teachers understand TPI as well as their beliefs regarding which aspects determine its construction and development. Additionally, it seeks to analyse whether there are significant differences in these aspects depending on the gender of the participants, mainly for two reasons. On the one hand, this variable was included because in a preliminary qualitative study, participants suggested that gender may affect their comprehension of the teaching profession. On the other hand, because there is certain disagreement in previous studies on whether male and female teachers concur in their perceptions about the teaching profession and their vocational attitudes, and evidence is still scarce regarding the effect of gender on the construction of TPI and the progression of teachers' careers (Egmir & Celik, 2019; Kapitanoff & Pandey, 2017). In addition, the present study focuses on preservice teachers whose first language is English and on those whose first language is other than English (mainly Spanish) because it seems they face a dualism of personalities (Treve, 2021; Vega et al., 2021). Therefore, these feelings will

directly affect their beliefs regarding the teaching profession, and, consequently, their TPI construction.

EFL Teachers' Professional Identity

The initial teacher training process is of great importance in the development of TPI (Rodrigues & Mogarro, 2019). Every future teacher should start developing their commitment and identity with the teaching profession during their initial training; however, there are some groups that could be more vulnerable than others. The construction of the professional identity of language teachers is a topic that has generated great interest in both research literature and the implementation of educational policies in recent decades (Hashemi et al., 2021; Mora et al., 2014; Trejo-Guzmán & Mora-Vázquez, 2018). In this study, the focus is on preservice teachers whose first language is not English because the "native vs. non-native English speakers" dualism could affect the development of their TPI and, consequently, their professional development (Zhu et al., 2020). In addition, there is also a significant variable that may accentuate this issue, and it has to do with the teacher training model (consecutive vs. simultaneous; Gómez et al., 2017). To be specific, consecutive training models do not allow for the opportunity to combine subject and pedagogical content simultaneously and, thus, do not include a teaching element from the beginning, and this hinders the integration of the two. Therefore, preservice teachers see themselves as professionals rather than teachers (Schaefer & Clandinin, 2019).

The globalization and internationalization of our world brought about the phenomenon of *Englishization* (Lanvers & Hultgren, 2018) in all fields, particularly in education. The spread of English has been significant, and it has even become the language of instruction in diverse educational levels (Feddermann et al., 2021; Macaro et al., 2018). It is undeniable that this situation has provoked great changes in language teaching and testing around the world. Thus, it has caused a global need for English language teachers, mainly in EFL countries (Llurda, 2004). Consequently, there is still a debate regarding what is better: whether to depend on professionals whose first language is English as the model in language teaching due to their culture and language proficiency, or to trust EFL teachers with their linguistic and pedagogical skills (Dervić & Bećirović, 2019). In this regard, scholars tend to favor the second option on the grounds that EFL lessons are more linguistically varied and allow teachers to switch codes when necessary. Nevertheless, the discussion is still open due to the diversity of learning contexts, but, undoubtedly, this is something that has an impact on preservice EFL teachers' TPI (Zhu et al., 2020). Thus, beliefs about the teaching of EFL affect the development of the professional identity of EFL teachers and, given that identity is a construct with a multiple, dynamic, and changing character, teachers should be exposed to teaching experiences that contribute to building a professional identity with a sense of context awareness and with a multicultural vision (Chacón, 2010; Ortaçtepe, 2015).

The dichotomy between teachers whose first language is English and those with another first language and the theories behind it have a major discriminatory impact on their careers. Therefore, labels such as native vs. non-native should be reviewed against the negative effects of degrading categories (Shin, 2008). The latter group is aware of this debate and how employment discrimination may affect them, mainly in the private sector (Clark & Paran, 2007). Hence, it may impinge on the way they develop their TPI. In this sense, it is important to reinforce professional identity construction throughout their initial teacher education so as to prevent possible burnout rates (Lu et al., 2019), strengthen their competences (Roulston et al., 2018), and reduce their anxiety and feelings of helplessness and loneliness during preservice training and early career development (Deng et al., 2018).

Teachers' Professional Identity Influencing Factors

TPI is not a static attribute, teachers continuously develop and change their sense of self through looking at and analyzing their daily professional practice and their lives as teachers (Vokatis & Zhang, 2016). This TPI construction process starts from the moment they made the decision to become teachers (Donnini-Rodrigues et al., 2018). Not only do they undergo variations in the development of their skills, but they also modify their conceptions of the teaching profession and its social image (Torriente & Villardón-Gallego, 2018).

Scientific literature on this issue states that TPI may be influenced by a wide range of aspects, both personal and contextual as well as internal and external (Rodrigues & Mogarro, 2019). First of all regarding the personal aspects, there are studies that point out the need for teachers to have a deep interest in their own teaching-learning process and the ability to awake this concern among their students (Leeferink et al., 2019), have an intrinsic vocation for education to avoid possible friction linked to motivation or commitment (Meijer et al., 2011), be empathic and build a positive and solid self-esteem as future teachers (Day, 2018), among others. In addition, at the individual level, other independent factors—such as gender—should be considered (Chang & Lo, 2016; Nürnberger et al., 2016). Moreover, Egmir and Celik (2019) suggested that educational beliefs and teachers' identities during initial teacher training periods significantly differ in terms of variables such as gender, field of knowledge, and degree. Focusing on gender as one of the most debatable issue, some studies highlight that differences between women and men in the field of teaching exist and affect their attitudes along their careers (Kapitanoff & Pandey, 2017). At first, Monroy and Hernández-Pina (2014) did not find clear evidence of any effect of gender on the development of TPI. However, with the increasing interest in this issue, later research projects have noted significant differences in how men and women from different fields of knowledge construct their TPI during their initial teacher training process (e.g., Pérez-Gracia et al., 2019). Along this line, Healey and Hays (2012) had already done a study where the differences between male and female participants with respect to aspects of professional identity were evaluated. The results of the discriminant analysis indicated gender differences in the development of professional identity. An additional regression analysis revealed a significant predictive relationship between professional engagement and professional identity development and orientation. However, no recent long-term and large-scale studies on EFL teachers' TPI were found.

Secondly, contextual factors should be considered within the training background. The placement period included in the secondary education teacher training master's program is one of the aspects that has been more widely analyzed since preservice teachers' participation in teaching practicum gives them both changes and challenges related to tasks such as planning or coordination with colleagues (Leeferink et al., 2019). Therefore, Yuan et al. (2019) state that "confronting a new learning environment, student teachers are likely to create new forms of identities through their cognitive learning, social interactions and emotional experiences" (p. 975). Consequently, they may start to create an identity different from the one they already have, and it will possibly influence their practice and development. These dissonances sometimes help them grew and reflect on their own professional learning. Moreover, learning by doing with mentors and peers as well as designing a professional project are decisive in TPI building (Schaefer & Clandinin, 2019). Finally, receiving specific training on pedagogy, psychology, and teaching methodologies also contributes to the way they feel dedicated to teaching (Tashma-Baum, 2014).

All in all, we believe this study is important to deeply analyze how the participants understand TPI and which aspects they believe contribute to its development. Thus, the results could bring about the opportunity to critically

reflect on the ways their training could be reinforced so as to reduce the anxiety and lack of confidence caused by the native vs. non-native dichotomy (Hashemi et al., 2021). In addition, this study results in newness in diverse issues: dualities on TPI construction among English as a first language preservice teachers and non-English as a first language preservice teachers, lack of studies focused on TPI construction as well as the importance of gender in TPI construction in this collective.

The objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the beliefs of a group of non-English as a first language EFL preservice teachers about TPI and its influencing factors.
2. To identify whether there are significant differences between men and women in this regard.
3. If differences are found, to identify the factors responsible for them.

Method

This is an empirical and descriptive study based on the quantitative analysis of data collected over several academic years within a master's degree in secondary education teacher training.

Participants

The sample was made up of 131 preservice EFL teachers from six consecutive academic years (2014–2020), 84% were women and 16% men. The sampling technique applied was convenience sampling (Emerson, 2015). Since participants were selected based on availability and willingness to take part, they participated voluntarily in the study. The average age of the sample was 21.2. All participants were enrolled in the master's degree in secondary education teacher training at Universidad de Córdoba (Spain). However, their home university (where they carried out their degree studies) were as follows: most of the participants were from the Universidad de Córdoba (82%), while 9% were from other universities in Andalusia, 7% were

from other universities in Spain, and 2% were from universities in other countries.

In Spain—and in other European countries (Eurydice, 2018)—initial teacher education follows a consecutive training model which focuses on training in pedagogy. In the case of secondary education teachers, people first need to hold a degree in a specific area such as EFL and then, if they are interested in becoming secondary education teachers, it is compulsory for them to enroll in the master's degree in secondary education teacher training, which also includes a placement period where preservice teachers are immersed in real education contexts.

Instrument for Data Collection

This study was carried out using a questionnaire designed on the basis of a previous qualitative study (Pérez-Gracia et al., 2021). The instrument is made up of 40 variables divided into two sections:

- Section 1 gathers information about the participants regarding nine independent variables related to various socio-demographic data, namely sex, age, field of knowledge, degree studies, time since they finished their degree studies, current employment situation, teaching experience, length of teaching experience, academic year in which they are enrolled in the master's degree.
- Section 2 corresponds to a five-point Likert scale with response options varying from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 5 (*totally agree*). It comprises 31 items organised in four dimensions (D1, D2, D3, and D4) related to the following respective aspects: D1 = 15 items on elements that globally characterize or define the TPI; D2 = five items on the development of the TPI in different stages of education; D3 = five items on differences in the way teachers and other professionals construct their professional identity, and D4 = six items on the aspects that contribute towards the development of the TPI.

However, for this study, two dimensions have been chosen: Elements that globally characterize the TPI (D1) and aspects that contribute towards the development of TPI (D4). The decision was made to use these two dimensions due to the scope of the journal as well as because D1 and D4 respond to a more personal and reflective perspective whereas the other dimensions have to do with more professional and contextual issues (Pérez-Gracia et al., 2019).

The instrument was validated in terms of content, comprehension, and construct. Firstly, the content and comprehension validity were carried out by a panel of experts through a pilot study, so it was improved regarding readability, internal consistency, and appropriateness of the scale. Then, after applying confirmatory procedures, the panel demonstrated the instrument has a satisfactory metric quality too. The indices show that the adjustment of the proposed model is highly appropriate, as the goodness of fit index (GFI) has a value of 0.889, 0.872 for the adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) and 0.773 for the parsimony goodness of fit index (PGFI). The x2 has a value of 2.401. Finally, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) shows that the model has a good fit, with an index of 0.05 (Lo = 0.046–Hi = 0.054), and the RMR is 0.044. All in all, the instrument is solid and has a reliable psychometric quality (0.879 Cronbach's alpha).

Research Procedure

The data employed in this study were collected at the beginning of the specific module of Complements to Disciplinary Training of the master's degree in secondary education teacher training at the Universidad de Córdoba (Spain). We chose this module because it deals with issues regarding teachers' professional profiles and development, which is in alignment with TPI formation. This module is taught in the first semester of the master's studies, and data were collected during face-to-face lessons.

Prior to data collection, students were informed of the objective of the study and its importance. Then, they were also told about the ethical issues such as the anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy of their answers. Only those students who were willing to participate answered the questionnaire, which took them between fifteen and twenty minutes.

Data Analysis

Diverse statistical treatments were applied in order to achieve the objectives of the study. Firstly, based on the first objective, descriptive analyses (mean values and standard deviation) were applied in order to find out non-English as a first language EFL preservice teachers' beliefs regarding TPI understanding as well as its influencing aspects. These analyses were done using SPSS V25.

Secondly, to be able to identify whether there were significant differences among the participants based on their gender in both dimensions of the instrument (Objective 2), we carried out the Permutational Multivariate Analysis of Variance (PERMANOVA).

Finally, in order to discover the variables responsible for these significant differences, SIMPER (Similarity Percentages) was applied so as to calculate the percentages of similarity/dissimilarity between the two levels of the gender factor. Thus, it allowed us to determine which items were responsible for the greatest proportion of gender differences among the variables on the questionnaire that the PERMANOVA determined as being significant. The PERMANOVA analysis was done using PRIMER V6.

Results

This section presents the results based on the objectives of the study.

Trends in EFL Preservice Teachers' Beliefs on TPI

Considering the first objective, Table 1 presents the participants' beliefs about TPI and its influencing factors.

Table 1. EFL Preservice Teachers' Beliefs on TPI

Dimension	Variable	Mean	Standard deviation
D1: Elements that globally characterize teachers' professional identity	1A. Having an adequate capacity to teach	4.21	0.883
	1B. Feeling a high level of commitment to the teaching profession	4.41	0.763
	1C. Having solid training regarding education and teaching	4.17	0.776
	1D. Building a positive self-image as an aspiring teacher	4.1	0.876
	1E. Knowing how to adapt yourself to educational changes based on the circumstances	4.4	0.677
	1F. Using and mastering teaching communication techniques	4.44	0.703
	1G. Showing an interest in knowing and understanding students	4.62	0.638
	1H. Integrating information and communication technologies into teaching	3.87	1.026
	1I. Properly combining theory and practise about teaching	4.44	0.703
	1J. Worrying about human relationships in the educational context	4.46	0.715
	1K. Ability to manage class work and solve possible conflicts	4.63	0.599
	1L. Having high self-esteem as a teacher	4.07	0.896
	1M. Being an expert in one's discipline	4.32	0.757
	1N. Motivation to awaken the students' interest in learning	4.76	0.528
	1O. Adopting a reflective and self-critical attitude with regard to teaching practice	4.42	0.733
D4: Aspects that contribute towards the development of teachers' professional identity	4A. Longer placement period	4.21	0.977
	4B. A broader psycho-pedagogical training during the master's degree	3.92	1.053
	4C. The recognition and social evaluation of the teaching profession	3.97	0.928
	4D. The acquisition of new methodologies and the use of educational resources	4.07	0.994
	4E. Learning through experiences with other teaching professionals	4.42	0.723
	4F. The promotion of teacher motivation and the development of a professional project	4.28	0.93

Note. Own elaboration.

The first dimension, which refers to the participants' understanding of TPI, shows that there is a high level of agreement among participants since the frequency rates are higher than 3.5.

The items with the highest frequency values are related to motivating pupils during the teaching-learning process (1N, $\bar{x} = 4.76$), the ability to manage class work and solve possible conflicts (1K, $\bar{x} = 4.63$), showing interest in knowing and understanding students (1G, $\bar{x} = 4.62$), and worrying about human relationships in the educational context (1J, $\bar{x} = 4.46$). On the other hand, the items with the lowest frequency, and therefore, with the lowest rate of agreement have to do with integrating information and communication technologies (ICT) into teaching (1H, $\bar{x} = 3.87$), having high self-esteem as a teacher (1L, $\bar{x} = 4.07$), building a positive self-image as an aspiring teacher (1D, $\bar{x} = 4.1$), and having a solid training regarding education and teaching (1C, $\bar{x} = 4.17$).

The frequencies of the responses in Dimension 4 (aspects that contribute to the development of TPI) are slightly lower than in Dimension 1. The items with the highest frequency refer to learning through experiences with other teaching professionals (4E, $\bar{x} = 4.42$), the promotion of teacher motivation and the development of a professional project (4F, $\bar{x} = 4.28$), and a longer placement period (4A, $\bar{x} = 4.21$). However, the sample shows that a broader psycho-pedagogical training during the master's degree (4B, $\bar{x} = 3.92$) and the recognition and social evaluation of the teaching profession (4C, $\bar{x} = 3.92$) are not that important in the development of the participants' TPI, and there is a lower rate of agreement in this regard among preservice teachers.

Differences in Terms of Gender

Table 2 shows the results of the PERMANOVA analysis intended to identify the possible significant differences between the participating men and women regarding TPI understanding and influencing factors.

Table 2. Results of PERMANOVA According to Gender

Variable	Gl	Sc	F	p
Sex	1	188.91	3.438	0.004
Residues	129	7088.5	-	-
Total	130	7277.4		

Note. Own elaboration.

PERMANOVA results (Table 2) show that the independent variable sex significantly affects the way participants respond to the items on the scale in both dimensions (men and women respond differently; $F = 0.438$; $p = 0.004$). Finally, Table 3 shows the items responsible for these gender differences.

The results of the SIMPER analysis (Table 3) show an average dissimilarity of 11.03 between men and women. This difference is mainly owing to the following items:

- 4D: The acquisition of new methodologies and the use of educational resources (6.56%)
- 4B: A broader psycho-pedagogical training during the master's degree (6.49%)
- 4A: A longer placement period (6.36%)
- 4F: The promotion of teacher motivation and the development of a professional project (6.06%)
- 1H: Integrating ICT into teaching (5.99%)
- 1B: Feeling a high level of commitment to the teaching profession (5.54%)
- 4C: The recognition and social evaluation of the teaching profession (5.33%)
- 1D: Building a positive self-image as an aspiring teacher (5.22%)
- 1A: Having an adequate capacity to teach (5.19%)

Women showed higher frequency levels than men in all of these items with the exception of 1A where the frequency was reversed. Moreover, most of the items responsible for the differences in terms of sex belong to the dimension about the aspects that contribute to the construction of TPI.

Table 3. Contribution of Each Item to the Dissimilarity Between Men and Women

		Average dissimilarity = 11.03				
		Women	Men			
Dimension	Item	Mean	Mean	Av. Diss.	Contr. %	Cum. %
4	4D	4.18	3.48	0.72	6.56	6.56
4	4B	3.99	3,52	0.72	6.49	13.04
4	4A	4.28	3.86	0.70	6.36	19.40
4	4F	4.38	3.76	0.67	6.06	25.46
1	1H	3.91	3.67	0.66	5.99	31.45
1	1B	4.53	3.81	0.61	5.54	36.99
4	4C	4.03	3.67	0.59	5.33	42.32
1	1D	4.17	3.71	0.58	5.22	47.55
1	1A	4.20	4.24	0.57	5.19	52.74
1	1L	4.13	3.76	0.55	5.00	57.74
1	1C	4.23	3.86	0.50	4.54	62.28
1	1J	4.52	4.14	0.48	4.37	66.65
1	1F	4.49	4.14	0.47	4.27	70.92
1	1I	4.51	4.10	0.46	4.20	75.12
1	1M	4.32	4.33	0.46	4.19	79.32
1	1O	4.45	4.24	0.46	4.13	83.44
4	4E	4.43	4.38	0.41	3.70	87.15
1	1E	4.43	4.29	0.39	3.57	90.72

Note. Own elaboration.

Discussion and Conclusions

Considering the relevance of how language teachers shape their TPI (Trejo-Guzmán & Mora-Vázquez, 2018), this research aims to make a contribution to educational research on initial teacher training from a gender perspective that contemplates various aspects of the way in which non-English as a first language EFL preservice teachers build their TPI. Specifically, it examines how non-English as a first language EFL preservice teachers understand the concept of TPI and which aspects they think may modify it. Additionally, it shows that there are differences in the participants' beliefs in terms of gender. Hence, this study is a new contribution to TPI field of research since there are no previous studies in

which an independent variable such as gender has been analyzed as responsible for differences in non-English as a first language EFL future teachers' beliefs. Most of the studies focused on TPI have considered external variables such as participants' previous experience and training or their field of knowledge and devoted less attention to internal and personal variables such as gender or age.

This group of future teachers who have followed a consecutive training model is sensitive for diverse reasons, but mainly, due to the controversy that still exists in non-EFL countries regarding the aptitude of EFL teachers (native vs. non-native). Therefore, not only it is decisive to know in depth how they perceive the

meaning and influence of TPI during their initial training so as to strengthen their social image, self-esteem, and commitment to the profession in their near future (Yuan et al., 2019; Zhu et al., 2020), but it is also necessary to study how the native vs. non-native dichotomy affects their TPI development in more detail while paying specific attention to those future teachers whose first language is not English. Thus, future research may explore and analyze this issue considering its impact on teachers' professional development.

To start with the first research objective, this study shows that preservice teachers already have their own conceptions and beliefs regarding TPI, although their previous experience in education is limited. There is a broad degree of agreement among participants since they broadly relate the understanding of TPI to being motivated to awaken students' interest in learning, having the ability to manage their classrooms and solve interpersonal conflicts, and being concerned about interpersonal relationships in educational contexts. These results coincide with previous studies (Leeferink et al., 2019; Meijer et al., 2011) that point out the connection between TPI and the attitude with which preservice and in-service teachers face their training and professional development. However, the participants did not agree to a great extent that the use of ICT or receiving good training in education and teaching has anything to do with their identity as teachers. Nor did they concur that building a positive image as an aspiring teacher and developing a high self-esteem had anything to do with TPI. These last results are not in line with Day (2018) and Torriente and Villardón-Gallego (2018), who clearly identified emotional wellbeing and resilience as framing TPI and teacher social prestige as a determining factor in identity and quality of education. This leads us to think that research on TPI should be focused and approached by areas of specialization since its construction changes depending on the group.

As for Dimension 1, participants did not show values of agreement as high as in Dimension 4. However,

they were consistent in believing that learning through experiences with other teaching professionals (their future colleagues), developing a professional project, and the placement period were the most decisive factors in TPI construction. These outcomes agree with other studies such as the ones carried out by Yuan et al. (2019), Schaefer and Clandinin (2019), and Deng et al. (2018), who emphasized the importance of practicum to solve the numerous dilemmas and internal conflicts that preservice teachers have regarding classroom authority vs. the ethic of caring, feeling part of an institution vs. feeling like a stranger, seeing themselves as teachers or other professionals, and dichotomies regarding teaching approaches. In this sense, the literature confirms that the first experience student teachers have in real educational contexts is conclusive in making them feel committed and engaged with their professional career. In contrast the participants in this study did not clearly associate broader psycho-pedagogical training and the social status of the teaching professions with TPI influencing factors. These ideas dissent with other studies—such as the one by Day (2018)—since the scholars noted that preventing training needs and teaching social status directly contribute to the development of their identity as soon-to-be-teachers.

The second and third objectives could be discussed together. This study shows that there are significant differences between how non-English as a first language EFL preservice teachers respond to the questionnaire in term of their gender, that is, men and women answered differently as has already been highlighted in previous studies but in different fields of knowledge, not in EFL. This coincides with a previous study done on future science and technology teachers in which gender was also determinant (Pérez-Gracia et al., 2019) and with Egmir and Celik (2019), who proved that preservice teachers' educational beliefs and identities significantly diverge in terms of gender. Moreover, this study also agrees with the perspectives and insights of Kapitanoff and Pandey (2017), who put emphasis on the existence of

social stereotypes that indicate a progressive process of feminization of the teaching profession. However, these previous studies do not provide detailed information on the aspects of TPI construction about which men and women think differently. Therefore, the present study goes further in this regard, and it also contributes to the lack of evidence indicated by Monroy and Hernández-Pina (2014).

The level of agreement is higher for women than for men in most of the variables. The items in which men and women differ more are mainly related to the aspects that contribute to TPI construction and development whereas there is higher consistency with respect to Dimension 1.

Differences are more pronounced in issues related to the use of educational resources, psycho-pedagogical training, the need for a longer placement period, and the promotion of teacher motivation and development of a professional project. It seems that the participants are not quite sure that these aspects are related to TPI since they have low frequency values in the descriptive analyses too.

All in all, one of the most relevant facts is that future non-English as a first language EFL teachers showed an interest in the development of a professional teaching identity from the very beginning of their training and that their belief of TPI is closely linked to the interest in acquiring professional skills appropriate to improve the teaching and learning processes throughout the placement period (Yuan et al., 2019). Therefore, from these results we can infer the need to rethink the curriculum of this master's degree and strengthen the work towards an adequate construction of TPI to improve future teachers' confidence and commitment. Moreover, identity and language build each other through a complex process, where identity is founded as a changing, multifaceted, and dynamic construct that arises from the interaction of the individual with their environment. This fact also has pedagogical implications for initial teacher training programs in our current context (Chacón, 2010). In this respect, the results of various investigations of TPI in early career EFL teachers show that academic transitions, the link with the English language, teacher training programs as well as the professional culture in the work environment have a major impact on the formation of their professional identity (Trejo-Guzmán & Mora-Vázquez, 2018). However, what is unique about this study is that it includes one more aspect to consider when designing curriculum and training programmes for EFL future teacher, namely, gender. It cannot be part of the hidden curriculum but the results of the present research point to the need to reinforce different formative aspects in men and women during their periods as student teachers since it seems they may interpret TPI and the importance of its development in different ways. Finally, incorporating reflection activities in various parts of the specific master's degree module to reinforce their confidence and self-esteem could be determinant too.

Note that the data is the result of the participants' self-perceptions, which may be a limitation due to subjectivity. Therefore, there could be varied beliefs about the same fact depending on the context where the instrument is applied. However, it could also be seen as a positive point since it gives us first-hand information on how the participants understand TPI and its construction process (Gutiérrez-Castillo & Cabrero-Almenara, 2016).

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Mentoring Language Student-Teachers: A Narrative Perspective to Mentors' Experiences From Borders and Cracks

Tutoría de estudiantes-profesores de idiomas: una perspectiva narrativa de experiencias de mentores desde fronteras y grietas

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This narrative study analyzes two mentors' experiences in their mentoring practices with language student-teachers in a private university in Bogotá (Colombia). Employing life-story interviews and drawing on ways of thinking and theorizing from praxis as a standpoint to enact decoloniality, we approach mentors' narratives from the notion of *crack*. Findings reveal that, for mentors, mentoring practices represent a space for knowledge reconfiguration, a locus of collective knowledge construction, and territories where student-teachers can mobilize and exercise their agency. Overall, when making meaning of clashing experiences in mentoring, mentors have constructed ways to fracture traditional and hegemonic logics of seeing knowledge and the self in teacher education.

Keywords: decolonization, mentoring, personal narratives, student-teachers, teacher education

Este estudio narrativo analiza las experiencias de dos educadores en sus tutorías con futuros docentes de lenguas de una universidad en Bogotá (Colombia). Utilizando entrevistas y adoptando formas de pensar y teorizar la praxis como una postura para representar la descolonización, nos aproximamos a las narrativas de los tutores desde la noción de *grieta*. Los hallazgos revelan que las tutorías representan un espacio de reconfiguración y construcción colectiva de saberes y territorios donde los estudiantes-profesores pueden ejercer su agencia. En general, al dar sentido a experiencias conflictivas en la tutoría, los mentores han encontrado maneras de fracturar las lógicas tradicionales y hegemónicas de ver los saberes y a sí mismos en la formación docente.

Palabras clave: descolonización, estudiante-profesor, formación de docentes, narrativas, tutoría

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Introduction

Teacher mentoring is a prominent complement scenario in teacher education programs (TEPs) for furthering student-teachers' experiences in practicum settings (Bullough & Draper, 2004). As an education practice, mentoring has described different approaches in teacher education literature. Some views comprise mentoring to develop knowledge and skills for future teachers (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Walkington, 2004) or build their teaching profession (Hudson, 2013b; Parker, 2010). Other more critical postures view mentoring as a process of assisting student-teachers to "enter the profession as critical inquirers and knowledgeable practitioners" (Edwards-Groves, 2014, p. 151).

Regardless of the perspective, the variety of studies on mentoring acknowledges the importance of the teaching practice (field experience, practicum) in the educative process of future teachers (Liu, 2014; Mena et al., 2017). Arguably, this influence of practicum in learning is believed to contribute to student-teachers' understanding of their roles as teachers and their ability to learn from field experiences (Graham, 2006). Moreover, additional literature has brought forward the importance of teacher educators (mentors) in developing knowledge and expertise about student-teachers' teaching (McIntyre et al., 2005; Mena et al., 2017). Notwithstanding, a few studies propose to re-think the linearity of accepted visions in mentoring that continue to suggest "hierarchical relationships between mentors and mentees" in which "the mentor has or can provide knowledge and skills that the mentee wants or needs" (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010, p. 43). Relatedly, in this paper, we find the opportunity to broaden the understandings of mentoring as a realization instilled by the dialogical nature of relationships between student-teachers and educators and the potential reconfigurations of notions about teaching, language, and the selves that can emerge for participants in teacher mentoring practices (TMPs).

We shared the idea that essential logics that naturalize hierarchical roles and verticalize knowledge constructions in mentoring are rooted in patterns of epistemic domination, power, and powerlessness reproduced in education. In this regard, some Colombian studies have questioned the colonial foundations that prevail in teacher education (Fandiño-Parra, 2013; Granados-Beltrán, 2018). Consequently, the decolonial option to approach how both mentors and student-teachers co-construct and negotiate their systems of beliefs concerning where they exist, think, and do, is another valid standpoint of thought. This implies engaging in a praxis of exposing the universal signifier in teacher education and "disturb the totality from which the universal and the global are most often perceived" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 2). Therefore, approaching teacher education from the mentors' and mentees' perspectives would help restore teachers' agency and disrupt naturalized beliefs in TEPs that dislocate pedagogical realities.

This study explores mentors' situated experiences in mentoring as dialogical pedagogic territories by unveiling more textured understandings of mentors, mentoring, and teaching and learning English. To that end, we approximate mentors' experiences and discourses from the notion of *crack*. According to Mignolo and Walsh (2018), "cracks enable us to re-configure ourselves as subjects outside [the] us/them binary . . . to construct alternative roads, create new topographies and geographies . . . to look at the world with new eyes, use competing systems of knowledge, and rewrite identities" (p. 83). Thus, we intend to find ruptures in mentors' experiences to navigate into their epistemological and ontological conceptions and construct an alternative notion of teacher education from mentoring.

Theoretical Framework

Mentoring in Teaching Education

Literature about language teacher mentoring has substantially addressed the potential to foster prospective teachers' learning in teacher education.

Some scholars have problematized mentoring as a social practice (Kemmis et al., 2014) that empowers "prospective teachers to think about expanded ways of engaging [in curricula and] in pedagogy" (Campbell & Brummett, 2007, p. 50). In the same vein, Sandelowski and Barroso (2007) conceive mentoring as a cornerstone in preservice teacher education since it encompasses teaching experiences for preparing new teachers for ever-changing educative contexts. Others have defined mentoring as "both a relationship and a process" (Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2005, p. 276), or as "a particular mode of learning wherein the mentor not only supports the mentee but also challenges them productively so that progress is made" (Smith, 2007, p. 277). From a more dialogical viewpoint, though, Fairbanks et al. (2000) assume mentoring as "complex social interactions that mentor teachers and student teachers construct and negotiate for a variety of professional purposes and in response to the contextual factors they encounter" (p. 103).

While literature about definitions and approaches on mentoring abounds, most of those constructions respond to traditional archetypes of mentors, mentees, and knowledge. In echoing this posture, Mena et al. (2017) contend that "many teacher education programs (whether knowingly or otherwise) are criticized for reproducing unidirectional views of mentoring that are more aligned to traditional approaches in which validated knowledge from research in teacher education is conveyed (transmitted) to pre-service teachers" (p. 48). On the one hand, mentors (teacher educators) are still assigned roles of experts and transmitters of Western knowledge that the mentees (student-teachers) need to know (see, for example, Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010), epitomizing the positionings of colonial selves over subaltern others (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). On the other hand, knowledge is fragmented and simplified under transmissible categories such as "skills" and "strategies" where the construct *pedagogical knowledge* is still used as a unitary facet of teacher knowledge (Shulman, 1986).

According to Castañeda-Londoño (2019), this episteme "stems from the European modernity," hence "does not leave room for other forms of knowledge" (p. 226).

Indeed, this juncture has called for situated studies of mentoring in teacher education. Darwin (2000), for instance, critiqued arbitrary "expert and learner" portrayals in mentoring and explored more democratic practices that engender "opportunities for dialogue" (p. 206). Khoja-Moolji (2017) proposed a type of pedagogical encounters to subvert colonial ways of knowledge production in teacher education. Furthermore, Wetzel et al. (2017) worked on mentoring from the basis of struggling against notions that perpetuate mentors' roles as trainers who install in student-teachers an array of discrete competencies to teach. At the local level, Lucero (2015) reflected on what mentors need to know for pedagogical practicum mentoring.

In more recent research, Pattisson (2020) found out how practitioners' agency was hindered due to cultural assumptions that both mentors and mentees bring to mentoring. On a different note, studies that focus on mentors' construction of identities (Lammert et al., 2020; Smit & du Toit, 2021), professional growth (Walters et al., 2020), and dialogic reflective practice for the construction of mutual knowledge (Hall, 2020) are bringing in valuable discussions to the field. Nevertheless, there is still a necessity to research on unveiling how the diversity of subjectivities, visions, and experiences struggle to emerge in *borders* and *cracks* within and across mentoring practices.

Language Teacher Practicum

Teacher practicum is a type of social practice that turns into a pedagogical praxis when reflections are individual and collective between teacher educators and student-teachers. Vásquez (2006) contends that in the teaching practicum, educative and academic dynamics converge. In this way, the practicum turns into territories where commitments with being, doing, and knowing about pedagogy emerge. These perspectives

align with most recent local studies that problematize teacher practicum and make efforts to delink it from the theoretical tenets and conceptual instruments of Western thought. In this regard, concerning the teacher education field, some Colombian authors, such as Fandiño-Parra and Bermúdez-Jiménez (2015), claim that teacher practicum cannot be reduced to the mere practice of teaching English and its technical processes in the classroom. Beyond that, it is fundamental to open dialogic spaces that broaden the understandings of practicum to see its real scope and nature (Fandiño-Parra & Bermúdez-Jiménez, 2015).

Lucero and Roncancio-Castellanos (2019) carried out a study to discuss English language student-teachers' pedagogical practicum experiences. They studied how student-teachers envisioned themselves as English language teachers during the pedagogical practicum. The authors found out that BA programs in language teaching concentrate on theory instruction and disregard emotional dimensions when becoming teachers. As regards this perspective, it has been documented that the teaching practicum is "believed to be an important stage . . . helping [student-teachers] reinforce, expand and improve what they have learned in the pedagogical institutions" (Nguyen, 2014, p. 47). Nevertheless, it is also a moment when acquired knowledge is contested or developed. Then, it becomes a critical moment in student-teachers' careers to question the idea of competence (Biesta, 2012).

Bearing this in mind, there seems to be an evident instrumentalization at the time of accompanying student-teachers in their teaching practicum. Ubaque-Casallas and Aguirre-Garzón (2020) found that, after analyzing lesson planning events, student-teachers tend to base their practices on all theoretical knowledge instructed by the mentors or the acquired beliefs on how English should be taught. Looking critically at this, it results from an evident hegemonic dominance over English language teacher education maintained through the instruction on language teaching method(s).

According to Kumaravadivelu (2003), this is a "colonial construct of marginality" (p. 541) that has perpetuated epistemological and ontological control over mentors and student-teachers' practices and discourses.

Our Thinking on Decoloniality

Decoloniality is "the disengagement of the logic of modernity and an alternative epistemic other" (Rincón et al., 2015, p. 75). This assumption recognizes that knowledge and practices outside the bounds of Western modernity are often ignored, marginalized, or repressed; a decolonial approach would signify decoloniality as an option to construct in mentoring from and within the cracks. This means understanding mentoring from "the place of our location, agency, and everyday struggle" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 82).

By the same token, our understanding of decoloniality is simple. It is a way of thinking and being installed "in the postures, processes, and practices that disrupt, transgress, intervene and in-surge in, and that mobilize, propose, provoke, activate, and construct an otherwise, that decoloniality is signified and given substance, meaning, and form" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 34). In this sense, decoloniality emerges as an option to think of possibilities of knowing and being otherwise. According to Andreotti (2011), there should be some emphasis on inquiring colonial relations within a "discursive orientation, learning toward poststructuralism, focusing on contestation and complicity in the relationship between colonizers and colonized and on the possibility of imagining relationships beyond coercion, subjugation, and epistemic violences" (p. 17). Despite the advances of TEPs towards more liberatory and situated educative practices, there are still, conscious or unconscious, coercive and repressive belief systems that disable the transformation of the discourse and relationships of inequality in educational contexts.

Therefore, we agree with McEwan (2019), who claims that to decolonize traditional spaces of education, it is paramount "to create different educational

establishments in which . . . subaltern ways of knowing form the basis of scholarly and pedagogical practices" (p. 364). One way to think differently about educating teachers is to disclose and disrupt how mentoring may work as the means for the de/colonization in teacher education.

Method

Narrative Inquiry as Research Path

This study takes on narrative inquiry as a research path. We see this approach as "a means to develop and value knowledge that had not always been valued in teacher education, one rooted in experience rather than research" (McAlpine, 2016, p. 34). For Barkhuizen et al. (2014) "narrative inquiry can help us to understand how language teachers [and mentor teachers] and learners organize their experiences . . . and represent them to themselves and to others" (p. 5). Arguably, narrative inquiry becomes a pathway to embracing contradictions and multiple possibilities within stories rather than seeking coherence (White & Epston, 1990).

Additionally, we believe narrative inquiry helps this study document mentors' experiences from borders and cracks. These experiences are narratives that bring numerous overlapped and interrelated (Berbary, 2011) meanings about mentoring. We see such meanings as "the meaning-making, learning, or knowledge construction that takes place during the narrative research activities of (co)constructing narratives, analyzing narratives, reporting the findings, and reading/watching/ listening to research reports" (Barkhuizen, 2011, p. 395).

Further, since narratives offer influence—the narrator views themselves and makes decisions to act (Holley & Colyar, 2009), we believe they become a sort of "pedagogy of narrating life" (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2002, p. 408) that encourages teacher's agency, (re)signifying and legitimizing stories that have been commonly marginalized.

Context and Participants

The study took place in a private university in Bogotá, Colombia, within a language education program frame. As part of their practicum process in schools, student-teachers complement their teaching practice with mentoring sessions led by a teacher educator (mentor) in the university, who accompanies them in their teaching practicum. Mentoring practices are a complementary component of the course "Teaching Practicum." Mentors hold these encounters every other week during one semester with groups of maximum four students assigned by the program. In those sessions, both mentors and student-teachers get together more informally, in a less structured way than a standard class, and dialogue and reflect upon the practicum and pedagogical situations emerging from it. Two male mentors, Edward and Dimitri (pseudonyms), participated in this study. Due to the accessibility of the teacher educators, convenience sampling was employed to select the participants. Both participants hold MA degrees, and their trajectories (i.e., their time at the university in the teaching practicum) were relevant to explore their situated experiences in mentoring.

Before partaking in the study, the participants received information about its objective and scope, and the procedure to share their experiences. They signed consent forms that evidenced agreement and willingness to participate.

Data Analysis and Exploration of Experiences

The study employed *life story interview* as a tool to gather mentors' experiences. Therefore, we adopted a holistic approach of analysis in which the complete account of experiences was separated into sections and analyzed; each section being constantly contrasted with the rest of the whole story (Lieblich et al., 1998). Through this approach, we acknowledged that although life stories can be composed of sequences of events, their complexity is greater as a story is each person's representation of

his or her experience (Atkinson, 1998). Moreover, we aimed to establish a horizontal conversation from the experiences inspected by avoiding scientific hierarchies (Ortiz-Ocaña et al., 2018) in the analysis. We chose to conduct interviews in Spanish and then translated them into English to be further transcribed. As such, since "it is impossible to anticipate what a life story interview [would] be like, not so much for how to do it, but for the power of the experience itself" (Atkinson, 2012, p. 119); we did not focus on structuring the interviews. In fact, "the *less structure a life story interview has, the more effective it will be* in achieving the person's own story in the way, form and style that the individual wants to tell it in" (Atkinson, 1998, p. 41, emphasis in the original).

Accordingly, in the analysis of experiences, we did not consider either "coding for themes, [or] categorizing these and looking for patterns of association among them" (Barkhuizen, 2013, p. 11) to present them as data. Instead, we aimed to guarantee voices' subjective essence (Atkinson, 1998) by setting eyes on personal thoughts, perceptions, and interactions (Barkhuizen, 2014) as relevant aspects of understanding mentors' experiences. Moreover, we can say that in both the analysis and in the findings report, we drew on the notion of *crack* to configure a body of research "toward the edges and borders" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 82). From this perspective, we attempted to provide an alternative notion of teacher education by tailoring the analysis of experiences with theory and starting a discussion about the epistemological configurations that mentors install, guide, co-construct, or configure in or with student-teachers.

Experiences About Mentoring

Our Conversation With Edward

This conversation departs from the recognition of two important concepts. First, "mentoring makes public the knowledge necessary for good practice in the form of symbolic representations (e.g., language statements)

within the immediacy of action setting" (Mena et al., 2016, p. 54); and second, that teacher practicum is a critical component of teacher preparation (Zeichner, 2010). As teacher practicum has been fundamental in teacher education (Trent, 2013), it is essential to pinpoint that it encapsulates feelings, beliefs, and background experiences in which mentor teachers and student-teachers engage in a mutual construction of the teaching experience (Lucero, 2015). Therefore, revealing the intimacy of our conversations with Edward attempts to delink (Mignolo, 2007) from fixed notions of mentoring.

Although teacher practicum enables "pre-service EFL teachers to have a better understanding of being a teacher" (Tüfekçi-Can & Baştürk, 2018, p. 189), it is relevant as well for mentor teachers who seem to co-construct and negotiate with student-teachers their systems of beliefs. Take, for example, Edward's construction in which mentor teachers can mold student-teachers' beliefs about teaching. The excerpt below opens the room to inspect deeper this assumption.

> In the university, it is precisely about accompanying students to schools, observing their sessions, and guiding them in the methodological and didactic designs they will implement in schools. One tries to guide them in one way or another. However, I discovered a fine line between what it is to show and, let us say, how to open the way for the student-teachers to find those ideologies, those teaching philosophies, language philosophies, philosophies of learning. These are built in their practice sites, and what the teacher shows can influence, maybe, in modeling those philosophies.

Edward makes evident that, although mentor teachers have to accompany student-teachers in the teacher practicum by observing and guiding them in the disciplinary/instrumental dimension of teaching, mentor teachers play a role in the epistemological construction of student-teachers. For instance, the literature available still builds teacher education as "the sum of experiences and activities through

which individuals learn to be language teachers" (Freeman, 2001, p. 72). This has meant for student-teachers and mentors to "keep aligned to that imposed knowledge and practices, [in which] there is no space for a pre-service language teacher to explore different alternatives" (Castañeda-Trujillo & Aguirre-Hernández, 2018, p. 159).

Traditionally, language teaching ideologies and philosophies have been rooted in what Pennycook (1998) defines as the imperialistic nature of English language teaching (ELT). For instance, the teacher practicum has been an instrumentalized space for student-teachers to use methods and approaches learned in their TEPs. Nevertheless, Edward's narrative reveals that mentor teachers play a role in offering a choice between just guiding in the implementation of what has been learned and guiding student-teachers in the discovery of the teaching practice. Being the former the act of maintaining rationality over teaching by having student-teachers "adapt [a method] to their learners, or their learners to it" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 20), and the latter an attempt to delink from the subaltern condition (Mignolo, 2010) imposed on English language teachers.

Such an attempt can be a path Edward builds upon. In the following excerpt, we aim to connect to Edward's agency as a mentor teacher.

> There are readings by different authors in a course. [Student-teachers] read them and think, perhaps at some point, that this literature is part of a system of knowledge that they should apply in practice when they reach a school. So, there is that verticality. They somehow translate it when they come to college as interns. They hope that both the professor at university and the mentor give them guidelines or instructions to follow in the classroom. I try to avoid that because what I believe is that they should base their teaching philosophy, establish it or adapt it, from which the teacher has already denounced; I mean, how am I going to do the same thing that he is doing? So, we open a way for them to start reflecting.

Edward denounces the vertical knowledge construction student-teachers are exposed to in the TEPs. Such a construction is part of a sign and value system that student-teachers believe needs to be applied. Nonetheless, his doing as a mentor teacher goes beyond this positivist paradigm. Instead, he engages in a more liberatory role in which "student teachers can claim ownership of their teaching practices to delink from fixed, universal, and Cartesian notions of conceiving teaching and being a teacher" (Ubaque-Casallas & Aguirre-Garzón, 2020, p. 140). Importantly, Edward seems to look for a path toward reflection. Such a path is geared towards delinking from the verticality in knowledge construction.

In the TEPs, it cannot be disregarded that knowledge production has been tied to the form, use, and content of the target language as the unique angle from where teachers understand their practice. In this respect, mentoring seems to embrace a different dimension in which it moves away from the idea of mentoring to "make teachers perfect in all aspects of teaching" (Aman, 2019, p. 243). Instead, Edward constructs mentoring as a space where student-teachers can make their own decisions informed by practical and theoretical knowledge. This breaks the traditional yet oppressive top-down perspective in which mentor teachers are seen as knowledge holders due to their experience. Such a construction advocates for the conception of alternative knowledges with different enunciative strategies in which mentor teachers' abilities dislocate the asymmetric relationship between mentors and mentees.

However, Edward's decision to open a path for reflection is also opening a way to disrupt the relational ontologies (Escobar, 2007) that have prevailed in the ELT field. The following excerpt allows a more in-depth inspection of the path above.

> I like to think precisely about constructing the knowledge that emerges from where they are doing the practice. Within the mentor's work, there is a particular inevitable accompaniment to processes that are already specific

and, let's say, more operational in the class, right? The lesson plan is an example that the student comes with a concern about whether this activity works, or not. Instead of telling them what they should do, we propose a dialogic process because they know more about the field than I do as a mentor. They know the students more than I do as a mentor because of a dialogical process of questioning them. They make those decisions together with the mentor; it is like co-construction, more or less. However, what I was referring to more than anything, was like a general teaching philosophy. They begin to create a more informed philosophy in what they live and what they mean, than in what the mentor tells them. That allows them to make sense of the knowledge they obtain and build in their practice and with me.

Edward proposes a dialogical construction of the TMPs. This proposal encourages student-teachers to create and mobilize knowledge based on their experience as student-teachers and on the dialogue with their mentors. As a matter of fact, Johnson and Golombek (2002) argue that:

> When theoretical knowledge is situated within the social contexts where it is to be used, when the interconnectedness of that knowledge is made apparent, and when language teachers have multiple opportunities to use that knowledge in interpretative ways, then theoretical knowledge has relevance for practice. (p. 8)

Nevertheless, Edward also seems to posit a framework towards a re-significance of the teacher mentoring process, in which students can mobilize and exercise their agency. In this respect, "agency appears as a key factor in reducing inequalities" (Archanjo et al., 2019, p. 73), a factor that has been continuously reduced and made invisible by frames of disciplinary knowledge imposed on student-teachers.

In closing this analysis, mentors and student-teachers' possibilities to exercise their agency and disrupt the monolithic and fixed roles assigned in education are enacted in TMPs. Edward has empowered them to focus on constructing and identifying ways of knowing (Kumaravadivelu, 2012) and being. Hopefully, those will shed light on distinctive ways to understand language, teaching, and learning from mentoring as praxis' pedagogical territories.

Our Conversation With Dimitri

Dimitri has mentored prospective language teachers for two years, accompanying student-teachers in local private schools. There, factors and practices can be demanding from pedagogical, institutional, and population points of view. Considering this, he has constructed a vision of teacher mentoring as a practice that suggests horizontal dialogues between alternative human configurations and academic narratives existing in TEPs.

> My involvement always starts from the institutional perspective. The mentor is the one who accompanies the practitioner in their pre-professional training. Therefore, the concepts we use are always from a traditional view, such as in-service teachers, preservice teachers.

Dimitri acknowledges there is an institutional narrative that underpins the TMPs in the university. This narrative shapes roles, functions, and practices that the practice of mentoring entails. Additionally, TEPs can converge specific value systems and ideologies with mentors' epistemologies of teacher education in mentoring spaces. In this sense, Dimitri argues that, in the mentoring practice, certain enunciations, roles, and positionings available for students-teachers (and mentors) from traditional logics of teacher development prevail. In echoing this posture, Hudson (2013a) argues that teacher education departments should invest more in preparing teacher educators "to become well-informed mentors" since they "must be prepared in their *roles* [emphasis added] by having *particular knowledge* [emphasis added] to take deliberate action in their mentoring" (p. 781). This might suggest ready-

made versions of unitary knowledge and assigned roles mentors need to assume to be "well-informed" to do their task.

As mentioned earlier, the previous discussion fits within the strategies of reproduction of the colonial matrix as it continues to privilege the "paradigm of the expert" discourse over the knowing-other. The process of pedagogical mentoring from this perspective stands over this basis of knowing and being. Nevertheless, although Dimitri addresses those logics as substantiating factors in initial language teacher mentoring, recognizing these traditional bases is a departure point to configure a more relational and dialogic outlook of his TMP.

> We, the ones who accompany student-teachers, are the ones who have some knowledge of the context in the central pedagogical practice, since we have already spent a few more years teaching. The accompaniment is precisely aimed at the practitioner, who comes with knowledge from her or his curricular program, from the pedagogical practice, and the understanding of the context, also from conversations with their mentor. They somehow build their vision or version of what language teaching should be. Here I withdraw a bit from what I was saying before, which is very different in the pedagogical practice.

Dimitri discloses an understanding of mentoring as an epistemological locus of collective construction where we recognize a triad of converging sources. One is the disciplinary and pedagogical *knowledges* prospective teachers obtain from the TEPs at the university. Another one is the *knowledges* they re-configure at the teaching practicum in the school. The other is the *knowledges* emerging from pedagogical conversations in the mentoring process. These three sources of *knowledges* interweave to shape different forms of knowing about teaching languages. We propose to analyze Dimitri's configuration of pedagogical knowledges in the TMPs under the metaphor of ecology. This helps to understand the circulations and spatial properties

of knowledge (Akera, 2007). Under this perspective, *knowledges* emerge from and across different geographical contexts and are interrelated, just like ecological systems in nature. TMPs from Dimitri's experience can be seen as a system where the plural complexity of knowledge production is valued (Akera, 2007) and legitimated as a source for student-teachers' knowledge reconfigurations.

Seemingly, this analysis of language teacher mentoring resounds in praxis from a decolonial gaze, which withdraws from the modern belief that we first theorize and then apply, as denounced by Mignolo and Walsh (2018). Dimitri's theorization emerges from a dynamic of living, thinking, and doing across his experience in TMPs, and conceives student-teachers' re-construction of teaching knowledge in the same vein. It is in the "praxis of living and the idea of theory-and-as-praxis and praxis-and-as-theory, and in the interdependence and continuous flow of movement of both" where "decoloniality is enacted and, at the same time, rendered possible" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 7).

This decolonial outlook of praxis emerging from TMPs imagines prospective teachers as knowledge generators (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). Hence, it "undertakes both resistive and reparative work" (Khoja-Moolji, 2017, p. 146) in teacher education. It removes academia as a universal source of teaching knowledge and restores agency for language teachers (Kumaravadivelu, 2003) while seeking to decenter dominant forms of intellectual productions (Mignolo, 2000). Therefore, mentoring, referred to as a locus of collective knowledge construction, is an ecological system fueled by clashing experiences that constitute epistemological cracks in Dimitri's experience. In the following excerpts, there is a realization of the role of disruptive phenomena emerging in prospective teachers' practicum topographies as a source for knowledge configurations in mentoring:

> In a school, this girl [a student-teacher] somehow was in a tough context. There were 60 students in a classroom; we had Afro students, students with disabilities, who

came from very vulnerable strata or socioeconomic conditions. Hence, it was a rich teaching environment in terms of the texture it had. However, at the same time, it was a very challenging environment for the pedagogical practice since this practitioner's lesson planning was always somewhat thought in linguistic terms, understood as what is taught. Language was not maybe considered from another perspective. . . . However, it was a context in which I believe that those who carry out pedagogical practice often start with that vision; with a version, or an incomplete image of what teaching is likely to be.

Dimitri retrieves this example to problematize a dislocated and essential teaching perspective that prospective teachers bring from teacher training scenarios into the practicum. In this regard, we have argued elsewhere that "student teachers' epistemologies include a view of acquired fixed knowledge that is learned during teaching preparation courses" (Ubaque-Casallas & Aguirre-Garzón, 2020, p. 133), and that sometimes, unwittingly or not, emerge in mentoring (Mena et al., 2017). This logic is referred to as rationalist teacher education, which evolves from a construct of coloniality in ELT education. In this vein, Granados-Beltrán (2016) argues that it is likely that coloniality sways student-teachers' beliefs, behaviors, and expectations related to their teaching practice. Language teaching imaginaries that are principled, mystified, and idealized versions shaped by TEPs are fractured in conflicting teaching settings and re-dimensioned through dialogue in teacher mentoring.

> The girl I have told you about, in the beginning, her pedagogical practices were based on handouts which sought that the students learned, for example, the use of modal verbs. In the reflections, we managed to locate a behavioral problem that arose, given the problematic relationships that her students had with each other. In the mentoring that we had with this student-teacher, what we achieved was to have a look a bit more from the ethnographic point of view, in terms of understanding

how our students relate to each other. . . . Also, I remember a lot that she, without my intervention, managed to find a mechanism to reconcile both voices, meaning, the first reading she made of reality and what emerged from conversations.

In mentoring, Dimitri has achieved a vision of himself as a mediator of prospective teacher's analytical praxis and mentoring itself as a site of *re-orienting-pedagogical encounters* where practitioners' language teaching visions are co-delineated and re-dimensioned by the agents in the process. In such *re-orienting-pedagogical encounters*, the student-teacher found an opportunity to look inward and backward and orient her teaching practices towards a more context-sensitive one (Kumaravadivelu, 2003) by making sense, along with the mentor, of conflictive experiences or *cracks* in her teaching practice. Seemingly, in this process, we argue that both the prospective teacher and Dimitri himself have committed to engaging in action toward anti-rational and decolonial ends (Khoja-Moolji, 2017) in language teaching. That discussion takes place also in dialogue as a path to democratize thought in TMPs.

> I believe that from the moment we sat down and asked a practitioner why she did or didn't do something, why she kept quiet, why she didn't, why he stood up, why he sat down. This implies leading in some way to the first meetings of reflection, to a kind of intervention that is a bit more critical in terms of why things are done in the classroom.

Dimitri resorts to dialogical practices and pedagogical questioning to guide prospective teachers to navigate their own language teaching experiences. In doing so, it seems that both re-establish their subjectivities and their knowledges about teaching. On the one hand, Dimitri configures his mentoring process towards an epistemological and ontological (re)shaping practice. On the other, the student-teacher sets on to devise different ways of sensing, being, thinking, and know-

ing about teaching. A pedagogical orientation aimed towards constructing democratic options for dialogue (Darwin, 2000), like the ones observed in Dimitri's TMPs, connects with a decolonial pedagogical praxis as much as it does not position teacher practitioners as subaltern others nor drags them to the periphery (Ortiz-Ocaña et al., 2018).

Finally, since we explored shades of decolonial thought emerging in the TMPs situated experiences in this paper, we open the discussion towards the plural value of Latin American thought (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). With this caveat in mind, alternative visions of language teaching co-delineated and re-configured in TMPs bring together a linguistic analysis of language teaching with more textured, local, and disruptive ways of doing foreign language pedagogy. Thus, avoiding a rejection or erasure of Western thought, as "Western thought is also part of the pluriversal" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 3). The aforementioned is portrayed in Dimitris' voice as follows:

> I think that this pedagogical practice served two purposes. She established a language teaching in terms of the instrumentalization of what the kids had to learn according to what the course syllabus offered them. However, she also managed to find in that class something more socially, critically oriented.

In Dimitri's experience we could envision a rich theorization of how subjectivities and epistemologies are collectively shaped for both student-teachers and teacher mentors, from a perspective of mentoring as a locus of collective knowledge construction. With this, we have attempted to extend the fixed conversation of mentoring for only enhancing prospective teachers' educational practices and building their level of expertise (Hudson, 2013a). This alternative construction of TMPs flows through a path of resisting static and hegemonic logics in teacher education that, according to Walsh (2015), is achieved by displacing and subverting inherited concepts and practices.

Conclusions and Implications

Mentoring continues to be a contested site where knowledge, practices, and subjectivities are shaped in pedagogical key. We demonstrated, by exploring Edward and Dimitri's life stories, how those constructions are still permeated by colonial ways of knowing, being, and doing that prevail in language teacher education. Nevertheless, we also showed that in the interrelation of mentoring practices and clashing experiences, Edward and Dimitri constructed alternative ways to see themselves as teacher educators and see knowledge as plural accounts of the epistemic fabric of teaching.

Despite the realization that mentoring hides a colonial logic in its rhetoric, not only did we see various cracks that can contest epistemic postulates in crisis, but also we observed in the mentors' narratives a more ecological notion of knowledges as they emerged from and across different topographies and dialogue with traditional, disciplinary knowledge. We conclude that this epistemic interrelation is also part of the *actionings* of decoloniality in pedagogy, since "decoloniality does not imply the absence of coloniality but rather the ongoing serpentine movement toward possibilities of other modes of being, thinking, knowing, sensing, and living" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 81).

Both Edward and Dimitri's experiences become a fertile ground to encourage more in-depth conversations about teaching experiences in TEPs and mentoring. Although findings reported here cannot become a universal guide to explore mentors' experiences elsewhere, nor should they be, it seems relevant for mentors in other TEPs to capitalize mentoring practices as a locus to question personal conceptions and the givens in teacher education. Also, these findings can trigger a more textured conversation around the need for more horizontal and dialogical options in mentoring.

Similarly, the localized epistemological ground established in this paper can inform TEPs to think of student-teachers' experiences in teacher practicum as the basis of the mentoring process and as a pedagogical

option to promote more ecological possibilities for *knowledges* (re)constructed in TMPs. Again, these thoughts are not to be seen as definite but as initiators of broader discussions in research around mentoring and teacher education in other periphery contexts.

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EFL Preservice Teachers' Technology Integration in Managing and Teaching Speaking Skills During Emergency Remote Teaching

Integración de la tecnología por parte de docentes de inglés en formación en la gestión y enseñanza de habilidades orales durante la enseñanza remota de emergencia

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This study aimed at investigating the EFL preservice teachers' technology integration in managing and teaching speaking skills online during emergency remote teaching in Indonesia. This study employed a single case study approach by implementing an explanatory sequential mixed method design. The findings showed that even though the preservice teachers used various technology tools, they frequently implemented WhatsApp, YouTube, and Google Forms for classroom management and teaching speaking purposes. This study offers some implications to advance English language teacher education programs to prepare the future EFL preservice teachers in the post-pandemic era.

Keywords: COVID-19, English as a foreign language, preservice teachers, technology integration, teaching speaking online

En este estudio se investigó la integración de la tecnología por parte de futuros docentes de inglés como lengua extranjera en el manejo y enseñanza de las habilidades del habla en línea durante la enseñanza remota de emergencia en Indonesia. Se empleó un enfoque de estudio de caso único mediante la implementación de un diseño de método mixto secuencial explicativo. Los hallazgos mostraron que aunque los docentes en formación utilizaban diversas herramientas tecnológicas, con frecuencia implementaban WhatsApp, YouTube y Google Forms para la gestión del aula y la enseñanza de la conversación en inglés. Este estudio ofrece algunas implicaciones para el avance de los programas de formación de docentes de inglés en la era pospandémica.

Palabras clave: COVID-19, docentes en formación, enseñanza oral en línea, inglés como lengua extranjera, integración de la tecnología

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Introduction

COVID-19 has significantly altered education worldwide (Nisiforou et al., 2021), including English language teaching (Yi & Jang, 2020). Hundreds of countries discontinued school instruction because of this virus's rapid spread (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020; Viner et al., 2020). Thus, teachers had no choice but to provide emergency remote teaching (ERT) in online modes (Chang, 2021; Evans et al., 2020; Ferdiansyah et al., 2020; Moorhouse & Beaumont, 2020) as an alternative to prevent COVID-19 from spreading to pupils (Gerber & Leong, 2021; Murphy, 2020).

However, this quick shift to ERT is novel for educators, particularly for preservice teachers who may lack online teaching experiences but must still undertake online practice teaching. Although most of the current preservice teachers are considered digital natives very acquainted with technology (Park & Son, 2020; Thompson, 2013), implementing technology to manage online courses and teach English online during ERT might not be as simple as people assume. Moreover, previous studies show that English as a foreign language (EFL) preservice teachers inconsistently integrate technology in their teaching (Batane & Ngwako, 2017; Baz et al., 2018, 2019; Park & Son, 2020).

Moreover, in English language learning, speaking is considered the most difficult one to learn among the four language skills (Zhang, 2009), and it undoubtedly requires certain considerations to be taught. During the quick shift to ERT, technology integration certainly becomes one of such considerations. But, unfortunately, little is known regarding how EFL preservice teachers would integrate technology in managing and teaching speaking skills during ERT, especially pertaining to online instruction. Additionally, very little is known about which tools they intend to use and how they plan to use them. Considering these gaps, this study aimed at investigating a group of Indonesian preservice teachers' technology integration in managing and teaching speaking skills online during ERT. The research question that guided the study was: How did a group of EFL preservice teachers integrate technology in managing and teaching speaking skills online during ERT due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Literature Review

Teaching Speaking Skills Using Technology

Effective communication necessitates the ability to do both monologues and dialogues (Burns & Joyce, 1997). Therefore, speaking is an essential part of language development (Naibaho, 2019) because it is both a necessity and a means of communicating ideas. Additionally, having good oral communication proficiency is viewed as an achievement in language learning (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2015) since people tend to judge the learners who are new to a foreign language on their ability to communicate using that language (McDonough et al., 2013). Thus, mastering English speaking skills is always one of the focuses of language learners (Kusuma, 2020).

Recent technological advancements have had a profound impact on teaching speaking skills. For instance, the personal computer, internet-accessible devices, and computer programs have provided foreign language learners with opportunities to obtain more authentic materials and learning experiences (Bowles et al., 2015; Golonka et al., 2014; Kern, 2006). With all features and benefits, technology supports English language learning (Bowles et al., 2015; Chun et al., 2016; Golonka et al., 2014).

A growing number of studies have also revealed that technology disruptions—a current term representing technological innovations in education using technology tools that are not initially designed for teaching and learning purposes—are being implemented to facilitate speaking activities (Amiryousefi, 2019; Cepik & Yastibas, 2013; H.-C. Hsu, 2016; Huang & Hung, 2010; Hung & Huang, 2015a, 2015b; Sun & Yang, 2015). For example, Watkins and Wilkins (2011) utilized YouTube to improve

students' learning exposure to languages, linguistic knowledge, and cultures. Several studies have also adapted YouTube for teaching and classroom management purposes. For instance, YouTube has been adapted as a means of submitting speaking videos where the students upload their videos on YouTube instead of sending them via email to the teacher (Cepik & Yastibas, 2013; Sun & Yang, 2015). Additionally, Lin and Hwang (2018) implemented the commenting feature on Facebook for students' discussions. Furthermore, Amiryousefi (2019) and Ferdiansyah et al. (2020) adapted social network services—such as Telegram and WhatsApp—and used them to support students' learning by posting instructions, text, audio, and videos. The above studies have shown that the implementation of technology tools has facilitated technology disruptions in English language teaching and could exert better speaking activities and performances. Thus, technology disruptions improve the technology-enhanced language learning paradigm.

EFL Preservice Teachers' Practice Teaching Using Technology

Increasing the quality of teachers could improve the quality of schools and boost the students' education (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Teacher education programs (TEPs) are therefore necessary to generate well-trained teachers. TEPs are responsible for providing teachers with knowledge and teaching experiences. To date, many TEPs around the globe have provided their preservice teachers with technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK; Yüksel & Kavanoz, 2011), a framework that helps teachers to understand how to teach a subject matter using technology (Koehler & Mishra, 2005, 2009; Mishra & Koehler, 2006). According to Koehler and Mishra (2005, 2009), TPACK consists of seven domains: technology knowledge, content knowledge, pedagogy knowledge, technological pedagogical knowledge, technological content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and TPACK. This framework is often inserted into the curriculum through technology courses, content-specific courses, pedagogy courses, and teaching experiences (Hofer & Grandgenett, 2012). Related to technology courses, Kusuma (2021) reported that Indonesian English language TEPs provided technology and educational technology courses to their EFL preservice teachers. Moreover, the instructors also implemented various technology tools to give examples and meaningful learning experiences to their EFL preservice teachers. Technology courses, content-specific courses, and pedagogy courses are expected to provide the preservice teachers with technology knowledge, content knowledge, and pedagogy knowledge. These three knowledge domains are necessary to create balanced interplays (Zyad, 2016) to yield other knowledge, such as technological pedagogical knowledge, technological content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and TPACK. Thus, preservice teachers will have the knowledge and skills to manage and teach English using technology. Recent studies have demonstrated that TPACK has affected how much someone prefers using technology and their willingness to integrate new technology into their teaching (Habibi et al., 2020; L. Hsu, 2016; Incik & Akay, 2017; Joo et al., 2018; Yildiz-Durak, 2019). Thus, the knowledge of using technology gained by preservice teachers from TEPs that introduce the TPACK framework is expected to influence their technology integration in their teaching.

While having a solid understanding is necessary for becoming a skilled teacher, EFL preservice teachers also require field experience through teaching practicum or practice teaching. The teaching practicum is a means for learning how to teach, and it offers preservice teachers the chance to strengthen their identities, both as individuals and as teachers, by using what they have learned from TEPs (Altalhab et al., 2021; Safari, 2020). Furthermore, it makes the preservice teachers feel more prepared before their induction phase, which is the phase of their first year as teachers (Haim et al., 2020).

Interestingly, regarding technology integration during practice teaching, some recent studies have found

that preservice teachers in their practice teaching tend not to utilize technology in their induction teaching phase—even if they were well acquainted with it—mainly because of unfamiliarity with the tools used in schools and the lack of supporting infrastructures. For instance, Merç (2015) recruited 86 EFL preservice teachers in Turkey to explore their use of technology in their practice teaching and found that schools lacked the necessary technology tools to enable these preservice teachers to use technology in their practice. Merç also found that these preservice teachers did not implement technology because they were unfamiliar with the tools implemented by the schools. Similarly, Baz et al. (2019) conducted a study with 22 Turkish EFL preservice teachers, following their training on the Voicethread program. The authors found that the participants had no intention of implementing this platform due to the lack of facilities available in most schools.

Conversely, other studies have found the opposite, that is, a great interest on the part of EFL preservice teachers in using technology during their induction phase. For instance, Baz et al. (2018) reported that 36 Turkish EFL preservice teachers incorporated numerous technology tools—such as Instagram, Skype, Twitter, and PowerPoint—to enhance their teaching further. In addition, Park and Son's (2020) longitudinal study with six EFL preservice teachers in Hong Kong showed that they implemented several types of software and web resources—such as digital audio editors, recording programs, online quiz applications, learning management systems, and video sharing websites. Furthermore, Akayoglu et al. (2020) conducted a study and found that 113 Turkish preservice teachers implemented technology tools, such as social media tools, learning management tools, quiz maker platforms, material design applications, presentation tools, and online storage applications. Finally, Fathi and Ebadi (2020) researched how six Iranian EFL preservice teachers used numerous technology tools to teach English after training. Unfortunately, the above studies did not report on how those tools were implemented when managing and teaching speaking skills, especially in fully online learning modes.

Emergency Remote Teaching During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Several recent studies have documented how rapid ERT was undertaken during this pandemic period. For instance, in a study by Evans et al. (2020), Google Meet and Google Classroom were extensively used. Evans et al., in implementing Google Meet, would start the class using poems, vocabulary, or images. Then, they asked the students to talk about the language used in the text. The researchers also instructed the students to create tasks and submitted them to Google Classroom. This study showed that Google Meet and Google Classroom could be used as technology tools for conducting ERT.

Another example is Moorhouse and Beaumont (2020), who developed an online English course for an English language teacher in Hong Kong. This development was initiated by the disappointment toward the synchronous mode provided by a school where this teacher taught during ERT. Moorhouse and Beaumont designed live lessons via Zoom for this teacher. Additionally, the teacher also implemented various innovative technology tools throughout the live classes, including Mentimeter and Kahoot for quizzes and games. Thus, combining Zoom and other platforms seemed to help this English language teacher to conduct online teaching even though it remains unclear whether this combination is effective or not. Apparently, using Zoom as a means to perform synchronous modes is very popular in Hong Kong. Chang (2021) also described his teaching experience during this pandemic time using Zoom and Moodle to teach English literature to his students, where he would explain the materials using Zoom and often ended the course with a discussion on Moodle.

In addition, using online literature circles and WhatsApp to give instruction, Ferdiansyah et al. (2020) had their pupils follow their lead. During ERT, the pupils

were instructed to read several chapters of books and discuss via the voice message feature in WhatsApp. Then, the students wrote summaries of what they had read and could use digital writing assistants, online dictionaries, or other platforms to support writing their summaries. Thus, Ferdiansyah et al. have shown the possible implementation of WhatsApp for education, conversation, and group work.

The above studies have shed some light on the preservice teachers' technology integration in teaching English and how ERT was conducted. However, the studies reviewed above have shown several important gaps, especially during the sudden online teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The above studies did not investigate how preservice teachers used ERT to manage and teach speaking skills during this pandemic. The information of which technology tools and how they are implemented for ERT will add to the literature of teaching English using technology.

Method

Design, Setting, and Context of Research

To have a complete understanding of the participants' varied experiences, I employed a case study approach through detailed data collection (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Stake, 1995). Particularly, I employed a single case study approach to explore a unique case (Stake, 1995). Therefore, even though the participants were from different universities, the single case study allows them to come from various groups (see Schoch, 2019; Yin, 2018) as long as one case is investigated. Furthermore, the case investigated in this study was the Indonesian EFL preservice teachers' technology integration, and it was bounded in teaching speaking skills online during ERT due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Moreover, a single case study allows the implementation of mixed methods (Yin, 2018). Therefore, to get profound data to explain the case, this study employed an explanatory sequential mixed methods design that started by collecting quantitative data and used them to plan the qualitative phase (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this study, I collected the quantitative data through a survey, and I also used semi-structured interviews based on the data gathered from the survey.

This study was conducted in Indonesia since I am an Indonesian lecturer and a faculty member at a state education university in Indonesia, enabling easy access to contact the research sites. I then contacted potential education universities with English language TEPs and preservice teachers who had finished conducting online practice teaching. In the end, out of six universities contacted, only three education universities (two state and one private) gave access to conduct this study with their preservice teachers. These three universities have long histories in Indonesian education and are very well known for their quality of English language TEPs. Furthermore, these three universities offered four-year programs with the TPACK framework in which the curriculum provided the EFL preservice teachers with content, pedagogy, and technology knowledge through relevant courses.

Participants

Prior to contacting the participants, I sought IRB approval. Once the proposal was approved, I invited approximately 400 Indonesian EFL preservice teachers from three education universities in Indonesia through an email that described the present study, including the risks, benefits of joining this study, and the link to the survey. A month later, 301 Indonesian EFL preservice teachers (203 women and 98 men) completed the questionnaires with a 75.25% return rate. To support the data gathered from the survey, I also recruited 18 male ($n = 9$) and female ($n = 9$) preservice teachers who had completed the questionnaires for the interviews using the purposive sampling technique (Ary et al., 2019; Mertens, 2015). These Indonesian EFL preservice teachers had conducted online practice teaching for 3–4 months in 2020. For confidentiality purposes, the

participants in this study are labelled with numbers from 1 to 18. On average, the 18 participants who were interviewed were 21 years old and were assigned to teach in junior ($n = 10$) and senior high schools ($n = 8$).

Methods of Data Collection and Instrument

In this study, I employed data/source triangulation (Farmer et al., 2006; Farquhar et al., 2020) to ensure the validity of the research results (Farmer et al., 2006; Stake, 1995) through collecting data from various sources, such as questionnaires, online interviews with EFL preservice teachers, researchers' notes, and lesson plans from the 18 participants. Furthermore, I developed a questionnaire that used Likert scales ranging from 1–5 (*never*, *rarely*, *sometimes*, *often*, and *very often*), which measured offline and online technology tools in teaching speaking skills (see Appendix). In developing the questionnaire, I sent the questionnaires to second language acquisition experts for evaluation and a small group try-out. Then, I conducted content and face validity through employing an inter-rater agreement model proposed by Gregory (2015). Finally, I employed empirical validity using the Pearson product moment analysis technique where all items were above 0.01 and 0.05, and all items were therefore valid. However, only the data about online technology tools are presented in this study. To complete the data gathered from the survey, I also developed an interview protocol that contained four questions (see Appendix). The interviews were conducted in the Indonesian language to reduce the anxiety of the participants. Then, the interviews were transcribed into the Indonesian language and were sent back to the participants to ensure the trustworthiness of the data before proceeding to the coding analysis.

Data Analysis Methods

Regarding data analysis methods, I employed descriptive statistics to identify the usage of online technology tools implemented by 301 Indonesian EFL preservice teachers in teaching speaking skills during the COVID-19 pandemic. Then, it was continued by analyzing the interview results of 18 participants. The transcriptions were carefully analyzed to generate potential codes. The data were coded using the in-vivo technique. Then, all codes were analyzed using the thematic analysis technique to identify themes based on theoretical or analytic interest in the area (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I also implemented the bracketing method by writing memos during interviews and analysis to support the interview analysis (Tufford & Newman, 2012). The memos were used to examine and reflect upon the researcher's engagement with the data. The analysis generated two themes, six sub-themes, and 13 codes, and 109 excerpts were found. The codes created were about how the participants implemented WhatsApp, YouTube, and Google Forms to manage and teach speaking skills. Therefore, the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the analysis centered around managing and teaching speaking skills using those platforms.

Findings

Kinds of Online Technology Tools Implemented in Teaching Speaking Skills During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The first analysis conducted was on the data gathered from the questionnaires completed by 301 participants. The descriptive statistic results in Table 1 show that the most frequent online technology employed by most participants in teaching speaking skills during ERT was WhatsApp ($M = 4.32$, $Mdn = 5$, mode = 5, $SD = 1.01$), followed by YouTube ($M = 3.16$, $Mdn = 3$, mode = 3, $SD = 1.15$), and by Google Forms ($M = 3.03$, $Mdn = 3$, mode = 2, $SD = 1.36$). Moreover, the analysis on the lesson plans submitted by the 18 participants also showed extensive usage of WhatsApp, YouTube, and Google Forms to support online teaching, including teaching speaking skills during their online practice teaching.

Table 1. Kinds of Online Technology Used in Teaching Speaking Skills
During Emergency Remote Teaching (*N* = 301)

Items	Variability			
	M	*Mdn*	*Mode*	*SD*
Social network services/instant messaging				
A. WhatsApp	4.32	5	5	1.01
B. Telegram	1.61	1	1	1.04
C. Line	1.42	1	1	0.95
D. SMS	1.24	1	1	0.62
E. Facebook messenger	1.33	1	1	0.83
F. Email	2.44	2	1	1.34
G. Other	1.38	1	1	0.86
Web 2.0 platforms				
A. Facebook	1.45	1	1	0.90
B. Instagram	1.63	1	1	1.04
C. YouTube	3.16	3	3	1.15
D. Twitter	1.25	1	1	0.72
E. TikTok	1.30	1	1	0.81
F. Ted-Ed	1.19	1	1	0.56
G. Blogs	1.41	1	1	0.78
H. Flipgrid	1.15	1	1	0.50
I. Duolingo	1.27	1	1	0.64
J. Other	1.25	1	1	0.69
Online quiz maker platforms				
A. Google Forms	3.03	3	2	1.36
B. Quizizz	1.65	1	1	1.02
C. Kahoot	1.57	1	1	1
D. Other	1.19	1	1	0.62

Purposes of Implementing Online Technology Tools in Managing and Teaching Speaking Skills

The statistical results showed that the participants frequently implemented WhatsApp, YouTube, and Google Forms, and, during the interviews, they talked about how they implemented those tools to teach speaking skills. The profound analysis from interview results about the purposes of implementing online technology tools in teaching speaking skills yielded two themes, six sub-themes, 13 codes, and 109 excerpts (see Table 2).

Table 2. The Purposes of Implementing Online Technology Tools in Managing and Teaching Speaking Skills

Themes	Sub-themes	Codes	Sample excerpts
Managing speaking courses	Implementing WhatsApp for managing speaking courses	For checking students' attendance	"I often used WhatsApp to confirm my students' presence." (Participant 10)
		For speaking material sharing purposes	"When the online teaching started, I would inform the students via WhatsApp group and sent the materials to the group." (Participant 6)
		For speaking task submission purposes	"I used WhatsApp for sending materials and task submission only." (Participant 4)
	Implementing YouTube for managing speaking courses	For speaking material sharing purposes	"I employed YouTube to give additional materials other than the ones I created." (Participant 17)
		For speaking task submission purposes	"My students used YouTube as a means to upload their speaking videos where they spoke in English." (Participant 15)
	Implementing Google Forms for managing speaking courses	For checking students' attendance	"When I taught, I used Google Form to check my students' presence." (Participant 18)
		For speaking task submission purposes	"The students uploaded the link of their video projects on Google Form. It also became the proof that they did the assignment." (Participant 2)
Teaching speaking skills	Implementing WhatsApp for teaching speaking courses	For speaking practices purposes	"When it came to the discussion, my students and I discussed using the voice message feature in WhatsApp. For example, if I am not mistaken, the topic was asking opinion, and I asked the students to record their voices asking and giving opinions using the voice message feature." (Participant 5)
		For explaining speaking materials	"During the practice teaching, I used WhatsApp to explain the speaking materials to my students." (Participant 2)
	Implementing YouTube for teaching speaking courses	For explaining speaking materials	"I used YouTube videos to explain to my students about some oral communication skills visually." (Participant 6)
		For testing students' speaking performance	"I used YouTube once to ask my students to create YouTube videos talking about the procedures of making something. After that, I watched them and gave them scores." (Participant 1)
	Implementing Google Forms for teaching speaking courses	For testing students' linguistic features	"Besides sending materials and having the discussion, I also asked the students to complete the quizzes on Google Forms." (Participant 5)
		For receiving students' feedback	"I employed this Google Form to get feedback from my students. It was like reflections. I asked my students to give feedback about the topics or materials that they still could not understand." (Participant 1)

Implementing WhatsApp for Managing Speaking Courses

Even though instructions were delivered online during ERT, the preservice teachers still regularly checked their students' attendance. The interviews revealed that three participants frequently utilized WhatsApp to check whether students were following the online instructions. For example, Participant 1 said, "I employed WhatsApp to know who read and did not read my messages. There is a feature on WhatsApp that allows me to see who has or has not read the messages."

The only way to deliver the speaking materials during this ERT was via internet technology. The interviews revealed that the participants used the learning management system rarely, especially for material sharing purposes. However, the participants confessed that they implemented WhatsApp as an alternative since the students often used this tool. Thus, 14 preservice teachers admitted to routinely using WhatsApp to deliver speaking materials, such as language expressions, dialogs or monologs, and speaking videos. For instance, Participant 7 said, "I employed WhatsApp in my practice teaching to send information, including the speaking materials and assignments. Before the class started, I sent the materials to the WhatsApp group."

Interestingly, five interviewees admitted to using WhatsApp for speaking assignment submissions. The students submitted their written dialogs or monologs, voice messages, speaking clips, or the links of the speaking clips if they uploaded them on YouTube. For instance, Participant 18 said, "during my online practice teaching, I asked my students to use WhatsApp to submit their speaking assignments. I also used this platform to send speaking prompts or instructions about the speaking assignments."

Implementing YouTube for Managing Speaking Courses

The interviewees stated that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, they frequently adapted YouTube as a means of sharing speaking materials. For instance, Participant 3 said, "to give further explanation and speaking examples to my students, I shared YouTube videos and asked them to watch."

Apart from providing examples for the students, the participants also used YouTube for speaking task submissions. Four participants indicated that they frequently requested students to create their own speaking clips and upload them on YouTube because they were already familiar with the process. For instance, Participant 10 instructed students to create and publish speaking clips on YouTube:

> If I gave speaking assignments to my students, I would ask them to record their performance using smartphones and upload the clips on YouTube because it was easy to access if they uploaded them on YouTube rather than using Google Drive.

Implementing Google Forms for Managing Speaking Courses

Google Forms made it possible for five participants to use the service to track their students' attendance. Either their teacher supervisor requested they utilize it, or they had this idea and implemented it independently. For instance, Participant 3 said, "I mostly employed Google Forms to record my students' attendance. Besides, my teaching supervisor also suggested using this platform."

Participant 2 admitted that she used Google Forms for speaking assignment submission, which is unusual. She said, "the students uploaded the link of their video projects on Google Forms. It also became the proof that they did the assignment."

Implementing WhatsApp for Teaching Speaking Courses

As most participants stated, developing speaking skills requires practice in areas such as pronunciation and conversation. Even while they admitted that designing

online speaking exercises was frustrating, 10 participants indicated that they used WhatsApp, particularly the voice message feature, to facilitate pronunciation and dialog practices. These participants often asked their students to practice their pronunciation by sending their voices to their WhatsApp group. For instance, Participant 15 said, "my students used WhatsApp for speaking practices. So, they would say what picture A said, and their peers would say what picture B said. That was how I used WhatsApp for speaking practice."

The interview results revealed that 14 participants used WhatsApp to explain the speaking materials. They would send the materials and explain them through chats or voice messages. For instance, Participant 13 said, "I sent the speaking materials to my students. I used the voice messages to explain those materials as well as the examples of how to say some language expressions in English."

Implementing YouTube for Teaching Speaking Skills

The interview results revealed that 12 participants used YouTube videos to explain speaking skills to their students. For example, they would record themselves talking about language expressions and upload them on YouTube to be watched by their students. They would also send some relevant videos and use voice messages to explain them. For instance, Participant 10 said:

> If I taught new speaking topics, I would give some example videos and explain to my students using voice messages. I sometimes recorded my explanations and uploaded them on YouTube. So, my students could watch my recordings at their convenient time.

Interestingly, four participants mentioned that they adapted YouTube for assessing their students' speaking performance. The participants would ask their students to record themselves talking in English in either monologs or dialogs with their partners. Then, the participants would watch and score the students' performances. For example, Participant 2 said,

> I remember when I taught a topic about giving opinions, I asked my students to create a project with their peers. They had to give their opinions in English, record their speeches, and upload them on YouTube. Then, I asked them to share the links on WhatsApp groups. So, other students and I could watch the videos.

Implementing Google Forms for Teaching Speaking Skills

The preservice teachers recognized that, to increase students' speaking abilities, they needed to provide them with opportunities to practice linguistic features. As a result, almost all participants reported that they used Google Forms to generate quizzes or mid-term assessments to aid in practicing linguistic features such as grammar, vocabulary, and language expressions used in the monologs or dialogs learned by the students. For example, Participant 4 said, "when I did my online practice teaching after I gave materials in the first week, I would give quizzes to the students in the second week. So, I would give quizzes every two weeks using Google Forms."

The preservice teachers claimed that Google Forms' various features allowed them to collect data during the interviews. For example, two participants utilized this platform to receive feedback from the students about their speaking skills development:

> I used Google Forms to know my students' speaking development. I received feedback from my students about their strengths and weaknesses in oral communication. Also, I asked them to answer some reflective questions to identify what they needed to improve related to a speaking topic. (Participant 1)

Discussion

This study aimed at investigating the Indonesian EFL preservice teachers' technology integration in teaching speaking skills online during ERT due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The statistical results in this

study showed that the preservice teachers (*N* = 301) implemented various online technology tools during online teaching. The findings therefore echoed previous studies (Akayoglu et al., 2020; Baz et al., 2018; Fathi & Ebadi, 2020; Park & Son, 2020) that reported preservice teachers implemented various online technology tools. On the other hand, these findings also contradicted the previous studies (Baz et al., 2019; Merç, 2015) that reported that preservice teachers did not implement technology because they did not know how to use some tools for teaching purposes. Furthermore, the findings in this study even indicated that these Indonesian EFL preservice teachers knew how to utilize online technology tools effectively to support their online instruction, especially when teaching speaking skills.

Nonetheless, the study's quantitative results suggested that Indonesian EFL preservice teachers did not frequently use all online technology tools during ERT, preferring WhatsApp, YouTube, and Google Forms when teaching speaking courses. Nevertheless, the interview results indicated that they could design engaging and appropriate speaking activities through implementing those platforms. As TPACK is pivotal to creating proper instruction with technology (Koehler & Mishra, 2009), the preservice teachers' knowledge of teaching using technology seemed to guide them to select which tools could facilitate appropriate speaking activities for the students during ERT. Moreover, it is also surmised that the selection of those tools was also inspired by the preservice teachers' considerations to use the tools that could work best with their students. For example, interviews with those who had installed a learning management system showed that, despite having implemented a platform like this, the interviewees preferred to utilize WhatsApp since most students were using it and frequently checking their notifications. As technology integration into the classroom relies on teacher beliefs in this regard (Prestridge, 2012), it is thus presumed that, despite the participants in this study used a variety of online

teaching and learning tools, they only used the ones that they perceived beneficial and that could work best for teaching speaking skills.

According to the Indonesian EFL preservice teachers' interviews, they had frequently implemented online platforms—particularly WhatsApp, YouTube, and Google Forms—for classroom management and teaching purposes. In addition, the interviews showed that those platforms could be adapted to facilitate exciting classroom management as well as teaching and learning activities. In addition, when merely using WhatsApp, YouTube, and Google Forms, the preservice teachers could facilitate both synchronous and asynchronous speaking activities. These findings indicate that technological disruptions, which were being used in the classroom before the pandemic—as demonstrated in earlier studies (Amiryousefi, 2019; Cepik & Yastibas, 2013; H.-C. Hsu, 2016; Lin & Hwang, 2018; Sun & Yang, 2015)—, continue to be present during pandemic times. As a result, technological disruptions are projected to continue, and more new technology tools are likely to be adapted if they possess qualities that could aid education.

The findings in this study offer three implications to advance English language TEPs, especially to prepare the future EFL preservice teachers who might migrate from conducting practice teaching in fully online forms to blended learning in the post-COVID scenario. First, as also claimed by several previous studies (Habibi et al., 2020; L. Hsu, 2016; Incik & Akay, 2017; Joo et al., 2018; Yildiz-Durak, 2019), the findings showed that preservice teachers, especially those who study in English language TEPs that provide the TPACK framework, will likely implement online technology tools, including doing technology disruptions, in their teaching practices. Therefore, the English language TEPs must continue to provide TPACK for preservice teachers as their knowledge will significantly influence their future actual technology integration in the classroom (Fathi & Ebadi, 2020). Thus, the EFL preservice teachers will

still implement technology in their teaching, especially when teaching speaking skills. Second, as shown in this study, the participants frequently adapted WhatsApp, YouTube, and Google Forms for classroom management and teaching speaking purposes. Thus, it is suggested that English language TEPs should identify other possible online technology tools for effective online classroom management and teaching speaking purposes in the post-pandemic era so that implementations are not limited to WhatsApp, YouTube, and Google Forms. Third, as digital technology is common during this pandemic, there is an urgent need to update pedagogy with online resources and appropriate teaching methods to adapt to the change (Jie & Sunze, 2021). The English language TEPs could use this study's information to consider providing their EFL preservice teachers with the knowledge that would allow them to use technology in teaching. Therefore, future EFL preservice teachers could have sufficient knowledge of managing and teaching speaking skills using technology when conducting fully online or blended learning in the post-pandemic era.

Conclusion

This study revealed that EFL preservice teachers employed various technology tools during ERT even though not all of them were implemented frequently. Moreover, they often implemented WhatsApp, YouTube, and Google Forms as the primary online technology tools for classroom management and teaching speaking skills in fully online instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, they also adapted those technology tools to facilitate some appropriate online speaking activities for their students.

However, this study has several shortcomings that future studies should cover. This study did not explore the reasons for adapting several online technology tools profoundly. An in-depth exploration of why preservice teachers adapted technology tools that are not designed for teaching speaking skills is necessary to advance our understanding of their decisions. This study also did not explore the challenges the preservice teachers face during their induction phase as they are not fully prepared for online teaching. Analyzing these challenges would help the English language TEPs prepare the upcoming preservice teachers to conduct online practice teaching. Therefore, future studies should address these limitations to enhance the literature of English language TEPs and preservice teachers' technology integration.

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Appendix: Research Instruments

Likert Questionnaire

	Statements	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
1	How often do (or did) you use the following Google Platforms in your teaching?					
	A. Google Slides					
	B. Google Drive					
	C. Google Docs					
	D. Google Sheets					
2	How often do (or did) you use the following Learning Management System platforms in your teaching?					
	A. Schoology					
	B. Edmodo					
	C. Google Classroom					
	D. Moodle					
3	How often do (or did) you use the following social network services/instant messaging in your teaching?					
	A. WhatsApp					
	B. Telegram					
	C. Line					
	D. SMS					
	E. Facebook messenger					
	F. Email					
4	How often do (or did) you use the following web 2.0 platforms in your teaching?					
	A. Facebook					
	B. Instagram					
	C. YouTube					
	D. Twitter					
	E. TikTok					
	F. Ted-Ed					
	G. Blogs					
	H. Flipgrid					
	I. Duolingo					
5	How often do (or did) you use the following online quiz maker platforms in your teaching?					
	A. Google Forms					
	B. Quizizz					
	C. Kahoot					

Interview Questions

Note. Here, Questions 2, 3, and 4 have been merged into one.

1. Please mention the technology tools that you implemented in teaching speaking skills.
2. In my record, you mostly implemented WhatsApp/YouTube/Google Forms. How did you use WhatsApp/YouTube/Google Forms in teaching speaking skills?

P R O F I L E

Issues from Novice Teacher Researchers

A Collaborative Autoethnography on Being Preservice English Language Teachers Throughout the Bachelor's Degree

Una autoetnografía colaborativa acerca de ser profesores de inglés en formación dentro de la licenciatura de inglés

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This article analyzes the experiences of two preservice English language teachers within their bachelor's degree and their pedagogical practicum through a collaborative autoethnography. The authors discuss their empowerment as a contributing agent to the field of English language teaching and address issues such as methodologies, mentor teachers, native speakerism, colonial ideologies, and decolonization processes. Findings suggest that preservice English language teachers should be allowed to reflect, analyze, and thus contribute to understanding the social dynamics of what it means to teach and be a language teacher. Preservice English language teachers are not passive agents but builders of knowledge, capable of transforming their vision of education, making visible the critical aspects of education, and resisting imposed colonial pedagogical processes.

Keywords: collaborative autoethnography, coloniality in ELT, identity, language teacher education

Este artículo analiza, mediante una autografía colaborativa, las experiencias de dos profesores de inglés en formación mientras adelantan estudios en una licenciatura y desarrollan su práctica pedagógica. Los autores discuten su empoderamiento como un factor que contribuye a la enseñanza del inglés y abordan cuestiones como las metodologías, los profesores mentores, el hablante nativo, las ideologías coloniales y los procesos de descolonización. Los comentarios finales sugieren que se debería permitir a los profesores de inglés reflexionar, analizar y contribuir a la comprensión de la dinámica social de lo que significa enseñar y ser profesor de inglés. Los profesores de inglés en formación no son agentes pasivos sino constructores de conocimiento, capaces de transformar su visión de la educación, hacer visibles aspectos críticos y resistirse a los procesos pedagógicos coloniales impuestos.

Palabras clave: autoetnografía colaborativa, colonialidad en la enseñanza del inglés, identidad, formación de profesores de idiomas

Introduction

Becoming an English teacher in Colombia involves enrolling in an academic program, learning the target language, understanding and applying teaching methodologies, and getting involved in research processes (Viáfara, 2011). However, becoming an English teacher also implies a series of transformations that affect the very context where the process occurs. Additionally, the positions, beliefs, and emotions of preservice English language teachers (PELT) also play an essential role. Therefore, to allow the PELTs' voices regarding their training process to be fully heard, it is necessary to open spaces for reflection and establish a relationship of dialogue with the context in which they are involved. In this way, PELTs may be able to build their understanding of what it has meant for them to be participants in a community of practice made up of members of the undergraduate program to which they belong (Castañeda-Trujillo, 2020).

In this sense, it is necessary to see research as a two-way process: when the researcher investigates himself/herself and when they establish a co-interpretation with another researcher. Consequently, these research spaces for reflection, such as the one carried out here, help to unveil what is not perceptible from an external position to the undergraduate program. Furthermore, these research experiences provide conditions for empowerment and critical emancipation while inquiring about oneself and others (Kincheloe et al., 2018).

Thus, the research presented here regards researchers as participants, turning them into agents capable of building knowledge and making contributions towards constructing the PELT identity in Colombia (Castañeda-Trujillo, 2018). We decided to do a collaborative autoethnography based on two of the authors' experiences, who happen to be PELTs in their last year of university studies, and a third author, their mentor teacher, who guided the reflection processes as well as the methodology and theory related to the study. This paper addresses teaching and learning methodologies, mentor teachers, native speakers, speakerism, colonial ideologies, and decolonization.

Theoretical Framework

English Language Teacher Education in Colombia

Teaching English in Colombia has increasingly become a way forward during the last two decades. Due to globalization, bilingual education programs require this type of education by viewing English as an economic asset and an essential requirement for modern life, for students, professionals, and the general population (Valencia-Giraldo, 2006). Thus, Colombia is actively advancing to apply an education supplemented by a foreign language (English) for future development towards a more tolerant society (de Mejía, 2006).

We can thus say that professional development in English implies all types of professional learning assumed by in-service English language teachers apart from formal teacher preparation (Buendía & Macías, 2019). This fact has become a remarkable aspect to support the demanding necessity of instructing different audiences. In Colombia, university teacher education programs usually prepare English teachers and offer alternatives for their professional growth (Buendía & Macías, 2019). Such change aligns with the Ministry of Education (MEN) bilingual education as one of its 2025 goals. These include positioning Colombia as the most educated country in Latin America in 2025 (MEN, n.d.). However, this expected education goal is disconnected from teachers' reality in both practical and conceptual terms (Buendía & Macías, 2019), limiting their alternatives to receiving early and meaningful tutoring and coaching. Consequently, issues with tutoring and coaching "fail to give teachers the time and support they need to learn" (Sweeney, 2005, p. 4), which is considered necessary in the process of teaching practice.

Preservice English Language Teachers in Colombia

Research on PELTs in Colombia has increased recently. Although most studies focus on teacher educators rather than on PELTs, we can consider research involving PELTs as main participants regarding different topics.

We identified four main topics around PELT research in Colombia:

- Cultural content and intercultural communicative competence in English teaching in university courses (Olaya & Gómez, 2013).
- The development of investigative skills in Colombia's undergraduate foreign language students such as teachers' strategies for reading purposes or even in-training teachers' beliefs about their teaching practice (McNulty-Ferri & Usma-Wilches, 2005).
- The relevance of the first pedagogical experience and the fundamental role mentor teachers play in shaping PELTs' future teaching practices (Aguirre-Sánchez, 2014; Lucero & Roncancio-Castellanos, 2019).
- PELTs' essential role in English teachers' education and the practicum as a space where PELTs feel empowered and resist colonial epistemologies of English language teaching (ELT; Castañeda-Trujillo, 2018).

Although Olaya and Gómez (2013), McNulty-Ferri and Usma-Wilches (2005), Aguirre-Sánchez (2014), and Lucero and Roncancio-Castellanos (2019) focus on what is essential and relevant to learn more about PELT training process, they fall short of explaining the actions taken by PELTs during their teaching practice. Conversely, Castañeda-Trujillo (2018) analyses PELTs' pedagogical practicum and their role in real contexts, which is closely connected to our research aim.

When we consider the pedagogical practicum, we visualize it as the primary encounter in which PELTs lay the foundations upon which they construct themselves as English language teachers (Lucero & Roncancio-Castellanos, 2019). During the practicum, they experience, essentially for the first time, what it is like to be immersed in a classroom; a process that is "full of feelings and emotions" (Lucero & Roncancio-Castellanos, 2019, p. 173). The advice of mentor teachers is also fundamental at this point, as PELTs can have access to an expert's opinion, which may assist them in reformulating their own practicum.

Ideologies in English Language Teacher Education

Teaching as a profession. Many authors agree that part of the English language teacher education agenda relies upon professionalization and social control (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001; Popkewitz, 1985). Professionalization implies preparing English as a second language and sheltered English teachers by teaching them language acquisition theory, language teaching methodologies and approaches, and a range of content/subject matter (Bartolomé, 2010). Thus, social power affects how the dominant social ideologies shape the curriculum and impose power, culture, and language disposition over the teacher and the students (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001; Giroux, 1985).

Therefore, a professionalized language teaching education relies on methods, theoretical principles, and classroom procedures. Kumaravadivelu (2008) examines these parameters and tries to bring a critical vision of L2 learning and teaching alongside the connection with professionalized teaching education. The primary purpose is to transition from traditional and standard methods to post-methodological processes where the best method is not "out there ready and waiting to be discovered" (Kumaravadivelu, 2002, p. 7) and where theory, research, and practice are fundamental to enhance the professionalized stage of language teaching education.

English and Englishes. According to Garside (2019), over the past 200 hundred years or so, English has

become the lingua franca (shared language) in a vast range of industries and areas, so it is now recognized as the standard language for international communication. Thus, English is no longer exclusively used by native speakers: "There are currently as many people learning English as there are native speakers of this language in the world" (Garside, 2019, p. 1).

There is a relative value of the different varieties of English used by native and non-native speakers. Those English varieties are known as "Englishes" and are part of the world of Englishes or the worldwide practices that acknowledge English varieties bestowed on the nations within which they are spoken (Mahboob & Szenes, 2010). Such Englishes have discrete linguistic features to contrast one variety with another and give a sense of the transformation of the English language from one place to another as part of its use as lingua franca. The problem, however, is not the varieties (Englishes) of English per se, but which varieties are selected and taught, a decision that basically rests upon what different educational authorities (government, school managers, etc.) perceive as "a culturally 'normal' demographic" (Garside, 2019), and which is often based on the idea of native-speakerism.

In Colombia, the handbook *Basic Standards of Competences in Foreign Languages: English* (MEN, 2006) treats the English language as neutral, prescriptive, denotative, and uniform (Guerrero-Nieto & Quintero-Polo, 2009). Therefore, viewing the language as standardized and with a set of rules, and also with a denotative function (specific activities that are expected to be carried out in an English class), prevents students from coming into contact with other varieties of the language, thus "fulfilling the purists' dream of keeping the language as unaltered as possible" (Guerrero-Nieto & Quintero-Polo, 2009, p. 142). Moreover, there is a preservation of the idea of using just two accepted varieties of English to be taught and learned: standard British English and Midwestern American English (Garside, 2019). In the end, a language becomes merely an instrumental tool

that limits teachers from accessing the richness of the language itself.

Native-speakerism. Part of our identity as teachers of English refers to the definition of oneself as a teacher on our professional development. One example is the concept of Native-speakerism, which, as Holliday (2005) argues, "is a pervasive ideology within ELT, characterized by the belief that 'native-speaker' teachers represent a 'Western culture' from which spring the ideals both of the English language and of English language teaching methodology" (p. 385). Consequently, native-speakerism can be understood as an ideology that privileges Western ELT institutions' voices by reinforcing stereotypes to classify people, especially language teachers, as superior or inferior depending on whether they belong to the native speaker group or not.

Many authors (Bonfiglio, 2010; Davies, 2012; Faez, 2011; Holliday, 2013, 2015) recognize "speakerhood" as similar to race; both concepts are not biological, but rather a socially constructed imaginary concept in ELT. According to Singh (1998), speakerhood is interpreted from social and discourse factors such as ethnic background, accent, name, and disposition to self-identify as a native speaker. The concept is often a very subjective and political matter. Native-speakerism needs to be discussed at the level of the prejudices installed in the teacher's practice and the dominant professional discourses to promote new relationships and understand the material consequences of this symbolic relationship.

The impact of native-speakerism is evident in many aspects of professional life, from policies to language presentation. According to essentialist cultural stereotypes, Holliday (2005) claims that an underlying theme is the "othering of students and colleagues outside of the English-speaking West. The influence native-speakerism exerts on the careers of 'native' and 'non-native speakers' is a complex one and very much depends on the context" (p. 25). Rivers (2013) proposes that both groups can suffer

adverse effects; however, native-speakerism does not equally affect the two groups and does not always have to be negative.

Lowe and Pinner (2016) describe two experiences related to teachers' self-confidence and authority. The first is a lack of trust from students and colleagues due to not being a "native speaker" and not having an authentic voice in the language. The second one is not being perceived as an authoritative voice and losing recognition and value as professionals. It demonstrates some of the effects of native-speakerism in teachers' lives, depending on the category into which they are placed, and how it disturbs their personal and professional identities and circumstances.

English Language Teacher's Identity

After conducting a literature review, we found two factors in establishing teachers' professional identities. The first type includes individual characteristics such as their personal experiences as students and PELTs. A second type is connected to external discourses associated with teaching and learning. These discourses come from the theory, education policies, different contexts, and models of practice.

The first type presents many studies approaching individual identity related to professional identity. Authors such as O'Connor (2008), Shapiro (2010), and Vavrus (2009) highlight the importance of personal factors in constructing professional identity. These studies focus on the connection between personal identity, emotions, and the importance of self-image in building teachers' professional identity. Olsen (2008) considers that personal history is paramount to professional identity development, integrating teachers' induction period experiences, particularly ideas from personal or professional understandings. Olsen's concept of identity describes it as emerging from teachers' experiences. From this perspective, teachers are always engaged in different interactions with others while recreating themselves as professionals:

> The collection of influences and effects from immediate contexts, prior constructs of self, social positioning, and meaning systems (each itself a fluid influence and all together an ever-changing construct) that become intertwined inside the flow of activity as a teacher simultaneously reacts to and negotiates given contexts and human relationships at given moments. (p. 139)

Olsen (2008) seeks to reconceptualize teacher learning as a constant, positioned, holistic, and identity-related process designed to integrate past and present experiences. The author also presents the negotiation between different teaching discourses that emerge from teachers' experiences as students and educators, imaginaries of teaching, and professional practice.

The second group of scholars looks at the connection between social aspects and professional identity. This group can be subdivided into those focusing on studies regarding the importance of learning contexts for professional identity development and those discussing identity concerning socio-political contexts, mainly connected with education policies and professional development.

Social identity theory promotes a definition of identity or self-definition based on social categories, such as nationality, race, class, and so on, that deal with power and status issues. Individuals develop their identities depending on the social types they belong to. This self-definition is a dynamic process in continual change and is determined by time and context (Sherman et al., 1999); furthermore, identifying with a negatively valued group will have a negative impact on teachers' self-esteem.

Method

This study's objective is to express the insights of two preservice teachers about the teaching profession after they have experienced the practicum from their perspective as participants and researchers. To do so, we decided to use collaborative autoethnography

(CAE) as our research method (Ngunjiri et al., 2010). CAE places self-investigation at the center stage and allows us as researchers to work collectively and cooperatively to question our experiences. The CAE methodology assumes that, as participants, we are active agents of change. It positions us within the other's experiences and reveals various aspects of forming our identity as processors within the bachelor's degree in ELT (Ellis & Bochner, 2006; Ellis et al., 2011; Yazan, 2018).

As researchers and participants, we shared the same context, in this case, a public university in Bogotá where we are finishing our bachelor's degree in ELT. Throughout the bachelor's degree program, we have had the opportunity to take seminars related to linguistics, the teaching and learning of languages, and other seminars complementary to our training. Additionally, we took four semesters of pedagogical practice, two in primary school and two in secondary school. That enabled us to carry out this research, and together with our advisor, we prepared everything to start the process of data collection and analysis using the CAE methodology.

For data collection, we followed the suggestions provided by Chang et al. (2013) to obtain a more detailed description of our socio-cultural context and improve our stories' credibility. First, we used personal memories and personal reflections on this study's central theme and wrote them in a journal. Second, we created spaces for discussion about our experiences. These spaces allowed us to obtain other data types that came from sharing and to delve into what was collected in the journals. Subsequently, we iteratively reviewed the two instruments (the journal and the discussion transcripts) to find the similarities and differences in our experiences. With the data resulting from this iterative process and established from the theoretical framework, we triangulated and extracted common categories for us as participants and researchers. These findings are explained in the next section.

Findings

During the data analysis, we found four main categories we considered significant as part of our PELTs experience in the bachelor's degree in ELT (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Data Instruments and Categories
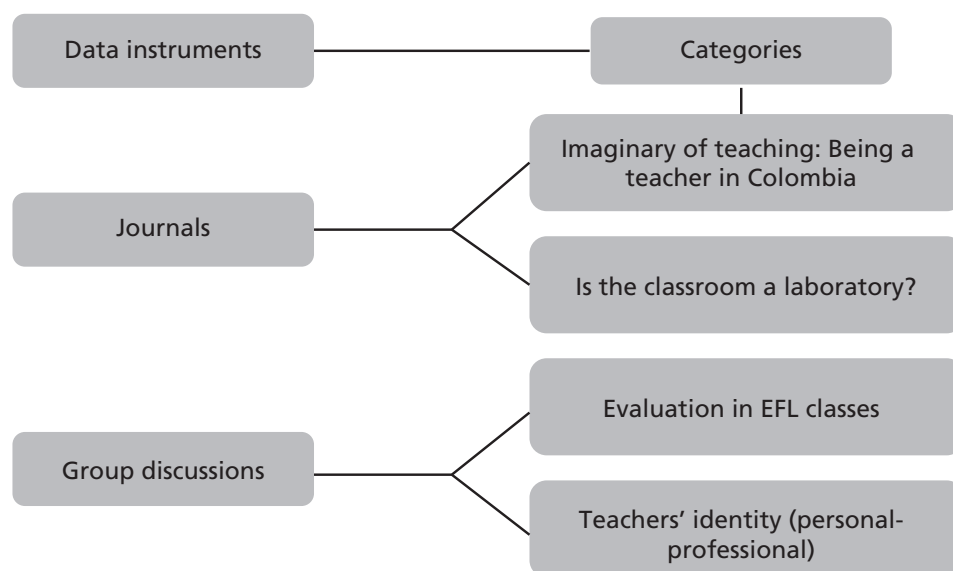
Imaginary of Teaching: Being a Teacher in Colombia

Our vision of what it is like to be a teacher in Colombia is reflected in how we express the feeling of becoming a teacher. Although our backgrounds are different, we encountered similar social imaginaries of teaching that did or did not affect our decision to study for a bachelor's degree. From those perspectives, we realized that we would not earn much money by applying for a bachelor's degree, and that it was challenging to be a teacher. Moreover, it was not worth studying a demanding profession to receive little money. Those beliefs made us wonder if we were making the right decision by following this path. Why does society always think this bachelor's degree is less worthy than others? Why do we qualify the value of something by the income we might receive?

All professions are demanding; they require innumerable skills, abilities, and substantial effort. However, teaching does not receive the recognition it deserves, and it is not the teachers' fault that the educational system underestimates those who educate society. Judging by the admission processes, the value of teaching seems to be discredited and underrated, as the dean of the Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia in 2018, Diana Elvira Soto, affirms:

> This is a severe problem in social imaginaries. It would seem that those of us who have entered programs to study for a bachelor's degree are mentally retarded because we are assigned the lowest score for admission. Hence, premises such as "anyone can be a teacher," "study this career and then move on to the one you like," "even as a teacher, what matters is work." This makes teachers' profiles significantly varied since many enter the career without knowing the educator's function. (¿Vale la pena ser profesor en Colombia?, 2018, para. 3; translated from Spanish by the authors)

The previous excerpt is a good example of the general perception most people in our country have towards the teaching profession. It is seen by many as an unviable career with undemanding admission criteria, which generates the feeling that "anyone can be a teacher." Moreover, the government does not invest money in teaching careers, certification, training, and staff, although they require teachers in Colombia to be certified if they want to teach, which puts the economic burden on teachers themselves:

> Tests and trainings represent a hefty load for Colombian teachers, especially for those at the beginning of their career, because of their high costs. . . . A person on the Colombian minimum wage would require a full month of work to pay for the IELTS test and two months to pay for the course. (Le Gal, 2018, p. 5)

In the end, this leads to inadequate teacher training, few opportunities for teachers to improve professionally, and inequitable wages. Furthermore, schools are not usually willing to provide spaces for teaching practice, and they demand experience and other requirements that are not easy to attain.

As a result of the reflection carried out, we converged around our experience as PELTs at the beginning of our bachelor's degree. Camila was influenced by a family of teachers who already knew what being a teacher means. Camila was thinking deeply about it. Sometimes she heard people saying that the pay was not enough and that it was better to apply for another degree, which made her doubt her decision. In the case of Cristian, even though he did not have external influences regarding teaching, he had never thought of becoming one. He enrolled in the bachelor's program due to his interest in the English language. He always thought being a teacher was challenging and somewhat humiliating because of everything he had to go through to be respected by others. Similar to what has been described in the excerpt above, he conceived of teaching as an undemanding career and, therefore, easy to study. He just wanted to have something to do, and because he liked languages, it was an opportunity to learn them. He never had in

mind what a teacher was and what the implications of the bachelor's degree were.

Is the Classroom a Laboratory?

We will discuss this category from the two contexts where the practicum took place: primary and secondary school

Our Practicum at Primary School

There are some struggles in facing the realities of the classroom where we are trying to discover the best way to teach. However, in our pedagogical practicum experience at primary school, there seemed to be a sort of testing yet expected process that is not open to other possibilities of teaching beyond the pre-established methodology based on the traditional stages of presentation, practice, and production. As long as we closely followed such a method, planned our lessons, and created teaching material accordingly, we would comply with what was expected of us. As soon as we started the practice, we were already inhibited from doing what we consider would be more suitable for our students' learning. We had to follow the Ministry's curricular guidelines, the school syllabus, and what the mentor teacher set as the practicum objectives. Planning changes were minimal, and this made us feel that we could not do the things we consider best for our teaching. We sometimes felt that our opinion, or that of our students, was unworthy.

Mentor teachers like the one in our primary school pedagogical practicum always highlighted the importance of innovating; however, this idea disappeared over time, and we ended up repeating the same patterns that we intended to break. All ideas to transform pedagogy were trampled because the system followed the same traditional pattern. Moreover, in the school where our teaching practice took place, we faced the school's unwillingness to invest in innovative pedagogical spaces: There were technological resources that they did not allow us to use for fear of their being damaged, topics we considered important to address (such as cultural awareness) were rejected as being unsuitable for young people, among other things that we believed placed the English class as a space for teaching grammar without context.

We understand that this is not totally the teachers' fault because there are many factors that have a bearing on the situation, such as the country's educational system, teaching experience, sociocultural factors, and so on, which affect a school's decisions as well as the way in which teachers do their practice. However, we believe that with the support of experienced mentor teachers, spaces of an experiential type of education can be created with certain freedoms for preservice and in-service teachers to test and try new ways of teaching and learning.

If a classroom is considered a place for testing how to learn and how to teach, we could probably use that as an advantage to see what works best, what students would like, and what teachers would like. These processes should be monitored and recorded by the guidance teacher to avoid mistakes and guide the learning experience. Besides, one possible way for future teachers to better know their teaching style is by letting them try what they have in mind for the process of teaching. Nonetheless, as Wheeler (2016) says, "innovative teaching is where good teachers are inventive and creative—where they continue to discover and devise new methods and content to ensure that students always get the best learning experiences" (para. 5).

Our Practicum at Secondary School

It is not all about difficulties, however. As we have mentioned, teachers are not the ones to condemn. Some are really trying to transform their way of teaching with their practices. We recall our pedagogical practicum at secondary school since day one. After a bad experience in primary with our previous mentor teacher for nearly a year, we were not expecting much from what was coming, but we knew that things might be slightly different now that we had a different mentor teacher. What we did not expect was to have the freedom to manage our

classes (following the MEN's curricular guidelines). We were amazed to hear from the teacher that we were in full charge of our class. We selected the most suitable methodologies, approaches, and topics considering our students' needs, the context, and the theoretical and academic resources suggested by our mentor teacher.

For example, Cristian can remember that one of his lesson plans was about sexual and reproductive rights. At first, he thought it would be difficult to put it into practice since he was dealing with tenth graders, and sometimes they take these types of issues as a joke. Cristian also felt that the headteacher (the teacher usually in charge of the class) might not like what he had planned. However, the lesson was a success and the students actively participated in recognizing the rights of their sexuality as young women and men. The lesson touched on usually controversial topics such as sexually transmitted diseases and ways to prevent them, the LGBTQ+ community, abortion, and Colombian sexual laws. The students even found out that one of their classmates was about to become a father and, although this young student may not be prepared to do so, his peers showed him empathy and acceptance. Such experiences made students participate more and argue that the school had never taught them about these topics, and in the end, they thanked Cristian for that session; even the headteacher liked what he did.

The example given is the most powerful free action taken by PELTs that gave them the sensation of being in control of their class. When you encounter significant experiences like these in your first years of teaching, you fall in love with teaching. You cannot merely apply things in which you are interested, you can also approach students' needs even if they did not know those were essential. Besides contextualizing them regarding topics such as sexuality and sex within their immediate local environment, we as teachers can change how education is approached. Why? It seems to us that such topics are still taboo in an English class and, sometimes, the same educational institutions consider them inappropriate.

However, recognizing for example that sex is normal, that there exist sexual and reproductive rights for each human being, and that students have questions to ask about that, is part of the pedagogy.

In the case of Camila, her secondary school pedagogical practicum followed a pedagogy based on workshops to develop particular skills. The workshops were created and directed by the students themselves and it was the children who decided which to register for depending on their interests. This time, the pedagogical proposal was based on writing and reading comprehension.

Here there are two crucial elements to highlight. The first was the organization of the workshops. They fostered a new pedagogical proposal based on diverse artistic and thematic elements that fit the educational context. Both students and we ourselves, as participants, contributed to the development of the workshops considering our skills, interest, and ideas about teaching and learning. The population consisted of children between the first and fifth grades, which allowed us to make a more varied intervention.

Second, as PELTs, we were not seen as mere apprentices and our opinions, unlike our experience in the primary school practicum, were taken into account during planning of the workshops. With all the freedom and trust given to us, we could become aware of our abilities and mistakes. Abilities considered the strengths and ways that we have had to develop the classes and been successful in doing so. Mistakes focused on those actions in which we felt we had failed while implementing our material and our lesson plans. The guidance we received focused on the workshops' pedagogical aims, but this never interfered with their application. For us, the most important parts of the pedagogical intervention were the personal reflections regarding improvement of the proposals, our performance, and the results of the teaching activities developed by us.

On the other hand, the workshops transformed the students' vision of normal assessment and they, with

the preservice teacher, worked together to construct knowledge. The students' relationship with us was horizontal, so that many of the contents and activities had their input and suggestions. The students could decide not only about which workshops were of interest but also how to carry them out. We decided not to assign grades in an effort to increase students' intrinsic motivation. This enabled students to get involved and innovate in their class projects, making them produce new understanding or knowledge to work on their tasks.

This teaching and pedagogical practice perspective represented enormous growth in our PELTs' identity and perspective regarding the possibilities and challenges for education and how to face and redefine them from our profession.

Evaluation in EFL Classes

According to Walsh (2020), evaluation can serve as a decolonization element. Teachers and students follow a universal, standardized, and commodified assessment system that contributes to colonization by the European and North American cultures. The concept of global evaluation classifies knowledge and decides what is valid and what is not; this idea denies the value of many ancestral, empirical, and traditional understandings that disappear over time. This random idea that the better the score, the better the knowledge you have, is not valid in the end. Students' competencies and abilities are not and should not be based on numerical parameters that classify who is at the top and who is at the bottom. We do not stand in the way of a commodity that denigrates and leaves other skills aside (artistic, for instance). We know what it is like because we have always faced it at school, at university, and in our personal and professional lives.

As far as we know and consider, we can provide other evaluation methods by using student-centered learning strategies, turning them into assessments where we not only advocate for the recognition of students' abilities but also where intercultural spaces are projected

in the proposed activities and that qualifying evaluative standardizations are ended where inequality, inferiorization, racialization, and discrimination persist (Walsh, 2010). While assessing our students' performance, we cope with their needs by gathering from different information sources that show the voices, needs, and ways of building and transmitting the knowledge that the student possesses. In the end, assessment can serve as an activity where all kinds of relationships are woven, and knowledge is built. Thus, it could help us see students' results in terms of their pedagogical experience and what we need to do to reinforce it. For instance, using tasks to assess, or playing roles, or even crafting, can denote a process of learning and assessing it, not just assigning a score to comply with the requirements, but to really assess the students' performance of tasks.

Teachers' Identity (Personal–Professional)

We could say that positive experiences are those that strengthen our continuous construction of professional identity. However, not everything we consider positive is what makes us better regarding that identity. Ibarra and Schein (as cited in Slay & Smith, 2011), define professional identity "as one's professional self-concept based on attributes, beliefs, values, motives and experiences" (pp. 87). These features are linked to everything that surrounds the individual and his or her relationship with the means of action in which he or she operates, which makes them feel, experience, think, and live in different ways. Thanks to this, it is possible to learn and relearn how to teach and discern about teaching, strengthening one's capacities and skills, and the professional aspects that transform the individual's conceptions of the world while he or she gathers new experiences, knowledge, failures, disappointments, joys, and much more. In our case, that chance of changing our conceptions of the world is possible when we belong—or feel we belong—to different communities of practice, such as the schools where we carried out our pedagogical practicum, our

fellow PELTs with whom we shared our pedagogical practicum experiences, the research group of which we are members at the university, and so on. Thus, in these communities, knowledge is obtained, and this allows us to interpret the world and make sense of it (Lave & Wenger, 1991), and while we are trying to figure that out, we start shaping those features that strengthen parts of our identity.

As part of our reflections, we discussed the influence of many factors of being part of such communities of practice. We understood that teaching is learned day by day, that the being is formed as the result of what is lived, that there are no perfect teachers and there are no ideal methodologies, so that a teacher capable of teaching is carved out. The teacher is not always an expert in the sense that he or she does not know everything, but the willingness to teach with passion and effort allows him or her to adapt and seek the best of the environment to transmit meaningful, didactic, functional, and above all, humanistic practices.

The teaching identity also refers to how teachers subjectively live their work, keeping in mind the aspects that satisfy them and those that do not. Identity does not arise automatically; it occurs through a complex, dynamic, and sustained process in time (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2011; Beijaard et al., 2004) and is continually prolonged and varied throughout the teacher's career. Moreover, it is affected by personal and professional aspects that shape such identity or identity varieties, built up thanks to contact with the environment. This allows PELTs to recognize and be recognized in a relationship of identification and differentiation concerning other PELTs.

As Colombian PELTs, we learn English from a nativist perspective, and we have assimilated these patterns through our professional and academic development. This is analyzed by González (2007), who affirms that Colombian teachers' professional development "advocates the superiority of the native speaker and favors British English (a prestigious variety

of the inner circle) over other varieties of language" (p. 327) since it adheres to "power and colonial discourses that perpetuate the dominant status of the culture and speakers of English" (González, 2010, as cited in Le Gal, 2018, p. 5). The concept of "the ideal English speaker" has settled a standard that all professionals must meet; the idea of native speakers as the most qualified to teach the language favoring the status and knowledge of the native speaker over Colombian teachers who cannot be categorized into what a native model features (Espinosa-Vargas, 2019; Guerrero, 2008), which is a way of exclusion and repression for future English language teachers.

The native speaker association with proper language and proficiency to teach *positions* non-native teachers as "inauthentic." This positioning characterized as inauthentic has consequences for teachers' identity; for example, teachers are judged continuously and compared unfavorably with native-like speakers, who gain more attention and relevance. As PELTs, we feel insecure because of our students' stereotype of an authentic EFL teacher; we frequently must establish our credibility, especially if we do not have a native accent.

The impact of such experiences on PELTs' identity is represented in the constant challenges to our credibility, making us feel nervous and insecure about our ability to succeed. This lack of confidence seems to mainly stem from our teachers, students, and even partners' lack of acceptance, which limits our full potential. We have seen how this affects PELTs who take a passive role in the learning process and limit their possibilities to teach the language. We feel that, by accepting the discourse which regards our variety of English as deficient, we are just imposing limits on our professional aspirations. The lack of recognition of teachers' English varieties and foreign language education due to promoting a particular accent and pronunciation as a necessary qualification, excludes cultural and personal characteristics that are useful while learning the language. Furthermore, we think that PELTs should be

allowed to develop language skills and not feel excluded because of their way of speaking. We should recognize that native-like English does not necessarily represent a skillful teacher, and it should not be considered a defining feature to judge their quality.

Conclusions

Although this study is the result of collaborative autoethnography research, we believe that our experiences during the practicum can serve as valuable insights for the community of PELTs, especially in Colombian public universities. We could understand certain issues related to PELTs from our reflections about being enrolled in an undergraduate program and our pedagogical practicum experiences.

For us, PELTs play a fundamental role in teacher education. Their lack of teaching experience can be seen as a liability, but we argue that it can also be an opportunity for fresh insights into classroom realities, which may lead to pedagogical innovations if appropriate guidance is provided. This, in turn, would reinforce the identity-building process in PELTs since they have a voice in decisions concerning school practice.

It is necessary to analyze the importance and meaning of being a teacher in Colombia to position the profession in the place it deserves; then, future teachers could feel more motivated to contribute to the development of education in the country. The classroom should be a space to experience being a teacher, where PELTs comprehend the educational contexts and feel impelled to resist those imposed colonial pedagogical processes and innovate to transform the vision students at schools have towards learning English.

Finally, we conclude that collaborative autoethnography research can serve as a model for other PELTs to reflect on their own experience and identity development as teachers. They have the chance to act and start transforming the process of learning by becoming agents of change and knowledge builders.

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English Learning and Teaching at a Polytechnic University in Mexico: Towards Bilingual Education?

Enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés en una universidad politécnica en México: ¿hacia la educación bilingüe?

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This study aims to examine the implementation of the sustainable international bilingual model at a polytechnic university in central Mexico. Drawing upon qualitative research, this instrumental case study explores teachers', students', and coordinators' experiences with the aforementioned model. Data were gathered through semistructured interviews. Results show that participants consider the university has started a positive change, focusing on improving teachers' and students' linguistic abilities in English. However, they also acknowledge some challenges, such as a lack of teachers' training, the context of the university, and teachers' knowledge of the language. The data suggest that actions need to be taken to avoid the same poor results the national English programs in Mexico have had over the past years.

Keywords: bilingual education, English teaching, teacher training, university education

Este estudio examina la implementación del modelo bilingüe internacional sustentable en una universidad politécnica del centro de México. Sobre la base de la investigación cualitativa, este estudio de caso instrumental explora las experiencias de profesores, estudiantes y coordinadores con el modelo. Los datos se recabaron mediante entrevistas semiestructuradas. Los resultados muestran que los participantes consideran que la universidad ha empezado un cambio positivo, enfocado en mejorar las habilidades lingüísticas de los profesores y estudiantes. Sin embargo, también reconocen algunos retos, como la falta de capacitación de profesores, el contexto universitario y el conocimiento de los maestros sobre el idioma. Los datos sugieren que se requieren acciones para evitar los pobres resultados que los programas nacionales de inglés en México han obtenido en los últimos años.

Palabras clave: capacitación de profesores, educación bilingüe, educación universitaria, enseñanza del inglés

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Introduction

Since 1926, the introduction of English into Mexican public schools has experienced changes (Ramírez-Romero & Sayer, 2016). Many state and national programs have tried to reinforce English language teaching (ELT) in public schools to help students improve their performance in the language (Petrón, 2009). These English programs have focused their attention on the elementary and secondary levels of education in Mexico. Consequently, English has become a required subject in the curriculum of Mexican schools. At the tertiary level, however, there are no national guidelines, and each university implements its own English program (Despagne, 2010). This has also been the case in polytechnic and technological universities.

In 2012, the "sustainable international bilingual model" (*bilingüe internacional sustentable*, or BIS, in Spanish) was created as a response to the need for internationalization and mobility of Mexican university students (Secretaría de Educación Pública [SEP], 2016b). The BIS model intends to increase the number of people who can speak a second language (L2), especially English, and therefore, 29 polytechnic and technological universities have adopted English as a medium of instruction (EMI) since 2012 (Sibaja, 2019). As a result, more teachers and students within the country are in contact with bilingual education where subjects such as mathematics, history, and chemistry, for instance, are taught through English (García, 2009).

Existing research in Mexico (Palomares-Lara et al., 2017; Sibaja, 2019) shows that the implementation of EMI in polytechnic and technological institutions is perceived as a tool that can help faculty and students develop skills in English. Examining EMI in Mexico will likely allow for an understanding of the impact it has on teachers' and students' personal and professional lives. Therefore, this study delves into the implementation of the BIS model in one public university in Central Mexico, and the research questions that guided this inquiry were:

- RQ1: What are the perceptions of English teachers, EMI teachers, students, and coordinators regarding the implementation of EMI at a polytechnic university in central Mexico?
- RQ2: How is EMI being implemented in the classroom according to the participants?

Literature Review

To gain an insight into what has been done in the area of ELT in Mexico and the need to look at the BIS model, we will start by providing a historical overview of ELT in Mexico. Then, we will explain the difference between traditional language education programs, bilingual education, and EMI programs. Finally, we will describe the BIS model in Mexico.

English Language Teaching in Mexico: Trends and Outcomes

In Mexico, English has been taught in secondary and high schools since 1926 (Calderón, 2015). Until the 1980s, many learners only had their first contact with the language when they started secondary education. This late exposure resulted in students' low performance in the subject. In 1994, Mexico became a member of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which prompted new economical demands. The proficiency in English was perceived as pivotal for the required technological, economic, and industrial advances; thus, the Mexican government saw the urgency of introducing English in the elementary education curriculum. From then on, diverse national English programs have been issued, especially at elementary education, with the aim of tackling the challenges posed by the teaching of English in Mexico (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Development of English Programs in Mexico
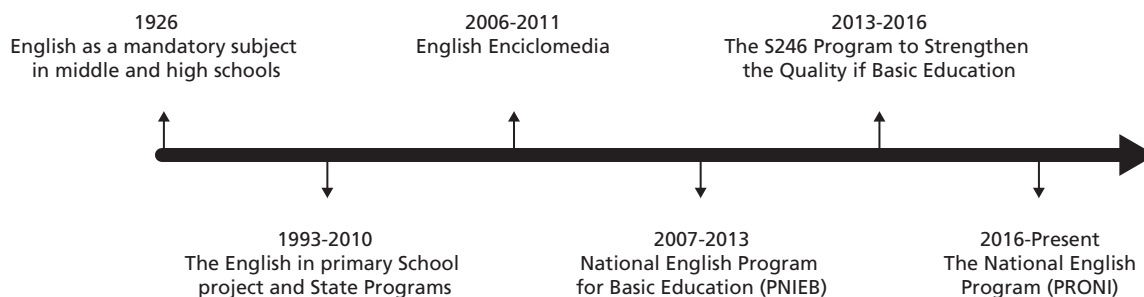
Note. Developed by the authors based on the information from the English national programs.

We can divide the programs into two major periods: the first one leaning more towards the participation of some States, and the second one with a national project of making English accessible to the majority of the students. The first programs (the English in Primary School Project, State Programs, and *Enciclomedia*) had the main characteristic that they were operated differently by each State (SEP, 2006). This represented challenges not only in the teaching practices and integration of these programs, but also in the temporary recruitment and status of the teachers, lack of an official curriculum and teacher training, unavailability of material, and, in general, "lack of logistics to support the development [of these programs] across the country" (Trejo, 2020, p. 12).

The second era of the English programs in Mexico started in 2007. According to the SEP (2015), the main objective was to help students attain a B1 level of English by the time they concluded secondary school. This level is described in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) as an intermediate level in which learners are independent users of the language, meaning that they can express their ideas and participate in conversations in a more natural way without being assisted by a teacher (Council of Europe, 2020). The National English Program for Basic Education (PNIEB, in Spanish), the S246 Program to Strengthen the Quality of Basic Education, and the

National English Program (PRONI, in Spanish), aimed to strengthen English teaching and learning in public primary schools (SEP, 2016a). However, each program was a hybrid arising from crossing the previous one "without making explicit the relationship with either of them or the reason for the creation of a new program" (Ramírez-Romero & Sayer, 2016, p. 9).

Nevertheless, all these programs have failed in improving the English proficiency of learners, as evidenced by the poor results they have obtained in national tests, and even though the outcomes of the national programs have been questioned, the increased importance of English has motivated institutions, from elementary to university levels, to introduce it into the curriculum. In an effort to help Mexican students acquire the language, alternative bilingual programs have emerged across the country, especially at the university level. But, in order to understand their importance, we now define traditional education programs, bilingual education, and EMI programs.

From Traditional Language Education Programs to English as a Medium of Instruction Programs

Traditional language education programs differ from bilingual education. García (2009) suggests that the realization of such divergence may be difficult due

to the types of programs implemented by schools. She points out that:

> For the most part, these traditional second or foreign-language programs teach the language as a subject, whereas bilingual education programs use the language as a medium of instruction; that is, bilingual education programs teach content through an additional language other than the children's home language. (p. 17)

In other words, in traditional language classrooms, the focus is on English to be understood and used—for instance, students in elementary schools learning how and when to use the verb "be." Conversely, in bilingual education programs, students learn mathematics, physics, history, among other subjects, in English. Bilingual education, as bilingualism, is not only about two languages. It is a complex phenomenon that specifies "how the language is used in the classroom and at home, or the purposes that it serves" (Lozano, 2018, p. 19). English, in particular, has become the lingua franca around the world, and hence, it is the main language taught as a second or foreign language. As Joya and Cerón (2013) assert, "in Latin America, young professionals have oriented their training in a second language exclusively to English as a strategy to improve their job opportunities by enhancing their CVs and professional development" (p. 232). In order to enhance these opportunities, "several governments in the region are developing and implementing policies aimed at increasing English competence among its citizens, and especially among primary and secondary school students" (González & Llurda, 2016, p. 90). From a globalized perspective,

> becoming competitive involves the exchange and interchange of information, and the use of a second language as a mandatory fact. The bilingual policy has defined bilingualism as a priority in education for the generation of people who are going to be able to gain access to the labor market. (Joya & Cerón, 2013, p. 234)

This vision continues to preserve the view that true bilingualism is "only that which includes access to the language of an economic empire" (González & Llurda, 2016, p. 90), what de Mejía (2002) calls "elite bilingualism."

In recent years, a series of EMI programs have emerged which place great emphasis on the importance of learning English as part of a university degree. In these programs, students are "encouraged to develop their linguistic, communicative, academic, and professional competencies without the need to travel to those countries whose language they are studying" (Madrid & Julius, 2020a, p. 26). Studies focusing on analyzing the academic performance of students in EMI programs are still scarce (Dafouz & Camacho-Miñano, 2016; Escobar-Urmeneta & Arnau-Sabatés, 2018; Griva & Chostelidou, 2011; Yang, 2015). In Spanish speaking countries, there have been a few studies that have analyzed how students perceive EMI programs and their level of satisfaction. For example, Madrid and Julius (2020a) examined the academic performance of bilingual and non-bilingual students pursuing a primary school teaching degree and their level of satisfaction with the degree program. Results showed no significant differences between the two groups in eight subjects; differences in favor of the non-bilingual group were present in two subjects: mathematics and learning disabilities. In another study, Madrid and Julius (2020b) aimed to research the students' level of satisfaction with their program. They examined the profile of Spanish university students in bilingual degree programs that employ EMI by utilizing the bilingual section of the teaching degree course at Universidad de Granada (Spain) as a sample. Their results showed that most students (70%) were satisfied with the program offered, but they also detected some deficiencies, which led to various suggestions as to how university bilingual programs might be improved. In the following section, we will describe the BIS model in Mexico, which emerges from the interest in implementing EMI at universities.

The Sustainable International
Bilingual Model in Mexico

The BIS model has tried to incorporate EMI at polytechnic and technological public universities in Mexico. Its creation is a response to the need for internationalization and mobility of Mexican students and its purpose is to increase the number of people who have proficiency in an L2, particularly in English (SEP, 2016b). Saracho (2017, as cited in Sibaja, 2019) contends that:

> The aim of the BIS universities in Mexico is to provide bilingual education to low-income students who otherwise would have never had the opportunity to develop English language skills, access scholarships to study abroad, or have opportunities to position themselves in the international industry sector. (p. 10)

The BIS model offers different programs that are mostly taught in English by faculty that have been trained in English-speaking countries (SEP, 2016b). Freshmen within this model must take an English-only first semester to acquire the language. This strategy should enable students to understand content in English as of the second semester. Furthermore, students, with no exception, must learn two other additional languages throughout their programs to expand their opportunities in mixed markets (SEP, 2016b).

The BIS model was firstly implemented in the Technological University of Aguascalientes in 2012, followed by the Polytechnic University of Querétaro in 2013 and by the Polytechnic University of Cuautitlán Izcalli, in the State of Mexico, in 2014. By 2016, 21 polytechnic and technological BIS universities offered bilingual education in 14 states in Mexico (Sibaja, 2019). Moreover, the SEP planned to open one BIS university in each state to comply with the demand from the industry (Nuño, 2017). This national strategy motivated other polytechnic and technological institutions to transition to the BIS model and, in 2019, it was possible to find 29 BIS universities across the country.

BIS universities work under a specific scheme as shown in Figure 2. Even though this program focuses on the provision of content through English, BIS universities first include an introductory term as several learners arrive with limited knowledge of the language. English allocation is at 100%, and the purpose is to help learners develop basic skills to comprehend content in English as of the next term. By the end, they will have taken 525 hours of English.

In the first term, which lasts four months, the model includes two content subjects in English and 10 hours of English as a foreign language (EFL). Here, Spanish is still the dominant medium of instruction due to students' budding proficiency in English. In the second term, however, the delivery of four content subjects and 10 hours of EFL lessons increase the exposure to English. From term three onwards, the medium of instruction should be 100% in English (Sibaja, 2019).

BIS universities are underpinned by three educative pillars:

- Bilingual: BIS universities offer bilingual education through EMI.
- International: BIS universities promote international programs that allow faculty and students to develop their skills in English.
- Sustainable: BIS universities focus on education that promotes sustainability through projects that acknowledge the importance of the environment.

According to Sibaja (2019), with these three main pillars, polytechnic and technological universities attempt to (a) train students and teachers to become competitive in the global market, (b) support teachers and students to be bilingual citizens who can use the language in diverse contexts, and (c) raise awareness of environmental issues among teachers and students to collaboratively devise projects and design technology that respects and values the environment.

Figure 2. Scheme of BIS Universities

Educational model BIS universities with two choices of degree

525 hours
Immersive English course
1 fourth-term

2 and 4 EMI subjects

From term 3 onwards, all are EMI subject

English as a foreign language

English A2

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 Internship |

University Senior Technician Level 5

English B2

| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 Internship |

Engineering Level 6

English C1

3,375 hours
7 fourth-terms
2 year, 4 months

1,560 hours
5 fourth-terms
1 year, 8 months

4,935 hours
12 fourth-terms
4 year

In BIS universities there are two types of teachers: EMI teachers, who are in charge of content subjects, and English language teachers, who concentrate on general English classes. At a first glance, it may seem that these teachers have similar profiles; the reality, however, is that their knowledge base differs. Both EMI teachers and English language teachers should possess specific traits to deliver content. As asserted by Inbar-Lourie and Donitsa-Schmidt (2019), the level of English, the teacher characteristics, and the teaching method employed by EMI lecturers can have an impact on the implementation of EMI in the classroom. As a consequence, "EMI teachers are required to obtain both rich content knowledge and [a] proficient English level" (Qiu & Fang, 2019, p. 2). They should demonstrate that (a) they are knowledgeable of the content, (b) they are acquainted with the specific pedagogical strategies to teach their subject, (c) they know their students and

prepare their classes to reach different needs, and (d) they possess language pedagogy skills. In other words, they must know how to help learners build reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills through English content (Li, 2012).

Method

We considered that a qualitative approach suited this study because we focused on how participants lived and experienced bilingual education. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2018), "qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible" (p. 43). The method that we decided on as the basis for this project is an instrumental case study.

Dörnyei (2007) asserts that instrumental case studies are "intended to provide insight into a wider issue while the actual case is of secondary interest; it facilitates our understanding of something else" (p. 152). That is to say,

the researcher makes use of tools that are not the focus of the research; however, using these tools will lead the researcher to understand a more complex phenomenon. This research project attempted to understand the complexities of bilingual education at a public university in central Mexico. Therefore, we focused on distinct stakeholders' experiences and perceptions.

It is important to highlight that, even though case studies "usually involve the collection of multiple sources of evidence, using a range of quantitative . . . and . . . qualitative techniques" (Crowe et al., 2011, p. 6), we only employed semi-structured interviews due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of access to official documents, programs, or course syllabi. Nonetheless, since the technique was applied to four diverse groups of participants, it was possible to gain a richer picture of the implementation of EMI, and the information about participants' experiences as teachers, students, and coordinators converged during the analysis.

First, to pilot the interviews, we designed four guides, one for each group of participants. After the feedback was provided by the volunteers who participated in the piloting sessions, we examined the four guides and modified them. The trustworthiness of the interview data assured that coding data was correctly registered using a protocol (Boyle & Fisher, 2007; Cohen et al., 2017). Our study considered construct validity, which assures the connection between questionnaire items and the dimension's supporting epistemology (Dörnyei, 2003; Michalopoulou, 2017). Likewise, the study considered content validity as it aimed to ensure the domain of content relevant to all items. For conducting the interviews, we had decided to go back to the place where the university is situated. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic affected this arrangement due to social distancing. However, following the categorization of Opdenakker (2006)—in which he includes types of interviews that are not only face-to-face verbal exchanges but also telephone interviews, messenger interviews, and email interviews—we decided to ask the participants if they would participate in an online interview. Each group had a separate interview. Once they agreed, we sent them a letter of informed consent where we explained that we would use pseudonyms to protect their identities. All the interviews were conducted in Spanish,[1] audio-recorded, and immediately transcribed. We conducted a thematic analysis using MAXQDA software to analyze the data. The data coding is as follows: I for interview, ET for English teachers, CT for EMI teachers, S for students, and EC for coordinators. For instance, the code I–Silvana–ET represents the participation of an English teacher whose pseudonym is Silvana.

Context and Participants

The university under research is one of the three previously mentioned BIS institutions in central Mexico. In 2017, it transitioned to the bilingual model, offering EMI in the Electronics and Telecommunications and Robotics programs. Later, in 2019, Administration was also offered as an EMI program (Sibaja, 2019).

Participants belonged to four groups: students, English language teachers, EMI teachers, and coordinators of area. The ages of the students ranged from 20 to 33 years old at the time the interviews were carried out. The learners were enrolled in the EMI programs offered by the university: Electronics and Telecommunications, Robotics, and Administration. They were studying in the second, fifth, and eighth semesters when they were interviewed. Having participants from distinct semesters provided richer information about how they perceived the model throughout time, how they adapted to EMI programs, how their learning processes were shaped, and how they could relate to others with similar past experiences.

Three English language teachers were part of the second group (two women and one man). One teacher worked in the Electronics and Telecommunications

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1 For the purposes of this article, all the excerpts were translated from Spanish into English.

program and the other two professors taught in the Administration program. The first teacher had worked at the university for eight months and the other two, for two years. Their ages ranged from 28 to 40 when they were interviewed.

For the third group, there was a call to invite three EMI professors. However, only two agreed to take part. The two women in this group worked with content classes in English. One of them had been teaching Human Development and Ethics in English for three years, and the other basic concepts of Administration for six months. When the interviews were carried out, they were 33 and 50 years old.

Finally, in the group of coordinators, there were two participants. They were responsible for coordinating the English area in the programs of Electronics and Telecommunications, Robotics, and Administration. They had worked as coordinators of area for six months. The participants of this group were 24 and 26 at the time the interviews were carried out.

Results and Discussion

During the analysis of the data, distinct themes emerged from the transcriptions of the interviews. For this article, we will focus on the different types of knowledge addressed by the participants as essential components in the development of the BIS model. Then, we will discuss the participants' perspectives on the implementation of the model.

Teachers' Knowledge

According to Shulman (1987), effective teaching "requires basic skills, content knowledge, and general pedagogical skills" (p. 6). That is, teachers should not only know about their subject but also about the strategies, the materials, and the learners to demonstrate that they are effective teachers. In this theme, we present diverse types of knowledge participants discussed as an integral part of implementing the BIS model in this polytechnic university: content knowledge, EMI

teachers' knowledge of English, and English teachers' knowledge of English.

Content Knowledge

Content knowledge is significant as it refers to the teachers' understanding of a subject. There may be, however, circumstances in which teachers are not acquainted with the discipline and yet they must teach it. For Helena, an EMI lecturer, not knowing the content was a challenge to overcome:

> In the subject that I gave, the idea was to help students learn vocabulary. Being honest with you, it is really important. When I studied to teach the content…since, well, I am not an administrator and that was the main conflict…I said "Geez! This is more complicated because I am not an administrator."

It is observable that Helena's profession did not match the content she was asked to teach. This excerpt implies that teachers' profiles and expertise may not be considered when programming the classes. However, they are required to teach specific content. In the next excerpt, Amanda—Helena's student—never perceived the lack of content knowledge:

> The teacher . . . helped us express our ideas according to what was expected from us and with the words that we already knew how to pronounce and, well, not only did she know English but she also knew about the subject.

Amanda considered that Helena was knowledgeable of the content. Even though Helena's profile was different from the subject she was assigned to teach, it is clear that she dedicated herself to expanding her knowledge of the subject so that she could cover the topics in the syllabus.

Unfortunately, not all teachers are willing to learn something new, as Helena did. For instance, Emma, an English coordinator, admitted that some English teachers have reached a plateau:

Regarding teachers, I believe that a great problem is that, as a teacher, you do not progress, that you continue with the same knowledge you have…I believe that if you are not a creative teacher, you will continue with your same knowledge, but it can be very harmful. It can harm students so much.

Emma realized that being an English teacher entails constant learning. As a coordinator, she had to observe classes and noticed that some educators did not progress. She believed that this can harm students' progress in the language. This excerpt denotes that, even though teachers possess content knowledge, they may not search for opportunities to improve it, which should be essential due to the constant epistemological advances in education. Since professors are part of a bilingual university, this fact demands that they be proficient in English. The following subtheme explains how EMI teachers are seen as users of the language.

EMI Teachers' Knowledge of English

EMI teachers' knowledge of English seemed to be a factor that should be considered for the bilingual model to be better implemented. Some students, like Miguel, believed that their EMI teachers did not seem to be qualified to use the language: "I think that our [EMI] teachers were not familiarized with the language . . . They perceived teaching us in English as a mandatory thing…I saw our teachers were very lost."

This participant observed some EMI teachers' limited proficiency in the language. Interestingly, this fragment denotes that even when EMI lecturers have an insufficient level of English, they are required or even forced to use it. Paulina, another student, also noticed that lecturers had difficulties in the classroom. Interestingly, she mentioned what some of them expressed concerning teaching their content subjects in English:

Some teachers that gave me content and wanted to give it in English were not proficient or they were learning the language at the same time. Some told us that it was hard for them to teach their subject in English. Others just tried once and then gave up. So, some of them only gave us the materials in English.

Paulina was aware of EMI teachers' level of English. She also commented that they expressed that it was difficult to teach in English. It seems that EMI teachers started the course using English. However, as they continued, they might not have felt comfortable with their level or they found it challenging, which led them to stop using the language. This, in turn, seems to be affected by the recruitment process they underwent. In the following, the two content teachers indicate how they became EMI lecturers:

It was super simple. The coordinator told me: "This is the subject, and you have to give it in English because it is for the bilingual groups." Period. That was all. (I–Cecilia–CT)
[My boss] told me that only two teachers could give the subject and that there were several groups. So, then I said: "I bet she is going to give me the subject." She never explained to me how to do it or what to do. (I–Helena–CT)

From these two excerpts, it is evident that these two professors did not expect to teach their content subject in English because, initially, they were not hired as EMI lecturers.

The limited English proficiency that students observe among their teachers most likely comes from the latter's lack of preparation and expertise in EMI. In addition, the recruitment process at this institution may not be strict, and the administration requires some personnel to teach content in English only because they had previous contact with the language. Since this is a bilingual institution, the demand for EMI teachers must be high and the solution provided was hiring teachers who have certain skills in English, even if these do not reflect the B2 level required by the model.

It is additionally perceived that no classroom observations are carried out. No process ensures

that students experience bilingual education as it is stipulated by the coordination of polytechnic and technological universities. If EMI faculty were observed and received EMI training and courses to learn the language, students would not perceive their teachers' low level of English. Regarding English language teachers' proficiency, some participants also addressed the theme, as we see next.

English Teachers' Knowledge of English

Since this polytechnic university is bilingual, professors who are responsible for teaching EFL must demonstrate they are proficient in the language. For some students, like Laura, the experience with English teachers has been positive: "In my opinion, the English teachers are super qualified. They speak the language very well and prepare us well."

Laura acknowledges that English language teachers are proficient and qualified to be in front of the class. Similarly, Ximena and Christian considered that their teachers could use the language proficiently.

> The teacher we currently have explains very well. He also has an advanced level of English. Sometimes he uses Spanish when we do not understand, but he almost always speaks in English. (I–Ximena–S)
> Talking about their proficiency in English, I have had good experiences. Each of them teaches differently, but in general, I consider them qualified to be there. They speak English very well. (I–Christian–S)

Both students consider that English teachers are proficient, which has allowed for positive experiences even when teachers use Spanish. This might have been due to the requirements that English teachers have to fulfill. Nazario, an English coordinator, provided information about those requirements:

> They have to hold a bachelor's degree, a language proficiency certificate with at least a B2, it can be the TOEFL…Also, they need to demonstrate they have experience teaching English and obviously, they have to

give a demo class in which we can prove that everything stated in their documents is evident in the demo class.

Whereas strict requirements for English teachers are observable, EMI faculty does not seem to have a formal recruitment process. These discrepancies within the institution need to be addressed as they may have negative impacts on the provision of bilingual education. We will now turn to discuss how the participants perceive the development of the model.

The Participants' Perspectives on the Implementation of the Bilingual Model

In this section, we will discuss two aspects that emerged from the data. First, we will show the complexities of trying to implement this bilingual model and how participants doubt this is possible. Second, we will discuss aspects that hinder the effective implementation of the model.

Towards Bilingual Education?

Students and teachers perceived that this polytechnic university has a different dynamic. Yet, learners provided evidence that may unveil the reality of bilingual education at this institution. For instance, when Laura, a second-semester student, was asked about EMI classes, she answered: "Supposedly, there is a subject that has to be given in English, but due to the complicated situation we are experiencing, we still do not have any content subjects in English."

Laura believed that the COVID-19 pandemic was an obstacle to receiving content through English. According to the stipulations of the model, a student in the second semester should be given two EMI classes. Perhaps the pandemic affected the organization, and teachers were more concerned about the content than the language. Similarly, Ximena, another student, thought that the pandemic allowed for some changes in EMI classes:

I believe that our teachers were considerate and agreed to teach the content in Spanish. In that way, it would not be difficult for us to understand or to miss any knowledge because we would practically be missing a semester.

Ximena considered that her teachers were sympathetic and preferred to use Spanish to help them understand the subjects. The pandemic possibly affected the dynamic of EMI. Nevertheless, students in more advanced semesters revealed that there are inconsistencies in the EMI classroom. Julia, for example, mentioned:

Right now, we are supposed to be taking physics and calculus, but they are not in English. Sometimes the exercises or exams are in English, and our reports should be in English, but our teachers do not speak in English.

According to the general guidelines, Julia should receive all her classes in English. As she stated, she only had two classes, and they were not given in the language. Once again, it is noticeable that EMI lecturers are not instructing in the language. An interesting finding was that for Miguel, an eighth-semester student, the bilingual experience disappeared some time ago:

In the end, I believe that our teachers gave up because, as of semester four, they stopped teaching content in English. They went back to the traditional thing again. They used Spanish and, well, the English subject continued. I mean, in the end, it did not work.

Miguel was almost finishing his program, and it seems that his teachers were not able to maintain the bilingual experience as it should be expected. For other students in the same semester the experience was similar. The following excerpt illustrates that EMI classes are inexistent:

To be honest with you, I do not take any content classes in English. I believe it is a good idea because, as I mentioned, it is complicated. Those subjects are complicated even in Spanish because we use a lot of numbers, and that is complex. So, I cannot imagine what that would be like in English. (I–Christian–S)

Christian's excerpt implies that EMI programs are not consistent and that, perhaps, the institution should evaluate what programs can be offered under a bilingual scheme. In that way, teachers and students' experiences could be improved. The following subtheme discusses other aspects that can be affecting the implementation of EMI at this university.

Aspects That Hinder the Effective Implementation of the Model

Participants mentioned some aspects that should be considered for the model to be developed more appropriately. One EMI teacher mentioned that culture was one factor that affects the implementation of the model:

I think that what we are missing is culture. The model is good. It is a good idea, but, as I have mentioned many times, we cannot implement something that works well in Europe in Mexican culture because we are so different. Mexicans are like, "yeah, tomorrow!" (I–Helena–CT)

Helena acknowledged that bilingual education is an advantage, but she also implied that perhaps Mexicans are not ready to embrace bilingual education due to cultural beliefs. For Silvana, an English teacher, the context of the university may also pose challenges as she explained: "I do not really know if the model is useful in the context where we live since many students are not in contact with different companies. Their parents are businessmen and have never required any knowledge of English."

The university is situated in a region where commerce has a great impact on the lives of many businesspeople. For Silvana, the learners' context plays a significant role. She questioned the usefulness of such a model due to students' previous contact with the language and how much they will require it in the future.

As she mentioned, students' parents are mainly traders and have built their heritage throughout the years. Some students plan to inherit their parents' businesses and they do not see English as a relevant tool in their lives, and that is why bilingual education might not seem important to them. Regarding the usefulness of the language, another English teacher also questioned the implementation of this model:

> Regarding the model, we try to do our best, and, in the attempt, we lose the vision. Students are required to achieve certain levels of English to continue with their studies, and it is subjective to try to measure under those standards; measuring the language when you are not really measuring its practicality and usefulness. All of this in a context that requires students to demonstrate they can use English and content concretely. (I–Carlos–ET)

Carlos believed that the way students were evaluated was not related to how much they could apply their knowledge to situations that are connected to the language and their careers. It looks as though the most important aspect was to pass the subjects. This has resulted in a challenge for some students like Ximena:

> Why do they demand that we learn English? I mean, we may use it and it can be helpful to us, but I felt angry when they told us that if we did not achieve the levels, I could not continue with my major or that they would kick me out of school even when I have good grades in other subjects.

It is observable that the school measures students' progress and that attaining certain levels of English is mandatory. Otherwise, learners cannot continue with their programs. Ximena likely encountered challenges to reach the levels required and she did not understand why she had to abandon her studies if she was not proficient in English. This excerpt denotes the authorities' misbeliefs that if students do not acquire English, they cannot become successful professionals.

Another aspect that may hinder the model was the context. Nazario, an English coordinator, mentioned:

> I believe the context plays a significant role. There can certainly be teachers who are good at teaching their subjects, but we live in a Hispanic context. I mean, the predominant language here is Spanish…Therefore, if you create a model, you have to check that your teachers satisfy the model's needs…If you cannot find those teachers in your context, you must train them…and that takes a long time.

Nazario considered that the model could work properly if teachers were trained to fulfill the needs of bilingual education. Unfortunately, not all EMI professors are experts in English. Although he considered that the university could help professors, he also stated that this process takes time. This might be the reason for learners to experience bilingual disenchantment shortly after they started their studies.

In general, factors such as culture, the applicability of the language, students' context, and teachers' profiles play a significant role in the development of the model. This suggests that focusing attention on these aspects could have better outcomes at this polytechnic university. For instance, if the institution provided training, teachers could become bilingual, and students could experience bilingual education throughout their programs. Students could also see that, regardless of their context, English is a skill that may provide them with enriching opportunities. Finally, the university could position itself as a real bilingual school.

On the subject of teachers' knowledge, students and teachers considered that knowing the language, the content, and students' needs, context, weaknesses, and strengths are factors that had an impact on the development of the model and the progress of learners at this university. Concerning the implementation of the model, it is perceived that the bilingual model was efficient during the first semester; however, factors such as the lack of training, the context, and the usefulness

of the language in authentic environments contributed to a deficient development of EMI.

Conclusions

This research project aimed to explore the implementation of a bilingual model in a polytechnic public university in central Mexico. Additionally, it sought to explore the experiences of English and EMI teachers, students, and coordinators involved in the model.

EMI teachers perceived their experiences were negative due to their lack of proficiency in the language. They acknowledged they were not acquainted with EMI and were not initially hired as EMI faculty. Therefore, they had difficulties delivering content in English. English coordinators acknowledged the importance of teacher training; however, more efforts need to be visible in this aspect since teachers mentioned they need constant training to be able to teach their classes in English. Students perceive the difficulties teachers have when trying to teach content in English, however, they do appreciate and value when teachers are creative and encourage them to learn more.

Through the participants' voices, it was possible to see what aspects of EMI could be improved at this university. It is observable that, after three years of implementation, the stakeholders still struggle to comply with the requirements. This paper will hopefully serve the administrators at this institution to evaluate how they have implemented EMI and how they can assist lecturers to improve their English and pedagogical-content skills. The observable lack of training and the limited information the stakeholders have about EMI has likely influenced the development of this program. It is recommended that the stakeholders work collaboratively and devise strategies to train teachers. Additionally, they should conduct a needs analysis to understand what aspects are paramount to be resolved in the near future and what modifications are feasible due to the context, the materials, the policies, the teachers, the financial support, and the type of

teachers and students. Otherwise, there is a risk this BIS model faces the same scenario as the national English programs. Over the years, the efforts of implementing English formally in the Mexican educational system have gone through different programs. However, these have not provided positive results and the same challenges are still present and unsolved. Polytechnic and technological universities aim for a bilingual model, but we recommend looking at the history of English teaching in Mexico and its realities so that the BIS model can succeed and overcome the challenges faced by previous programs.

From the analysis of the data, we were able to illustrate how the participants perceive EMI and some of the challenges and benefits experienced. In addition, at a global level, this research adds to the ongoing discussion of EMI in higher institutions as it sheds light on the situation of EMI in the Mexican context. To obtain a clearer picture of EMI and the participants' experiences, further research should include more than one technique to gather data and more participants. Observations, journals, and focus groups would likely provide more insights into the situation of EMI at BIS universities. Future research should continue investigating EMI programs in other polytechnic and technological universities across the country as many of them have adopted or will transition to this type of bilingual education in the years to come.

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P R O F I L E

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*Issues Based on Reflections
and Innovations*

Are Language Teaching Methods Really Dead as Some TESOL Gurus Have Proclaimed?

¿Realmente el método de enseñanza de los idiomas ha muerto tal como lo han declarado algunos gurús de la enseñanza del inglés?

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Up to the last two decades of the 20th century, the era of methods prevailed as a key component, especially in the field of teaching English as a second language. Nevertheless, by the end of the century, many TESOL authorities were questioning the usefulness and scope of methods. Consequently, the idea was declared dead and the postmethod condition emerged. In this reflection article, it is argued that the nature and scope of a method in the teaching field cannot die for a series of reasons. It is concluded that what can be proclaimed is the death of a unique, universal method, but not the death of methods per se, since this is an essential component of any teaching process.

Keywords: approach, language teaching, method, methodology, postmethod

Hasta las últimas dos décadas del siglo xx, la era del método prevaleció, especialmente en el campo de la enseñanza del inglés como segunda lengua. No obstante, a finales del mismo siglo, muchas autoridades en el área de la enseñanza del inglés cuestionaron la utilidad y el alcance del método. Como consecuencia, se declaró su muerte y surgió la idea del postmétodo. En este artículo de reflexión se sustenta que el método educativo, con su naturaleza y alcance, no puede "morir" por una serie de razones. En conclusión, lo que se puede proclamar es la muerte del método único o universal, pero no la del método *per se*, ya que éste es un componente esencial de cualquier proceso de enseñanza.

Palabras clave: enfoque, enseñanza de idiomas, método, metodología, postmétodo

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Introduction

The field of language teaching, whether as a second language (L2) or foreign language, has been very productive in the area of teaching approaches, methods, and strategies. In fact, while Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) refer to 15 *techniques* and *principles*, Richards and Rodgers (2014) analyze 16 *approaches* and *methods*. What these authors show is that the language teaching field was dominated by an era of methods in the 19th and the 20th century.

Despite the richness of approaches and methods, around the middle of the 20th century, some voices started to highlight the limitations of the concept of method. Examples of these early voices were Mackey (1965) and Kelly (1969). Additionally, by the 1980s and 1990s, other voices such as those of Stern (1983), Clarke (1983), Pennycook (1989), and Prabhu (1990) warned teachers against accepting teaching methods without a critical attitude because those scholars were doubtful about the support of the nature and scope of methods. Furthermore, methods of language teaching were declared dead by such authorities as Allwright (1991) and Brown (2002) in the 1990s and 2000s. Finally, Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2001, 2003, 2006) supported the emergence of what was called the postmethod condition in order to "restructure our view of language teaching and teacher education" (2006, p. 170).

Although the authorities above have strong arguments for questioning the nature, scope, and application of methods in any sociocultural context, can they really assign the concept of method "to the dustbin" of history (Nunan, 1989, p. 2) and proclaim its death?

The purpose of this article is to support the importance of the role of method in language teaching, whether as an L2 or as a foreign language. The article is divided into the following sections: a brief chronological review of the method era, the method crisis, the counterargument to support the importance of methods, and conclusions.

A Brief Chronological Review of the Method Era

Chronologically, the method era can be classified into six moments: (a) oldest methods, (b) structuralist approaches, (c) cognitive approaches, (d) innovative methods, (e) communicative approaches, and (f) latest trends.

The first group includes the grammar-translation method (GTM) and the oral methods. According to Howatt (1984), GTM appeared towards the end of the 18th century. This method was not supported by any theory of language or learning. Its emphasis was on the teaching of grammar and the development of translation skills. Vocabulary was also important, and it was taught by means of isolated lists of words. In contrast, the oral methods included the series method, the natural method, and the direct method. As the general name of this group implies, they emphasized the oral aspect of a target language. They appeared before the end of the 19th century between the 1880s and the 1990s as a result of the Reform Movement and were promoted by various authorities from Germany, France, and Great Britain who were not satisfied with the level of students' language learning as a result of the use of the GTM (Howatt, 1984; Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). Although there were no definite theories of language and learning at that time, these methods were supported by rationalist principles about child language learning, phonetic principles, and methodology principles. Each one of the previous methods used a series of activities, procedures, and resources to fulfill their oral objectives, so that the students could process the new language without recurring to their mother tongue (Diller, 1971).

The second group, called structuralist approaches, consisted of the audio-lingual method (ALM) and the audio-visual method (AVM). Their emphasis was also on the aural-oral skills of a language, and they were supported by the principles of learning from the perspective of behaviorist psychology and of language coming from structuralist linguistics. Although they

did not teach grammar directly, their syllabi were carefully sequenced from easier to harder language structures. The ALM appeared by the 1940s in the USA, and the AVM towards the 1950s in France. According to Bastidas (1993), the AVM did not use structuralist linguistics principles about language, but some teaching techniques—such as observation, mimicry, repetition, and memorization—were borrowed from behaviorism. Finally, these methods were characterized by the incorporation of the technology available at that time, such as language laboratories, tape recorders, overhead projectors, films, and slides.

The third group has been labeled the cognitive approaches. They are the cognitive-code learning approach (CLA) and the silent way. The CLA was the result of Chomsky's critical analysis of the Skinnerian neobehavioristic theory of learning and its application on language teaching through the ALM (Chomsky, 1966). As a result, some authors tried to design a new approach supported by principles of cognitive psychology and generative-transformational grammar. The CLA was advocated by Carroll (1966), Chastain (1969), and Chastain and Woerdehoff (1968). In this approach, language learning is a creative and active mental process that allows learners to acquire and use the new language to communicate. Even though the CLA emphasizes the conscious learning of grammar, the learners should understand the rules, select them to fit the context, and use them meaningfully. According to Chastain (1976), a CLA class should include a series of activities that promote meaningful practice, expression of meaning, and meaningful learning. Another method that can be classified as cognitive is the silent way because of its emphasis on the development of the learners' mental powers. According to Richards and Rodgers (1986), the silent way was supported by some principles of cognitive psychology. This method was not based on any theory of language. Its strength is its learning theory, which is learner-centered. For Gattegno (1972, 1976), its inventor, language learning is a

creative process that is facilitated by intensive attention, autonomy and independence, learning to learn, silent periods, self-correction, cooperation, problem solving, and self-discovery. In the silent way, the use of "cuisenaire rods," fidel charts for developing pronunciation and vocabulary, and some reading and writing materials are well known.

The fourth group is composed of community language learning, total physical response, and suggestopedia. These methods were published in the 1960s. Some authors labeled them as innovative approaches (Blair, 1982) and others classified them as humanistic approaches (The British Council, 1982). These methods are characterized by basing their conceptions of learning on psychoanalysis, counseling, humanistic psychology, developmental psychology, suggestology, and yoga. They do not provide any linguistic support for their concepts of language. All of these methods aim at helping students get a good command of the language by lowering their affective filter through a series of activities such as the use of the first language (L1), cooperative work, physical commands and movement, relaxation techniques, yoga, classical music, and so on. In other words, they try to create the best conditions for language learning.

The fifth group is called the communicative approaches which emerged in the 1970s and flourished by the 1980s (Bastidas, 1993, Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Waters, 2012) as a result of questioning some of the principles of Chomsky's generative and transformational grammar, especially those of linguistic competence and performance by such sociolinguists as Hymes (1972), and philosophers of language such as Austin (1969). These authors stressed the role of social context and the notion of communicative competence to explain language from a functional perspective. The approaches included in this group are the situational approach, the communicative approach to language teaching, the natural approach, task-based language teaching, the lexical approach, competency-based language teaching, and content-based

instruction. As the name implies, all of these approaches were designed to develop the learners' communicative competence. Consequently, their theoretical foundations are based on sociolinguistics, speech acts, semantics, second language acquisition, corpus linguistics, educational standards, syllabus design, among others. These approaches use a variety of activities, tasks, and materials to promote interaction, negotiate meaning, and share information. Typical types of communicative activities are information gap, opinion gap, information transfer, mingling, cued dialogues, role plays, picture strip stories, drama, games, and so forth (Bastidas, 1993). Examples of tasks are jigsaw, opinion exchange, decision making, problem solving, and so on (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Finally, in the 21st century, two tendencies are spreading around the world in language teaching: content and language integrated learning (CLIL) and emerging uses of technology in language teaching and learning (TLTL; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). Although CLIL is being used to teach foreign languages in some European countries, most of the European experiences relate to the integration of content and language learning for teaching regional or minority languages and official languages. This means that CLIL is mostly a type of innovative methodology in the field of bilingual and plurilingual education (Eurydice, 2006). TLTL cannot be considered a language teaching approach or method. However, it is the latest trend that deserves special attention in our field. TLTL is a source of a variety of digital resources for teaching and is a means of enhancing students' language learning (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). Examples of technology tools are computers, cell phones, tablets, digital cameras, projectors, printers, video beams, among others. Examples of information and communication technology (ICT) are software applications, operating systems, web-based applications, computer language learning software, search engines, and so on. Some of the advantages of the use of ICTs in language

teaching for students are: instant access to the use of authentic oral and written language, synchronically or asynchronically; using computers and cell phones to work both independently and collaboratively; organization and participation in online or virtual communities; autonomy in what the students want to learn; monitoring their progress by using programs that allow them to test their language knowledge; communication with e-pen pals, both orally and in writing in real time; learning a new language wherever and whenever they want to; and motivation to learn a new language by themselves (Chouthaiwale & Alkamel, 2018).

This review of teaching methods and approaches shows many strengths that this area has contributed to support the field of language teaching methodology (LTM). First, it shows that there has been a long-lasting tradition of searching for new methods and approaches as was shown above. Second, many authorities around the world have looked for new ways to change, innovate, and reform the teaching of second or foreign languages. Third, there has been an increasing effort to support the methods with a variety of beliefs, principles, and theories coming from a diversity of disciplines, the most relevant being linguistics, psychology, pedagogy, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and sociology. Fourth, the richest component of methods has been the procedural one, which accounts for the great number of activities, tasks, and techniques implemented in classes internationally. Fifth, all of the methods took advantage of the technology available in each period of time with the most innovative one being the new ICTs. Finally, although none of the methods are ideal, comprehensive, or not appropriate for every context, their proponents have tried to provide teachers with more effective ways of teaching L2 or foreign languages so that learners could reach the highest levels of language proficiency.

Despite the previous strengths of the method era, by the middle of the 20th century, some analysts of language teaching methods voiced their concerns about

the limitations of the concept and scope of methods, the exaggerated claims of the proponents of methods, and the teachers' uncritical acceptance and application of them in any context (Kelly, 1969; Mackey, 1965; Stern, 1983). These critical views had been stated at that time even though in 1963 Anthony (1963/1972) had attempted "to lessen a little the terminological confusion in the language field" (p. 8) by proposing the use of three terms organized hierarchically: *approach*, *method,* and *technique*. In his own words: "The organizational key is that techniques carry out a method which is consistent with an approach" (p. 5).

The Method Crisis

The crisis of method in the field of LTM was declared by the 1990s. For example, some well-recognized authorities affirmed that the concept of method should "[be laid] to rest" (Brown, 2002, p. 11), "not . . . exist at all" (Jarvis, 1991, p. 295), be assigned "to the dustbin" of language teaching history (Nunan, 1989, p. 2), and that a "requiem" should be written for the "recently interred methods" (Brown, 2002, p. 14). Some reasons for the previous assertions could have been that the word method meant "so little and so much" (Mackey, 1965, p. 139), the existence of methods was unhelpful (Allwright, 1991), the concept of method had lost its significance (Kumaravadivelu, 2006), and that the concept of method is "shrouded in a veil of vagueness, despite its central importance" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 162).

In conclusion, there were not only reasons for a crisis of method in LTM, but enough arguments to sentence the methods to death, just at the start of the new millennium (Brown, 2002). Kumaravadivelu (2006), in fact, corroborated this when he wrote:

> And particularly the ambiguous use of the term method, and the multiple myths that are associated with it, have contributed to a gradual erosion of its usability as a construct in language learning and teaching, prompting some to say that the concept of method is dead. (p. 168)

The previous assertions are very dangerous for the language teaching practitioners. For example, preservice language teachers could infer that there is no need to study the language teaching methods in their TESOL courses, and the in-service language teachers might think that the issues of method are not important to consider when they plan their language courses and their daily or weekly lessons.

The Counterarguments to Support the Importance of Method

In spite of the arguments stated above by the well-known and respected TESOL authorities, the question is: *can we really affirm that a language teaching method can die?* In this section, it is argued that there are convincing reasons to demonstrate the essential role and importance of methods, not only in language teaching, but also in teaching any other discipline. Some of the reasons why it cannot be affirmed that a language teaching method can die are the following.

Method is a concept that is supported in various disciplinary fields. Starting with philosophy, it is well known that philosophers used a variety of methods to pursue knowledge. For example, Descartes used the concept in his famous work *Discourse on Method* (1637/1968). He used the etymological meaning of "methodos," coming from Greek, which was equivalent to a path, a track, or a road to pursue knowledge. Classical examples of methods in philosophy are methodic doubt, argument, and dialectics. Another discipline where the study of a specific type of knowledge is important is epistemology. This type of knowledge is called scientific knowledge or science in general. According to Piaget (1970), epistemology uses the following methods: method of direct analysis, the formalizing epistemological method, and the genetic method. Finally, statistics, as a branch of mathematics, uses a variety of methods to collect, organize, analyze, and interpret data. The

main methods used to analyze data are descriptive and inferential statistics.

Methods are the main object of study of a general discipline called methodology. This is an old discipline closely related to epistemology and logic. It is defined as the critical study of methods to solve complex, theoretical, and practical problems (Morles, 2002). According to Morles (2002), there are different types of methodologies, such as research methodology, planning methodology, teaching methodology, methodology of technological and industrial production, and so on. As stated above, methods are the main component of the structure of methodology and are defined as a set of systematic and orderly operations, procedures, and instruments employed to look for solutions to problems.

In research methodology, methods have always played a salient role in the process of collecting and analyzing data. In this area, methods are conceived of as a set of rules, procedures, strategies, and techniques to collect and analyze data in order to study physical and social reality. Methods are the path to building scientific knowledge and that is why to do science, one needs a scientific method. Methods are also necessary in science to validate knowledge. Examples of specific research methods are observation, interviews, questionnaires, surveys, experiments, and so on (Hernández-Sampieri et al., 2014).

Methods are very important in the field of general didactics. In fact, one of the main components of the objects of study of general didactics is methods. This serves to answer the question, how do teachers teach? The other objects of study of general didactics are students, the teachers, the objectives, and the contents of the subjects. According to de Mattos (1974), methods are the rational organization of activities and resources in order to reach objectives efficiently. This means that a good method can facilitate students' learning. This area includes a variety of teaching methods such as deductive method, inductive method, direct instruction, inquiry-based learning, discovery learning,

differentiated instruction, personalized learning, flipped learning, and so on.

In the process of learning and teaching, method is an essential component. A method is a bridge between learning and teaching. In fact, according to Mayer (2008), in educational psychology a method is not only a component of teaching, but also an object of research. "How can we tell whether instruction [teaching] affects learning?" (p. 8); three approaches to research on teaching methods have been used: the behaviorist, the cognitive, and the contextual. Furthermore, in order to be effective learners, students need to apply the appropriate learning strategies, which are part of a method.

In educational planning, a priori decisions about method are very important. In any human endeavor, planning is necessary to guarantee success, and that is why educational institutions plan their activities every year. Medina-Rivilla and Mata (2009) affirm that the basic components of planning are didactic objectives, contents and competencies, activities and resources, and evaluation. The procedures, activities, and resources are the main elements of a method. Teachers need to plan the use of varied, appropriate, and useful methods so that the students understand and apply the contents of the school syllabi, reach educational objectives, and develop the competencies planned in advance.

Decisions about method are also essential in the process of lesson planning. This is a corollary of the importance of decisions regarding method in institutional planning stated above. According to Harmer (1983), "the best teachers are those who think carefully about what they are going to do in their classes and who plan how they are going to organize the teaching and learning" (p. 218). Previous questions about selection, orderly organization, sequence and pace of contents, activities, and resources to accomplish the lesson objectives and to develop the students' competencies refer to method. According to de Mattos (1974), a method establishes a practical relationship between procedures,

resources and activities, and the students' learning objectives or results.

The nature, constituents, and stages of what you observe in a lesson or class are the essence of method. Whatever happens in class is the result of a teaching and a learning method. This means that even if teachers cannot teach a class as planned, what they do in class represents a method. In other words, a method is an inherent characteristic of a lesson.

The quality of the students' learning an L2 or a foreign language might depend on the effectiveness of a good teaching method. Although students can learn a new language by themselves, teachers are needed to serve as mediators in an L2 or a foreign language lesson. To accomplish this, teachers should design and implement active, varied, flexible, and motivating methods to facilitate students' language learning. For instance, de Mattos (1974) states that when teachers teach a subject with a good method, the contents of the course work become rich, suggestive, and effective. This way the students' minds will be energized, inspired, and open to new study and life. In contrast, when teachers use inappropriate methods, the subject can become dry, irrelevant, and not motivating for the students.

Methods have always played a significant role in LTM. As soon as people began to teach classical languages to children at home, they started to use techniques, procedures, and resources, which are the main components of a method. The same happened to early teachers who taught classical languages at school. Little by little teachers and people interested in language teaching accumulated and organized their procedures, activities, and resources to support methods and approaches. This process has been described and organized in such works as the one written by Kelly (1969), who traces the development of language teaching between 500 BC until 1969, to cover a period of 25 centuries. LTM has been a very dynamic, productive, innovative, controversial, cyclical, popular, and unpopular field of teaching methods.

This has been demonstrated by method analysts such as Mackey (1965), Diller (1971, 1978), Richards and Rodgers (2014), Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011), and Kumaravadivelu (2006). Finally, if a method is an important component of general didactics, it should also be important in language teaching didactics because both types of didactics deal with the process of teaching and learning.

Interest in language teaching methods is resurfacing in the 21st century. Despite the existence of some discrediting voices against language teaching methods, there is a tendency in the 2000s to support their value due to the knowledge and the experience of some language teaching authorities, such as Block (2001, as cited in Bell, 2007), Larsen-Freeman (2001, as cited in Anker, 2001), Bell (2003), and Adamson (2004) and the results of some research by Bell (2007). Block (as cited in Bell, 2007), for example, has argued that

> While method has been discredited at an etic level (that is, in the thinking and the nomenclature of scholars) it certainly retains a great deal of vitality at the grass-roots, emic level (that is, it is part of the nomenclature of lay people and teachers. (p. 142)

In addition, Bell (2007) did a qualitative study with four groups of teachers (145 students in an MA program in applied linguistics at an American university and 16 students in a preservice certificate program at the same university). The objective of the study was to assess Block's claim that "whereas the notion of method no longer plays a significant role in the thinking of applied linguists, it still plays a vital role in the thinking of teachers" (p. 135). Data were collected by means of interviews, discussion board postings, autobiographies, and teaching journals. Results of the study indicated that "teacher interest in methods is determined by how far methods provide options in dealing with particular teaching contexts. Rather than playing a vital role in teacher thinking, teacher attitude towards methods is highly pragmatic" (p. 135).

Conclusions

The TESOL authorities previously mentioned—such as Allwright (1991), Brown (2002), Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2001, 2003, 2006), and Nunan (1989)—have had strong arguments regarding the limitations of the method era of language teaching. There is no question about the inexistence of the ideal, unique, and universal "one size fits all" method to be applied in any sociocultural context. In addition, there is no perfect approach or method, and consequently, their promoters have exaggerated their claims about the innovation and superiority in comparison to other methods, the effectiveness in facilitating students' learning of a new language, and so on. Finally, it is certainly true that method is not the solution to the complex problem of learning an L2 or a foreign language effectively around the world.

Another critique that goes back to the 1960s refers to the use of a variety of terms in language teaching (Anthony, 1963/1972) and to the vagueness of the concept of method (Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Mackey, 1965). To solve these difficulties, Anthony (1963/1972) proposed the use of the terms approach, method, and technique. He also defined method in accordance with its etymological meaning: "Method is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language to students" (p. 6). In addition, in an effort to systematize and evaluate the knowledge and experience accumulated in the method era, other authors proposed other terms to support the concept of method. However, their efforts seem to have created more confusion than clarity. For example, Richards and Rodgers (1982) expanded the concept of method to include *approach*, *design*, and *procedure*. Stern (1983) converted the method into a *theory of teaching*, and Larsen-Freeman (1986) presented methods as composed of *principles* and *techniques*. Finally, Kumaravadivelu defined method as a *construct*. In conclusion, instead of going forwards, we have gone backwards in relation to the conceptualization of method in such a way that Mackey's (1965) concern continues to be valid:

As a result, much of the field of language method has become a matter of opinion rather than of fact. It is not surprising that feelings run high in these matters, and that the very word "method" means so little and so much. (p. 139)

The problem with the previous arguments is that the TESOL gurus sentenced the concept of method to death. According to them, the concept of method has lost significance, is unhelpful, has no substance, and "has little theoretical validity and even less practical utility" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 170). Metaphorically, what they have done is "throw the baby out with the bathwater."

The answer to the question that motivated the writing of this article, "can we really affirm that a language teaching method can die?" is a resounding "No" for the following reasons. Firstly, method is a construct that has been substantiated in a variety of disciplines, such as philosophy, epistemology, statistics, and so on. Secondly, method is the object of study of a traditional discipline called methodology. Thirdly, method is essential in research methodology. Fourthly, method is a key component of two related disciplines to LTM: general didactics and educational psychology. Last but not least, method is an inherent component of the teaching and learning process. Everything teachers and students do from the start to the end of a language lesson is the result of method.

Referring to the nature and scope of method, one suggestion is to maintain the idea used in general didactics. In this discipline, the word method comes from the Latin word *methodus*, which means "way of teaching" and was expanded with ideas or orderliness and regularity in order to reach an end. That is, method is a means to an end. Consequently, the didactic method has been described as the rational and practical organization of procedures, activities, and resources to accomplish learning objectives effectively and efficiently (de Mattos, 1974). In addition, a method should be supported by

theoretical principles of language learning, language teaching, and the role of the sociocultural context. Finally, a method should be adapted to the educational aims, the contents of a course, the types of students, and to the institutional and external sociocultural context (Medina-Rivilla & Mata, 2009). Finally, the attempts to explain the complex problem of learning an L2 or a foreign language successfully should be assigned to theories of language learning, and not to methods of language teaching.

Despite the criticism stated above against the methods in TESOL, one cannot ignore some of their strengths. The results of the analysis of methods indicate that some of them are based on sound theoretical principles of language learning and teaching, while others have developed and applied a variety of activities and procedures. Some have been well designed, and still others have and are just now taking advantage of the advances in the new ICTs. The lesson for language teaching practitioners is that we cannot throw all of this knowledge and experience into the dustbin of history, but should use them, at least, as a source of enlightenment to design and implement our methods of teaching an L2 or a foreign language in our everyday classes.

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The Repertory Grid Interview: Exploring Qualitative and Quantitative Data on Language Teachers' Pedagogical Beliefs

La técnica de rejilla: una exploración de datos cualitativos y cuantitativos sobre las creencias pedagógicas de los profesores de idiomas

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This article focuses on the use of the repertory grid technique as a research instrument for conducting and analyzing interviews in the field of teaching English as a foreign language. As a demonstration of the explanatory usefulness of this methodological framework, a pilot study was carried out to elicit second language teachers' tacit beliefs concerning cultural perceptions of good language teaching. Repertory grid interviews were conducted with nine teachers at a public university in central Mexico. The data from each group were compared to uncover possible cultural influences on participants' beliefs. It is hoped that this overview of the method encourages an interest in repertory grid interviews and their analytic techniques in the field of applied linguistics and in English as a foreign language teaching in particular.

Keywords: foreign language teachers, Mexico, mixed-method approach, pedagogical beliefs, repertory grid technique interviews

Este artículo explora el uso de la técnica de rejilla como instrumento de investigación para realizar y analizar entrevistas en el campo de la enseñanza del inglés. Para demostrar la utilidad explicativa de este marco metodológico, se realizó un estudio piloto para conocer las creencias tácitas de los profesores de segunda lengua sobre las percepciones culturales de la buena enseñanza de idiomas. Las entrevistas se hicieron con nueve profesores de una universidad pública del centro de México. Se compararon los datos de cada grupo para identificar posibles influencias culturales en las creencias de los participantes. Se espera que esta descripción general del método fomente el interés en la técnica de rejilla dentro de la lingüística aplicada y de la enseñanza del inglés en particular.

Palabras clave: creencias pedagógicas, enfoque de método mixto, maestros de lenguas extranjeras, México, técnica de rejilla

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Introduction

This paper discusses the use of the repertory grid technique (RGT) as a credible research tool in the field of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL), specifically for research focused on issues related to teacher beliefs. As an example of its use, we describe a case study concerning foreign language teachers' cultural perceptions about good pedagogy. Because research into culture is particularly fraught with methodological difficulties (Baldwin et al., 2006), the topic serves as a useful focus to illuminate some of the advantageous features of the RGT.

The role of culture in second and foreign language teaching and learning is well established, and research on the topic is extensive. In the last decade or so, at least four literature reviews on the subject have been published (Álvarez-Valencia, 2014; Lessard-Clouston, 2016; Risager, 2011; Young et al., 2009). Most empirical studies comparing and contrasting cultural views on pedagogy (language or otherwise) have typically relied on questionnaires, often supported by structured interviews, using previously validated and standardized items (e.g., Clark-Gareca & Gui, 2019; Liu & Meng, 2009; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2009; Pawlak, 2011; Schulz, 2001). These data elicitation techniques are not without problems. Questionnaires have been criticized for their susceptibility to common method variance, which occurs when respondents' answers do not genuinely reflect their authentic views but are instead influenced by the instrument's design (Gorrell et al., 2011). Research has identified several ways in which this kind of method bias can pollute questionnaire data (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

To mitigate the inherent defects of questionnaires, many researchers support them with structured interviews. Such interviews, however, are subject to their own limitations, including the possible downsides of "subjectivity, the generalisation of the findings, conscious and unconscious biases, influences of dominant ideologies and mainstream thinking" (Diefenbach, 2009, p. 875). When data from questionnaires and structured interviews are used together, problems arise in aligning data derived from the two methods. Poor alignment can be attributed to

> the complexity and instability of the construct being investigated, difficulties in making data comparable, lack of variability in participant responses, greater sensitivity to context and seemingly emotive responses within the interview, possible misinterpretation of some questionnaire prompts, and greater control of content exposure in the questionnaire. (Harris & Brown, 2010, p. 1)

The RGT is a type of structured interview associated with the field of personal construct psychology (PCP). Combining the best features of both qualitative and quantitative techniques, the grid technique militates against some of the weaknesses of both. First, the structure of repertory grid interviews helps mitigate method bias. As with any qualitative interviewing method, there is always a danger that the RGT researcher may impose constructs or lead participants. However, because the main role of the interviewer is to focus and clarify a participant's responses rather than guide the interviewee through a series of predetermined questions, the potential for "leading the witness" is reduced. Second, unlike elicitation techniques that necessitate post-hoc thematic analyses, the repertory grid process brings the most essential themes of an interview immediately to the fore. Finally, because RGT data is amenable to statistical analysis, it allows researchers to uncover patterns in participant responses which reflect psychological relationships within the "construing systems" of both individuals and groups (Fransella et al., 2004, p. 81).

The following is a consideration of the RGT as a methodological instrument. Specifically, the paper describes an analysis of the commonalities and individuations of the pedagogic beliefs of nine language teachers at a public university in central Mexico in order to illustrate how the RGT can profitably be employed

in the field of applied linguistics and TEFL. First, an overview of the RGT is provided. Second, several studies in the field of TEFL that have utilized RGT interviews are reviewed. Third, literature concerning the impact of cultural beliefs on language pedagogy is presented to situate the subsequent discussion of repertory grid analysis. Finally, a case study is presented as one example of how the grid technique can be used to capture information about cultural dissimilarities in teachers' pedagogic beliefs and, by extension, to capture information concerning pedagogic beliefs in general.

The Repertory Grid Technique

The RGT is a specific type of interview utilized to analyze the content and structure of the implicit theories that people rely on to construe reality. Of the methodologies associated with Kelly's (1955, 1963) theory of PCP, the RGT is the most well-known.

Although repertory grids were initially developed by Kelly for use within the field of clinical psychotherapy and primarily focused on the individual level of analysis, scholars in other disciplines have adopted its premises and employed its methods to understand belief systems at the collective level (Jankowicz, 1987). Kelly's (1955) writings on "commonality" and "sociality" explicitly address the tendency of groups to create tacit theories of the world. People, of course, define themselves in overlapping ways as members of ethnicities, genders, economic classes, age cohorts, and professional or occupational groups. All such sub-cultures build on a shared perspective that orders their respective "fields of experience to provide identification and solidarity for its members" (Kay, 1970, as cited in Diamond, 1982, p. 401). As Wright (2004) points out, when individual constructions are brought together, "certain underlying collective frames of reference emerge that reflect a sense of common understanding and shared meaning" (p. 354). Sechrest (2009) argues that uncovering these frames likely has more definite implications for research than any other area of Kellian theory.

The RGT is a "two-way classification of data in which [entities or] events are interlaced with abstractions" (Shaw, 1984, as cited in Zuber-Skerritt, 1988, "The repertory grid" section, para. 2). Repertory grids "reflect part of a person's system of cross-references between their personal observations and experience of the world . . . and their personal classifications or abstractions of that experience" (Zuber-Skerritt, 1987, p. 604). Using Kellian nomenclature, personal observations and experiences are denominated "elements"; abstractions of experiences are denominated "constructs."

Elements are a set of events and entities external to the interviewee. In clinical psychology, for instance, elements might be family members. In marketing, elements might be a set of different cars, or vacation destinations, or cellphones. In the current research, participants were asked to think about their past teachers. The choice of "past teachers" as grid elements is premised on Lortie's (1975) theory of the "apprenticeship of observation," which denotes the internalization of teacher roles, identities, and practices that occurs over the course of an instructor's time as a student. These beliefs about teaching constitute what have been referred to as "folk pedagogies," a term which emphasizes the cultural dimension of how students come to understand teaching (Joram & Gabriele, 1998).

Constructs, Kelly (1955) asserted, are the personal theories that arise when humans compare or contrast any two entities. Humans develop hypotheses based on these theories which, in turn, are tested through on-going "experiments" (i.e., interactions) with their environments (Beail, 1985; Fromm, 2004; Hardison & Neimeyer, 2012). In other psychological approaches, these theories may be variously referred to as *personality*, *attitudes*, *habits*, *reinforcement history*, *information coding system*, *psychodynamics*, *concepts*, or *philosophy* (Fransella et al., 2004). Borrowing Jerrard's (1998) denotation, in this paper constructs are defined as a "basic dimension of appraisal" (p. 41).

The constructs in Kelly's (1955) model are always bipolar. When elicited during an RGT interview, the two poles are designated the *emergent* pole and the *implicit* pole. The emergent pole refers to the original comparison or contrast given by the participant; the implicit pole is elicited by asking the participant to provide what they believe to be the semantic opposite of the emergent pole. Because each construct is bipolar, it is possible for participants to use a numerical scale to evaluate each element. That is, each completed grid can be thought of as a "personal differential questionnaire" (Tomico et al., 2009, p. 57) that participants can use to numerically rate elements in terms of constructs, allowing for a variety of statistical analyses to be conducted.

The Repertory Grid in TEFL Research

Since its development in the 1950's, the repertory grid has been adopted by a wide range of researchers with interests outside its original psychotherapeutic context (King & Horrocks, 2010). Indeed, the RGT has proven to be such a useful instrument for eliciting and analyzing verbal commentaries that the technique is often dissociated from its underlying theory. Although scholars within the field of PCP warn against decoupling repertory grid interviews from Kelly's theories of personality (Beail, 1985; Denicolo & Pope, 1997), researchers outside the area of PCP have found repertory grids to be a practical, stand-alone data collection technique: Repertory grids have been employed in more than 2,000 books, book chapters, research articles, and academic work in a wide variety of fields (Luque et al., 1999; Neimeyer et al., 1990; Saúl et al., 2012), with an average of 100 works utilizing the technique published each year (Saúl et al., 2012).

In the field of general education, there are numerous studies of teacher development and cognition based on repertory grid data. However, only a handful of investigations in the field of TEFL have utilized the RGT. One of the first of these was a study carried out by Bodycott (1997), who investigated conceptions of the "ideal teacher" among 12 preservice English language instructors in Singapore. The author supplied the grid elements, all of which were based on social and professional identities such as "self," "past self," "ideal self," "mother," "father," "school principal," and "language teacher." Bodycott reported that the research participants' opinions about "good" teaching emphasized the personal traits and values of language instructors rather than pedagogic knowledge.

Sendan and Roberts (1998) used the RGT to investigate the complexities of change in student cognition. Arguing that much of the teacher cognition literature defines thinking in terms of one-dimensional "lists" of variables, they instead approached student-teacher cognition as a dynamic developmental process. Through a diachronic, statistical analysis of one student-teacher's repertory grid data, the authors found that the participant's beliefs about effective teaching were indeed dynamic, changing not only in terms of content but also in terms of structure.

Murray's longitudinal investigation (2003, as cited in Borg, 2006) focused on the development of language awareness among preservice teachers. Over the course of a seven-month class in English as a second language (ESL) pedagogy, participants were interviewed three times. Murray provided samples of learner language, native-speaker language, and coursebook language and asked his research participants to discuss similarities and differences between them. Murray's data analysis was unconventional: Although he used a repertory grid elicitation technique, actual grids were not constructed. Instead, the researcher analyzed interview transcripts and located constructs within them. In subsequent interviews, he then tracked how these constructs changed and were supplanted by others.

Yaman (2008) relied on repertory grid interviews to follow a single English language teacher's development over the course of a one-year, in-service training program. The author emphasized that the RGT had great potential as a tool for reflection, concluding that the technique

allowed her to "gain access to and monitor changes in the teacher's personal theories with relatively less imposition of the researcher's own construction of the issues than would have been possible with methods such as observations, questionnaires or checklists" (p. 38).

Kozikoglu (2017), in an RGT study of 36 prospective teachers in Turkey, aimed to identify their cognitive constructs regarding ideal teacher qualifications. Six participants were selected from the department of foreign language education. In all, 356 cognitive constructs were produced. The author concluded that, according to the study, "ideal teachers should have qualifications such as humaneness, joviality and personal values as well as professional knowledge (content knowledge and pedagogical skills)" (p. 72).

More recently, Eren (2020) investigated the intercultural views of three instructors from Germany, Syria, and Iran regarding the concept of teacher autonomy. Eren gathered data using repertory grid interviews along with traditional semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. Findings suggested that the teachers understood "teacher autonomy" in similar ways, notwithstanding their national origins.

The Impact of Cultural Beliefs on Language Pedagogy

The widely acknowledged idea that socio-cultural forces influence teachers' pedagogical beliefs and professional practices is encapsulated in the term *situated cognition* (Brown et al., 1989). This concept is based on the notion that knowledge is always developed within a given context. Teaching and learning are never neutral acts: They are inseparable from their socio-cultural settings (Brown et al., 1989; Lave, 1988; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Through classroom activities, teacher models, and peer influence, students are apprenticed into a particular culture of learning that reflects wider cultural assumptions (Lave, 1988). Teachers are likewise enculturated. The anthropologist Conrad Kottak (2004, as cited in Read et al., 2009) defines enculturation as

the process where the culture that is currently established teaches an individual the accepted norms and values of the culture in which the individual lives. The individual can become an accepted member and fulfill the needed functions and roles of the group. Most importantly, the individual knows and establishes a context of boundaries and accepted behavior that dictates what is acceptable and not acceptable within the framework of that society. It teaches the individual their role within society as well as what is accepted behavior within that society and lifestyle. (p. 52)

There is considerable empirical evidence to support these ideas. For instance, the OECD's *Teaching and Learning International Survey* (2009) compared perspectives on pedagogy in 16 OECD and seven partner countries. Findings indicated that the influence of culture and pedagogical traditions on teachers' beliefs and practices is "exceptionally high" (p. 96). Schleicher (2018)—summarizing the OECD's most recent 2018 survey of teaching and learning—reaffirmed the cultural dimensions of teaching, noting that "the meaning of teacher professionalism varies significantly across countries, and often reflects cultural and historical differences" (p. 29).

Language education, like all education, is a cognitively situated activity. Whether overtly or covertly, a process of "cultural scripting" (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999) encourages both teacher and students to conform to the socio-cultural practices of their educational environment.

How socio-cultural forces influence teacher and student perspectives on foreign language pedagogy has been a fertile area of study in TEFL research (see, for instance, Amiryousefi, 2015; Widiati & Cahyono, 2006; Yoo, 2014). Indeed, the large number of such studies supports Atkinson's (1999) assertion that "except for language, learning, and teaching, there is no more important concept in the field of [TESOL] than culture" (p. 625).

Given the sheer volume of research focused on questions of culture, it is remarkable that there are relatively few studies in the field of TEFL devoted to cross-cultural comparisons. The exception here is the research contrasting Chinese and Western beliefs and attitudes about EFL pedagogy (Anderson, 1993; Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Clark-Gareca & Gui, 2019; Degen & Absalom, 1998; Hong & Pawan, 2015; Rao, 2013; Shi, 2009; Simpson, 2008; Stanley, 2013; Zhang, 2016; Zhou et al., 2011). Other comparative studies, however, are relatively rare (Aubrey, 2009; Can et al., 2011; Liu, 2004; Pawlak, 2011; Richter & Lara-Herrera, 2017; Rubenstein, 2006; Schulz, 2001).

Method

This exploratory study is concerned with the tacit beliefs of foreign language teachers concerning cultural perceptions of good language teaching. It is offered as an example of the usefulness of the RGT, both in terms of the productiveness of elicitation and the utility of subsequent analysis.

Participants

Possible participants were identified through convenience sampling. Nine second and foreign language teachers working at a university in central Mexico ultimately agreed to take part in the study: three Spanish language teachers, three French teachers, and three English teachers. A larger pool of participants was deemed unnecessary given that this article aims to illuminate the RGT as a methodological instrument rather than to delve deeply into matters of culture, per se.

Procedure

The participants were interviewed individually. Grid elements were chosen by the participants, who were asked to think of six of their past teachers: an excellent language teacher, an excellent content teacher in another field, an average language teacher, an average teacher in any subject, a poor language teacher, and a poor teacher in any subject. They were also asked to think of themselves at three moments during their teaching career: in the past, in the present, and in the future. Through researcher-directed dyadic elicitation, the participants were subsequently asked to compare and contrast the elements they had chosen, thus generating a list of personal constructs. At the intersection of each element and construct, participants were asked to provide a numerical rating, representing an evaluation of each element in terms of its corresponding construct's emergent and implicit poles.

To analyze any group as a whole, it is necessary to homogenize individual responses. This is generally achieved by pooling all the participants' constructs and categorizing them according to the meanings they express. There are essentially two ways of going about this. The first, referred to as "bootstrapping," consists of analyzing the collected constructs systematically and identifying the most salient connections or themes. The second method requires that the researcher preselect a set of constructs, generally one encountered in the literature or one that is theoretically based (Jankowicz, 2004). To overcome the highly idiosyncratic nature of the results and to create a standardized classification scheme, we employed the second option. Constructs were placed into a number of categories suggested by Dunkin (1995). Dunkin's taxonomy breaks teaching into eight distinct dimensions: teaching as structuring learning, as motivating learning, as encouraging activity and independence in learning, as establishing an atmosphere conducive to learning, as experience, as content knowledge, as pedagogic knowledge, and as personal/professional orientation. The resulting categorizations allowed for both inter- and intra-grid analyses of the constructs elicited from the English, Spanish, and French groups. While sacrificing some detail in each of the individual grids, this system allowed for the identification of trends common to all of them (Jankowicz, 2004).

We analyzed the categories in terms of three dimensions: (a) dominance, (b) importance, and (c) semantic similarity. *Dominance* refers to the degree

of inter-group agreement about the importance of a given construct category. If, for instance, constructs associated with "structured learning" were elicited more often from one group than another, one could plausibly conclude that structured learning is more important to the first group than to the second. In PCP, elicitation order is used to measure a construct's *importance* to a given participant (Tomico et al., 2009). An importance index was created by calculating the normalized order in which constructs were elicited (with constructs reported first being considered more important to the participant than those reported later). Finally, *semantic similarity* can be computed using hierarchal cluster analysis, which in turn can be visually represented by a dendrogram of taxonomic relationships. Such an analysis is useful because it provides a way to understand the extent to which given elements and constructs are seen as similar in meaning, both inter- and intra-personally.

Findings and Discussion

In all, the nine participants generated 177 constructs. The average number of constructs among the English teachers was 21; among the Spanish teachers, the average was 26; and among the French teachers, the average

was 11. In all, 1,770 pieces of data (i.e., all emergent and implicit constructs plus the participants' ratings on the constructs) were elicited.

Dominance and Importance Measures

Table 1 displays the relative percentages (i.e., dominance) for each construct category as well as the elicitation order (i.e., importance) for the English, Spanish, and French teachers. The elicitation order index was derived by calculating the mean of the order of all constructs within each construct category. Based on the total number of constructs generated, the order of the constructs was normalized for each participant to a range of 0 to 1: a 0 value reflects the first construct that was elicited, and a 1 value reflects the last construct. A standard normalization formula was used:

X normalized = (b–a) * [(x–y) / (z–y)] + a

This can be reduced to

normalized order = order rank – 1 / total constructs – 1

The standard deviations (which are critical for estimating the homogeneity of a category of constructs in the relative order) are included in parentheses after each rank.

Table 1. Dominance and Importance Measures

Construct categories	Dominance (relative percentage %)			Importance (elicitation order)		
	English	Spanish	French	English	Spanish	French
Content knowledge	8	6	3	.20 (.14)	.41 (.21)	.80 (.00)
Encourages activity & independence	3	6	0	.80 (.00)	.77 (.10)	-
Establishes atmosphere conducive to learning	31	24	18	.51 (.50)	.63 (.40)	.49 (.73)
Experience	1	0	3	.61 (.00)	-	.50 (.00)
Motivates learning	8	12	9	.40 (.29)	.44 (.51)	.08 (.10)
Pedagogic knowledge	3	20	3	.23 (.27)	.29 (.47)	.64 (.00)
Personal / professional orientation	26	25	49	.57 (.42)	.53 (.52)	.62 (.23)
Structures learning	20	7	15	.50 (.32)	.63 (.14)	.64 (.14)

Note. The dominance of each category (measured by the relative percentage of total constructs) and the importance of each category (measured by the elicitation order) for the English, Spanish, and French teachers. Standard deviations are displayed in parentheses.

The dominance analysis highlighted major alignments and disjunctures between the three groups. For instance, the relative percentage measures demonstrate that all of the teachers regarded the personal and professional aspects of their work as significant. Constructs in this category, which included "willingness to grow," "ability to adapt," and "dedication," demonstrated a commitment towards instructional excellence and professional development. The French teachers emphasized this aspect of their work: almost 50% of their constructs had to do with their personal and professional orientation. Overall, all three groups shared beliefs about the importance of establishing a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning. The English and French teachers were alike in that both groups generated a significant number of constructs having to do with structuring learning, such as careful planning, organization, and assessment (20% and 15% of total constructs, respectively). The Spanish teachers placed a great deal of emphasis on the importance of pedagogic knowledge (20% of the total constructs generated by this group).

These findings are enhanced by the nuance afforded by an analysis of the importance indices. While the English teachers offered the largest number of constructs related to establishing an atmosphere conducive to learning, according to the elicitation index, content and pedagogic knowledge may be more important to them (these constructs were ranked as 1 and 2, respectively). The agreement between the English teachers regarding their rankings, as reflected by the low standard deviation scores, adds credence to this claim. Pedagogic knowledge was similarly important to the Spanish teachers. Interestingly, the relative percentage here is more in line with the salience of the construct. That is to say, the Spanish teachers both created a high number of constructs associated with pedagogic knowledge and rated these constructs as the most

important to their practice. Finally, for the French group, although personal and professional orientation was the most "replete" category (comprised of 49 constructs), "motivating learning" was ranked as the most important construct.

Semantic Similarity Measures

Semantic similarity is a metric defined by how closely or remotely an individual perceives the distance between the meanings of two (or more) units of language, concepts, or instances (Harispe et al., 2015). When a hierarchical cluster analysis of correlations is applied to the numerical data in a repertory grid, the more that constructs or elements are alike, the closer they approximate a score of 100, which would signify a perfect correlation. Thus, in Figure 1, the construct categories "establish an atmosphere conducive to learning" and "personal and professional orientation" are closely linked (a 95.7% match). This suggests that for the English teachers, an instructor who makes students feel secure, is approachable, and "nurturant" (Dunkin, 1995, p. 24) and is probably also a teacher who tends to integrate their personal and professional identities (Sabirova et al., 2016). For the English teachers, content knowledge and experience were also highly correlated (94.3% match). In terms of elements, the English teachers viewed being a language teacher in roughly the same terms as being any other type of teacher (94.4% match).

Figure 2 shows that the Spanish teachers also believed there to be a strong connection between establishing an atmosphere conducive to learning and an instructor's personal and professional orientation (94.4% match). In comparison to the English participants, the Spanish group, however, viewed the pedagogic characteristics of language teachers as being relatively distinct from the characteristics of the non-language teachers they had identified as elements (85% match).

Figure 1. Cluster Analysis of English Teachers' Construct Categories and Supplied Elements
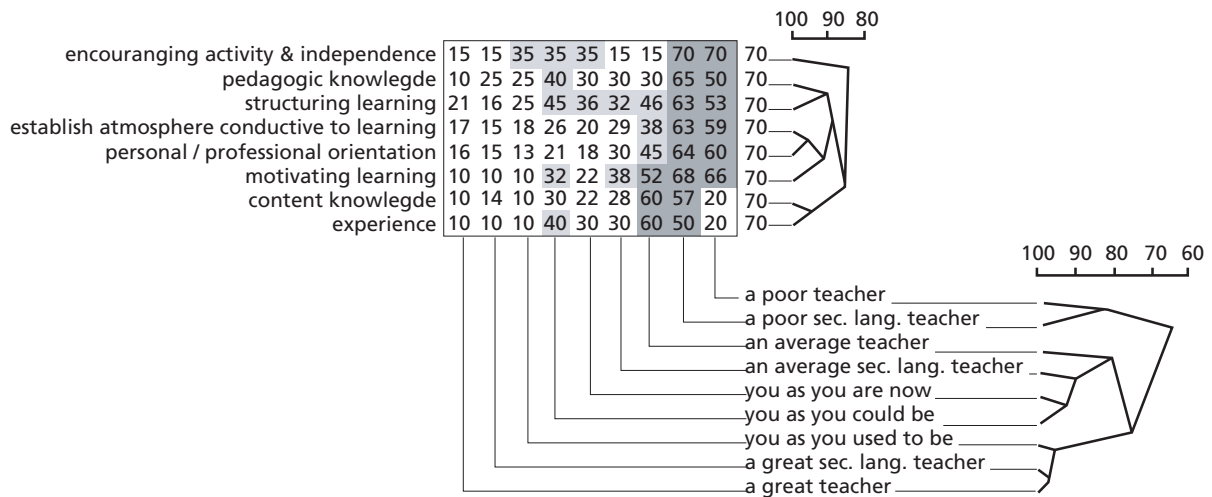
Figure 2. Cluster Analysis of Spanish Teachers' Construct Categories and Supplied Elements
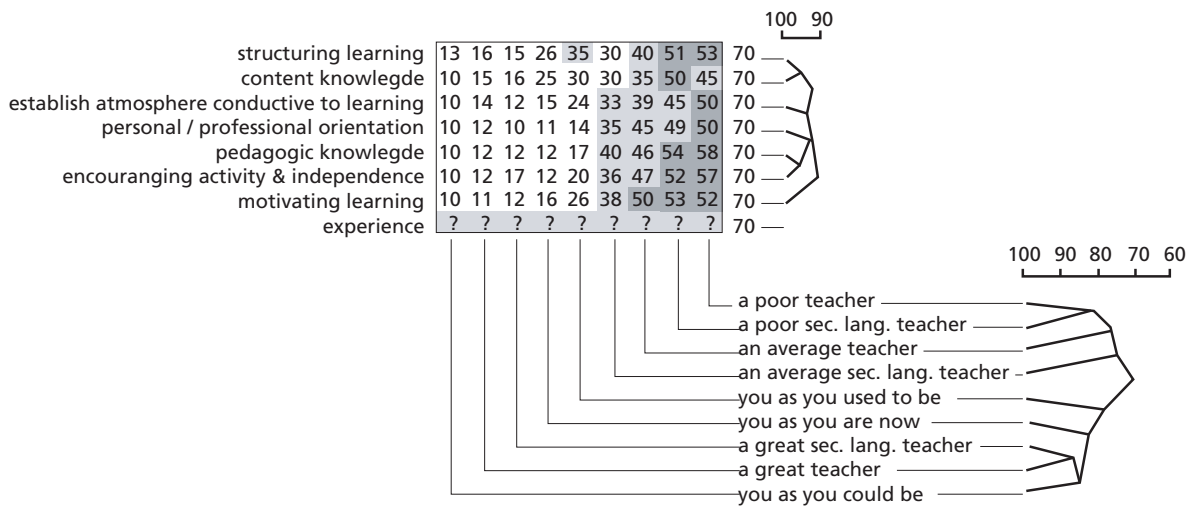
The French teachers viewed both the construct categories and the supplied elements as semantically independent units with relatively little overlap between them. As seen in Figure 3, for this group, the concepts "establishing an atmosphere conducive to learning" and "personal and professional orientation" were also the most semantically similar. However, unlike the English and Spanish groups, these concepts only matched at a relatively low 89.6%. For the French instructors, a "great teacher" and a "great second language teacher" only matched at approximately 75%, suggesting that for this group, language teachers possess several characteristics and beliefs that distinctly separate them from teachers in other fields. To understand these differences better, follow-up interviews would have to be conducted.

Figure 3. Cluster Analysis of French Teachers' Construct Categories and Supplied Elements
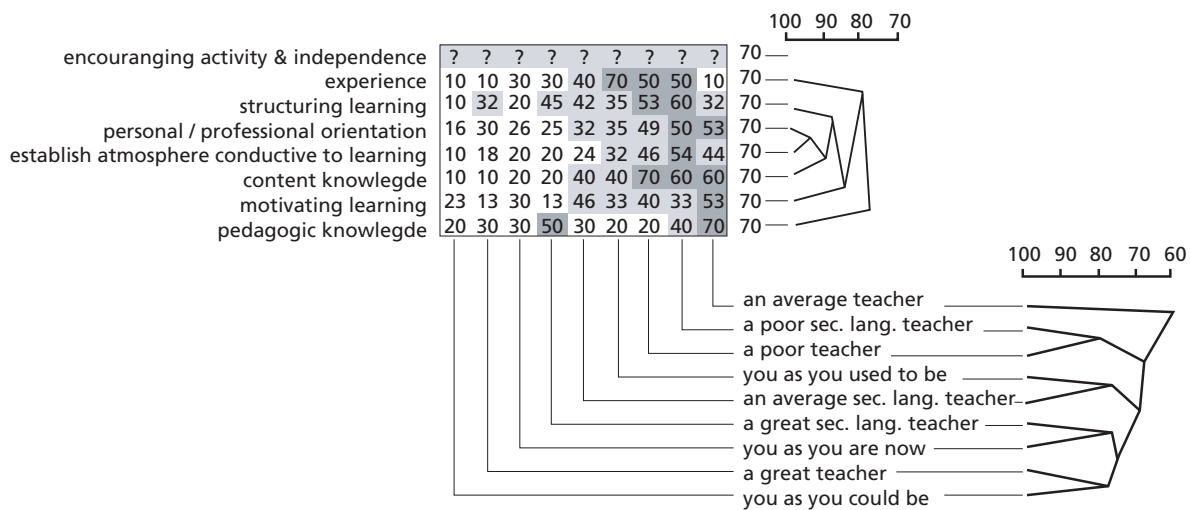
Conclusion

The repertory grid is an interview technique that explores the structure and content of the implicit theories people rely upon to construe their experiences. As mentioned in the introduction, the technique merges the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative approaches in a way that mitigates a number of methodological difficulties associated with other qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods procedures.

In this study, nine language teachers at a public university in central Mexico were interviewed about their conceptions of "good" language pedagogy. The dominance and importance measures demonstrate that all the language teachers viewed the personal and professional aspects of their work as important. All three groups shared beliefs about the importance of establishing a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning. Both the English and French teachers generated a significant number of constructs having to do with structuring learning. In addition, the Spanish teachers placed a high emphasis on the importance of pedagogic knowledge. Findings like this demonstrate the usefulness of the technique in uncovering tacit, pedagogical beliefs, a knowledge of which would, of course, be useful in

second language teacher education, particularly in terms of opportunities for self-reflection and monitoring changes in pedagogical perspectives over time.

As this research was premised on creating an example of how repertory grids function, the study must be considered exploratory and illustrative. And as with any such study, the results must be heavily caveated. In the present case, first, the concept of culture is infamously "messy" (Fives & Buehl, 2012; Pajares, 1992) and thus would have to be carefully disambiguated were this research to advance beyond its current state. Second, there are unresolved questions regarding sample size. The literature is notoriously unresolved as to requisite sample sizes in repertory grid investigations, with different researchers advocating sample sizes of between six and 25 to approximate the universe of meaning within a given population (Dillon & McKnight, 1990; Dunn, 1986; Ginsberg, 1989; Hassenzahl & Trautmann, 2001; Heckmann & Burk, 2017; Moynihan, 1996; Tan & Hunter, 2002). In any follow-on study, the question of proper sample size would have to be carefully addressed. Lastly, were the research to be carried further, whether to rely on pre-formulated categories or to undertake

conceptual content analysis is a question that would need to be resolved.

These methodological concerns, however, are largely tangential to the purpose of the current article, which offered a small-scale study to elucidate how RGT interviews are conducted and to present a few of the ways in which the resultant data can be analyzed. As should be apparent, the RGT's usefulness is in no way limited to the topics explored in this article. It is a data elicitation and analysis approach suitable for any study focused on teacher, student, or shareholder beliefs. It allows for comparisons of beliefs between a variety of people on a wide range of topics. In sum, repertory grids are distinguished for their ease of use, their utility in precisely defining concepts without the need for post hoc analyses, their usefulness in uncovering connections between seemingly dissimilar concepts, their ability to restrain researcher bias, their high degree of validity, and their amenability to several types of statistical analysis grounded in participants' qualitative and idiosyncratic views of the world.

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Colombian Scholars' Discussion About Language Assessment: A Review of Five Journals

Discusión de académicos colombianos sobre la evaluación en lenguas: revisión de cinco revistas académicas

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The current discussion about assessment in the language teaching context—involving topics such as immigration and citizenship, and university entrance—has brought with it the issue of justice in assessment. Although in Colombia such concerns are not generally discussed, it is important to consider fairness when it comes to classroom assessment. This paper presents a review of five Colombian well-known journals during the period 2009–2020 aiming to identify the scholarly discussion regarding language assessment and testing in the country. Findings suggest that Colombian researchers are concerned with fair and democratic assessment practices, and the involvement of students in peer- and self-assessment practices to improve learning and promote autonomy. Also, there is a perceived need for more teacher education in language assessment.

Keywords: classroom-based assessment, Colombia, language assessment, language assessment literacy

La discusión actual sobre evaluación en el contexto de enseñanza de lenguas —la cual incluye temas como inmigración y ciudadanía y admisión a la universidad— trae consigo el tema de justicia en la evaluación. Aunque en Colombia estos temas no han sido objeto de preocupación, sí es importante considerar la justicia cuando se trata de evaluación en el aula de clase. Este artículo presenta la revisión de publicaciones sobre evaluación en lenguas durante el período 2009–2020 en cinco revistas académicas reconocidas, a fin de identificar los intereses de académicos colombianos en esta área. Entre dichos intereses están las prácticas de evaluación justas y democráticas, así como el uso de la auto- y la coevaluación para mejorar el aprendizaje y promover la autonomía. También se percibe una necesidad de mayor formación a los profesores en evaluación en lenguas.

Palabras clave: Colombia, competencia de evaluación en lenguas, evaluación en el aula, evaluación en lenguas

Introduction

During the last decade, the discussion about language assessment in the English-speaking context has involved concerns such as immigration and citizenship (McNamara & Ryan, 2011; Shohamy & McNamara, 2009), and entrance to universities (Deygers, van den Branden, & van Gorp, 2018; Deygers, Zeidler, et al., 2018). This has brought with it the issue of justice linked to assessment, which has taken on great relevance due to the social implications some uses of tests have in terms of equity in a broader sense. As McNamara and Ryan (2011) affirm, "justice questions the use of the test in the first place, not only in terms of its effects and consequences but in terms of the social values it embodies" (p. 165). In Colombia, there has been little discussion of these concerns; yet, the issue of justice in assessment needs to be considered when it comes to the classroom setting, where context plays an important role (Scarino, 2013). In this sense, I would rather use the term *fairness* since it basically refers to issues of bias and impartiality and "assumes that a testing procedure exists" (McNamara & Ryan, 2011, p. 165). In other words, a test can be fair but unjust if used as a policy instrument without considering cultural contexts, for example (Deygers, van den Branden, & van Gorp, 2018).

Language assessment literacy (LAL) is another issue currently discussed in the area of language assessment, and it is important for the purpose of this paper since it considers language teachers' competence in language assessment. With its roots in assessment literacy (Fulcher, 2012; Stiggins, 1995), LAL relates to the skills, knowledge, and practices of assessment that different stakeholders should possess (Taylor, 2009). Inbar-Lourie (2008) maintained that LAL "comprises layers of assessment literacy skills combined with language specific competencies" (p. 389), which implies knowledge about what to assess, why and how—in Stiggins's (1995) words—anticipating what can go wrong and being able to take actions regarding the type of assessment used. Inbar-Lourie summed up assessment literacy as "the capacity to ask and answer critical questions about the purpose for assessment, about the fitness of the tool being used, about testing conditions, and about what is going to happen on the basis of the results" (p. 389). Malone (2013), for her part, included the classroom context when defining LAL, maintaining: "language assessment literacy refers to stakeholders' (often with a focus on instructors') familiarity with measurement practices and the application of this knowledge to classroom practices in general" (p. 330).

With this in mind, I intend to describe how language assessment is addressed in the Colombian context, what the concerns of language teachers and academics in this respect are, and how they are responding to these current global concerns of justice/fairness and LAL. To do so, I have reviewed five Colombian academic journals that specialize in publishing articles in the field of language teaching. I analyzed the publications that dealt with language assessment and testing and found six categories related to the main issues in this area: assessment practices, beliefs about assessment, skills involved, testing, teacher education and development, and language assessment literacy.

Method

This paper analyzes the articles published between 2009 and 2020 in five Colombian academic journals: *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal (CALJ)*, *HOW*, *Íkala*, *Lenguaje*, and *Profile*. All of them, except for *HOW*, belong to well-known public universities in the country and they cover language teaching. *HOW*, for its part, is published by ASOCOPI—the Colombian Association of Teachers of English.

For the journals *Íkala*, *Lenguaje*, and *Profile*, I searched using the phrase "language assessment" and "language testing" in the titles and keywords in the EBSCOhost database and limited the search to the above-mentioned period. The results showed 12, 10, and 38 publications, respectively. Using the same filter and phrases, I searched the *CALJ* webpage directly and obtained 53 results. Then I

revised the article abstracts to ensure that the publications had originated in Colombia. For the review of the *HOW* journal, I searched volume by volume, identifying titles that included "(language) assessment" or "testing," and then I read the abstracts to ensure that they met the proposed criteria for a final decision. All this resulted in a corpus for this review composed of 29 articles, distributed as shown in Figure 1. I then read the publications and identified common interests which subsequently became the categories that I will introduce later.

Figure 1. Colombian Journal Publications in Language Assessment During the Period 2009–2020
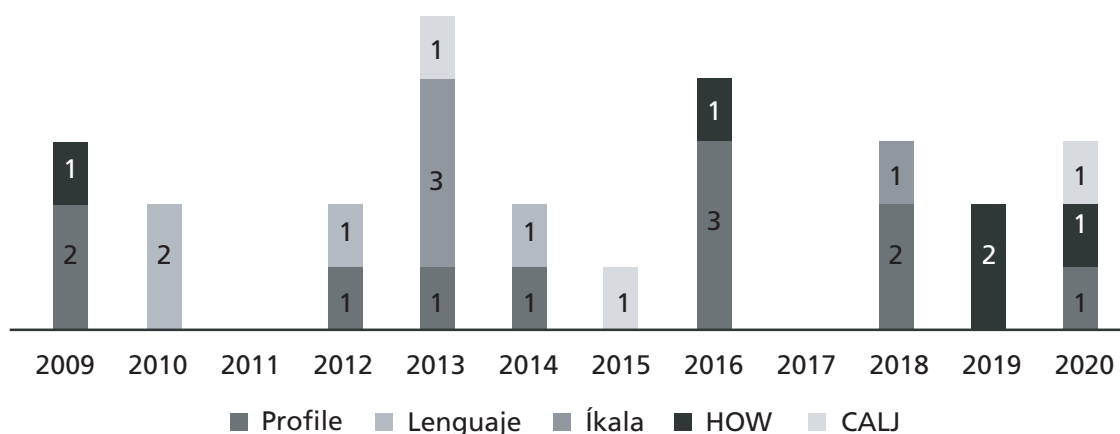
An Overview

The discussion by Colombian researchers about language assessment presented higher frequency—yet low if the relevance of assessment in education is considered—in the second third of the 12-year period (between 2013 and 2016), in which all the reviewed journals had at least one related publication. Overall, articles were of two types: those based on research and those derived from the researchers' reflections. With six articles of reflection, the vast majority were of the first type. These included three articles reporting quantitative studies and two giving an account of mixed-methods studies; the rest of the articles (85%) reported qualitative research. In this large group (12 articles in total), action research (six articles) and case studies (six articles) were the designs explicitly reported. Some of the other qualitative studies were designed as exploratory, others as descriptive, and others as interpretive. Furthermore, there was one article reporting a theoretical analysis. The articles were published in English, except for three that were written in Spanish.

With regard to the methods used to collect information, interviews appeared in first place, followed by journals—written by teachers, students, or researchers—, and assessment forms—that included self- and peer-assessment. Figure 2 shows the wide variety of methods and the frequency with which these were used. Nevertheless, regarding the convenience of having multiple sources of data in qualitative studies as some scholars maintain (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), a good number of these studies fell short in this aspect. With a range of one to five methods to collect information in the articles under review, one third of the papers reported using two methods, while one fifth reported three methods. Five methods were used in only one of the studies while four studies reported to have used four methods.

Figure 2. Different Methods Used to Collect Information in the Reviewed Articles
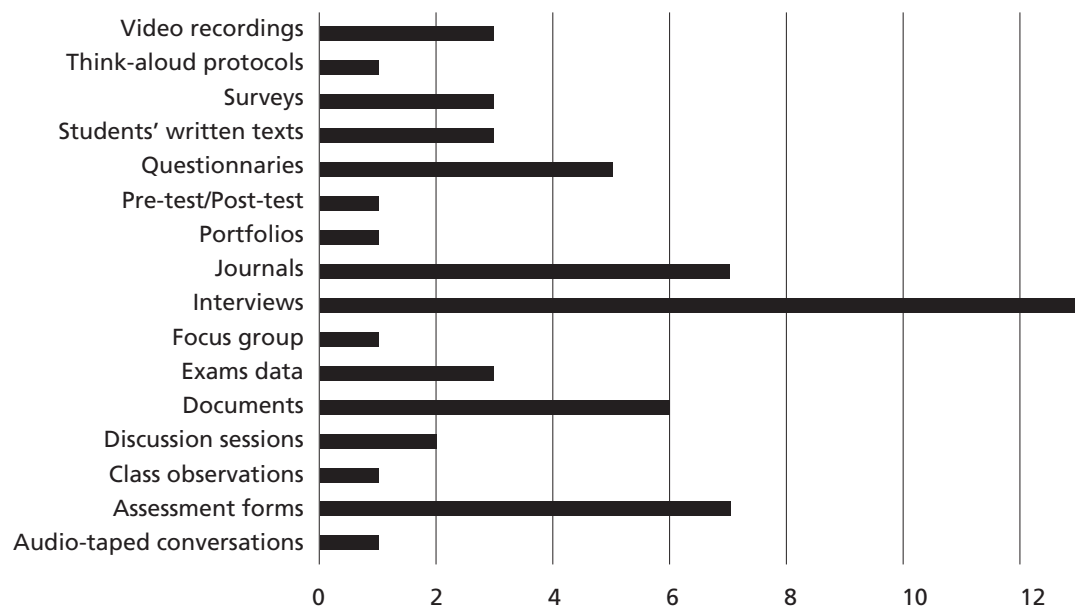
The Researchers' Interests

Scholarly interest in the field of assessment during this period showed considerable variety. I grouped these interests into six categories: assessment practices, beliefs about assessment, skills involved, teacher education and development, testing, and language assessment literacy. I will now discuss each of these and will present a table that summarizes the common findings in each category.

Assessment Practices

Muñoz-Marín (2009)—in an exploratory study—identified teachers' assessment practices in the English reading comprehension program at a public university. He found that there "may be as many assessment practices as there are teachers in the programs" (p. 78). One possible reason for this, he said, was that teachers had autonomy in designing their courses, and there was no assessment approach defined by the institution yet. Another finding reported by Muñoz-Marín was that the teachers in the study used quantitative assessments and translated the results into qualitative concepts, as required administratively. This seemed to respond to the

teachers' difficulty to deal with qualitative assessment as well as to the students' lack of familiarity with it—and their preference for numbers rather than concepts in the assessments. Besides, the author found that the participating teachers were not familiar with alternative assessments, and they felt the need to verify students' learning through instruments such as tests and quizzes that gave more precise and valid information about their achievement of goals.

González and Ríos (2010), for their part—in a qualitative descriptive study—gave an account of the discourses about instruments and practices of evaluation used by teachers of French in the planning, design, and development of evaluation in a language teaching program at a public university. Similar to Muñoz-Marín (2009), they found that the assessment practices in the French component were "heterogeneous due to the subjectivity of conceptions, beliefs, pedagogical knowledge and experiences and the lack of continuous training" of the teachers, who "followed the institutional regulations strictly" (González & Ríos, 2010, p. 133, translated from Spanish). They also found poor test

design and lack of sound assessment tools. Although the authors evidenced an effort to use new assessment practices centered on competences, the main purpose of assessment was still conceived as to classifying, selecting, and punishing in practices in which the teachers' power prevailed.

Similarly, Faustino et al. (2013) found heterogeneous assessment practices and agreed that it was due to the particular conditions of their institution, a public university; echoing Muñoz-Marín's (2009) and González and Ríos's (2010) findings, they explained that this heterogeneity derived from the absence of a common assessment system in their teaching program and the knowledge and experience of the teachers involved. The analysis of the French and English courses syllabi in their language teacher education program revealed the use of both formative and summative assessment, presented as continuous and fixed-point assessment, respectively. There were also indications of alternative assessment—portfolios being the main instrument—and the use of self- and peer-assessment. Nevertheless, Faustino et al. considered that there was more evidence of summative assessment, probably due to institutional requirements. Despite this, the authors highlighted that the participating teachers' agreement about the final grade came from the weighing of a variety of activities rather than from one single assessment at the end of the course.

Arias et al. (2012) implemented an action-research study focusing on an agreed assessment system in three different foreign language programs. This was closely related to assessment practice and its implications, derived from a prior study that had revealed a lack of coherence between language assessment and student promotion. This system was presented as a means of articulating assessment practices that "allow to reach consensus between teachers and administrators and promote coherence by offering common criteria and the same language about assessment" (Arias et al., 2012, p. 102, translated from Spanish). The assessment system was general, flexible, and it could be adapted to the particularities of different programs, as well as being rigorous and continuous. As a result of the implementation, assessment practices turned into fair and democratic practices that benefited students, teachers, and institutions.

Another topic discussed relating to fair and democratic assessment was the use of rubrics that were agreed upon by both teachers and students. In this respect, Picón-Jácome (2013)—in an article of reflection based on his own pedagogical experience—gave an account of the highly positive impact that involving students in the design of rubrics had. As he explained, not only did it increase the assessment validity and transparency, but also promoted student participation—which turned it into a democratic assessment practice—and ensured formative assessment. The author argued that teachers should use equitable and democratic forms of evaluation and proposed the use of inclusive and democratic rubrics to facilitate students' learning. Table 1 presents a summary of the common findings in this category of assessment practices.

Table 1. Common Findings in the Category of Assessment Practices

Studies	Common findings
Muñoz-Marín (2009) González & Ríos (2010) Faustino et al. (2013)	Assessment practices in the language classroom are heterogeneous. This is because they rely on the teachers' experience and preferences when there is absence of a common assessment system in the language programs.
Arias et al. (2012) Picón-Jácome (2013)	Assessment practices become fair and democratic when there is participation of different stakeholders (administrators, teachers, and students) in the design and implementation.

Beliefs About Assessment

Although fewer articles address the issue of beliefs about assessment, some scholars recognized that they played an important role in teachers' assessment practices (González & Ríos, 2010; Muñoz-Marín, 2009). López-Mendoza and Bernal-Arandia (2009)—in a qualitative study that examined 82 teachers' perceptions about language assessment—found that the level of training in language assessment impacted their perception about it. Teachers with no training, the authors concluded, tended to have a negative perception of language assessment or associated assessment to grades and institutional requirements mainly; conversely, teachers who had had formal training in assessment viewed it as a part of teaching and as a tool to promote learning. For this reason—as well as this finding, in the same study, that there was little published research in the field of assessment and few assessment courses offered by universities in both undergraduate and graduate language teaching programs—the authors recommended that teachers should receive training in language assessment before they started teaching the language and advocated for the professionalization of teachers in the field of assessment.

Similarly, Muñoz et al. (2012)—in an empirical research study that aimed to identify the beliefs of a group of 62 teachers about assessment—found that teachers' beliefs did not match their practice completely. The study revealed that, although the participating teachers considered formative assessment relevant in enhancing their students' learning, they tended to focus on summative assessment. The authors also argued that in order to change teachers' assessment practices, their beliefs should be taken into account in the implementation of new assessment systems. In fact, three of the reasons for change in the assessment practices that the participating teachers acknowledged were professional development, self-discovery, and institutional policy. Self-discovery, Muñoz et al. considered, allows teachers to be aware of their beliefs and how

their teaching reflects them; as this happens, teachers "will be more able to change their beliefs and practices in a constructive and beneficial way" (p. 155). These scholars focused on the need to strengthen efforts to promote the practice of formative assessment which, in their view, could be accomplished within professional development programs.

Areiza-Restrepo (2013), for his part, carried out a qualitative study to examine students' views of formative assessment as well as their perceptions of the implementation of this system in their language course. The author found that his students viewed formative assessment as a tool that helped them "become aware of their weaknesses and strengths in their communicative competence and of the situations in which this awareness arose; and thanks to FA [formative assessment] they experienced a sense of achievement because they realized they had learned" (p. 173). Also, with respect to the implementation of the formative assessment system in their class, students perceived this as a transparent process. As a result of this experience, the author called on teachers to involve their students in democratic assessment practices that include their voices in the description of learning outcomes in their course.

In similar fashion, Rojas-Serrano (2017) wanted to know how students who were used to quantitative assessment viewed the qualitative assessment system at an English institute, as well as the perception they had about the alternative assessment activities he gave them. The author found that it took students some time to get used to qualitative assessment; they felt that quantitative assessment was more accurate at the moment of a "non-pass" situation, for example. However, students saw some benefits in the new alternative assessments they were given, such as being able to recognize their strengths and weaknesses—in agreement with Areiza-Restrepo (2013)—, lowering anxiety during assessment, and receiving feedback. In the end, Rojas-Serrano acknowledged that alternative assessment demands a lot of time and energy from the teachers, added to the

need to train students in it, but it is worthwhile since this kind of assessment fosters reflection and autonomy, and students do appreciate the benefits.

More recently, Giraldo (2018a) explored the beliefs and practices that a group of 60 English teachers held when designing an achievement test. He found that this group of teachers believed that the designed tests should meet four principles of assessment; these tests should be valid, reliable, authentic, and provide positive washback. Also, the study revealed that the teachers' practices in the design of the test reflected their beliefs to a great extent. Table 2 summarizes the common findings in this category.

Table 2. Common Findings in the Category of Beliefs About Assessment

Studies	Common findings
López-Mendoza & Bernal-Arandia (2009) Muñoz et al. (2012)	Beliefs play a leading role in teachers' practices. They are affected by teachers' training in assessment and need to be addressed so that changes in assessment practices really happen.
Areiza-Restrepo (2013) Rojas-Serrano (2017)	Students' beliefs about formative assessment changed positively, although with some difficulty due to their familiarity with quantitative assessment.

Skills Involved

This category represents the topic that Colombian researchers find most interesting in the field of assessment. The studies in this category focus on the use of different assessment forms or tools relating to or aiming at the development of skills such as writing, speaking, critical thinking, and argumentation. In the first case, Espitia and Cruz-Corzo (2013) analyzed the use of peer-feedback to help students improve their writing skills through online interaction. In a case study report, the authors described how students undertook the task of giving online feedback to their peers' written compositions and how students reacted to such peer-evaluation, helping them to improve their writing skills. Students were involved in the construction of rubrics to assess their peers' texts and, in doing so, they became aware of what was expected from their own written production. As a result, students' writing showed linguistic improvement. However, Espitia and Cruz-Corzo found that the students' beliefs regarding authority in assessment prevented them from giving feedback to their peers more actively. Students believed that it was the teacher's job and did not consider that their partners' feedback would be appropriate. Despite

this, with their involvement in the construction of rubrics, students showed that they were more willing to accept their peers' comments.

Similarly, Gómez-Delgado and McDougald (2013) examined the role of peer-feedback in the development of coherence in writing. In an action-research study that involved students' feedback to their partners' blog entries, the researchers found that by exchanging feedback through informal writing exercises students improved or maintained coherence—specifically regarding text unity and clarity—in a text. They also found that this practice shaped students' cognition and affection.

With respect to assessment of oral production, Pineda (2014) reported the experience of a study group with the design and use of a rubric to assess students' oral performance. The author described the process of designing and training teachers to use a rubric to assess the oral performance of young learners at the beginner level, a process that took at least two years. Findings suggested that, in general, teachers who participated in the study found that the rubric was practical and easy to use, although some of them confirmed that it was difficult to get used to using it. They acknowledged the importance of being trained to use the rubric and also "discovered in

the rubric a tool for obtaining evidence of their students' performance, helping students become aware of their weaknesses and strengths, and making them responsible for their learning needs" (Pineda, 2014, p. 192).

In another study involving speaking, Gómez-Sará (2016) identified the linguistic, affective, and cognitive needs of a group of 14 in-service teachers working at a private school and proposed a strategy that involved peer-assessment and a corpus to address such needs. The pedagogical intervention had two stages: (a) a training stage, in which participants became familiar with the study and with the peer-assessment forms and the corpus, and (b) a main implementation stage, during which the author collected information. Through qualitative analysis of the data, the researcher found that the strategies used in her study (peer-assessment and the corpus) impacted the participants' oral production positively as they became more willing to improve, used compensatory strategies, and constructed a personalized version of the corpus. Nonetheless, the participating teachers tended to over-depend on the corpus and to under-assess their peers.

The third study related to the assessment of speaking was carried out by Caicedo-Pereira et al. (2018), in which they examined the use of self-assessment to improve the oral production of a group of 27 participants. The researchers looked into the impact of self-assessing recorded videos of IELTS-like oral tasks using an adapted version of the IELTS rubric, and they focused on the assessment of grammar accuracy and grammatical range only. Through both qualitative and quantitative data analysis, the authors found that participants could recognize their flaws and establish a route to improve and overcome their shortcomings. Also, as they were able to become aware of their own improvement after analyzing subsequent videos, their motivation increased noticeably.

The development of critical thinking was another aspect aimed at being fostered through assessment. Torres-Díaz (2009), in a qualitative study at a public school, analyzed the use of portfolios and peer- and self-assessment in order to enhance critical thinking skills in her students. She found that writing portfolios fostered the students' autonomy since they could explore their interests and set the path to follow in their learning process. In doing this, students were able to reflect on their own progress from a critical perspective, deciding what they needed to improve (self-assessment practice). Also, as students had to read their partners' portfolios, they made comments on their peers' work. The researcher found that her students were open to receiving their peers' feedback and, based on that, they reflected on their own work and took actions to improve it. All in all, Torres-Díaz found that the use of portfolios accompanied by peer- and self-assessment practices helped develop critical thinking skills such as self-examination and self-regulation.

The last in this group of skills involved in assessment focused on developing argumentation skills with the practice of peer-assessment. Ubaque-Casallas and Pinilla-Castellanos (2016) carried out an action-research project to help their students overcome the difficulties in developing their ideas when there was class discussion. The researchers provided students with argumentation outlines and, when it was shown that it was not enough to help them develop their arguments, they incorporated peer-assessment. They concluded that

> through the assessment of oral tasks learners created individual knowledge regarding their own argumentation skills and abilities to be used in connection with certain vocabulary. [The constructed knowledge was] also the result of a collaborative endeavor where peers co-constructed new learning schemas that helped modify the existing ones. (Ubaque-Casallas & Pinilla-Castellanos, 2016, p. 118)

What is more, according to the authors, students' engagement in peer-assessment of oral performance in class discussions fostered reflection on their own argumentative skills and this resulted in more self-reflective speakers who assumed agency in the development of their arguments when discussing topics in class. The common findings in this category are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Common Findings in the Category of Skills Involved

Studies	Common findings
Espitia & Cruz-Corzo (2013) Gómez-Delgado & McDougald (2013)	The development of students' writing production was enhanced with peer-feedback.
Gómez-Sará (2016) Caicedo-Pereira et al. (2018)	Oral production was also improved using self- and peer-assessment.
Torres-Díaz (2009) Ubaque-Casallas & Pinilla-Castellanos (2016)	Critical thinking and argumentation skills were also positively affected through the implementation of self- and peer-assessment practices in the classroom.

Testing

Four papers reported studies that addressed the issue of language testing. In the first one, López and Janssen (2010) examined the ECAES[1] English exam validity. Through content evaluation sessions with 15 university English teachers and think-aloud protocols with 13 university students, the researchers framed a validity argument (in favor and against) from evidence based on the following aspects which emerged as categories in the analysis: interactiveness, impact, construct, and authenticity of the exam under scrutiny. They found that, despite the positive evidence for the validity, negative evidence was stronger to build a case against the validity of the test in the way it was then designed. In their words:

> 1) general English language proficiency cannot be accurately judged from this test; 2) we cannot make responsible generalizations about the test takers' English language ability beyond the testing situation; and 3) we cannot make responsible predictions about the test takers' ability to use the English language in real-life situations. The central problem in the validation argument for the ECAES English Exam in its current form is that it is being used to describe a student's English language level based on the CEFR. (López & Janssen, 2010, p. 443)

The second paper reported on a quantitative study that aimed to respond whether students had reached the language level required for graduation in a language teaching program. This study was framed within the language teaching program evaluation. Kostina (2012) used the results of the institutional proficiency exam in a six-year period to identify the English level that their students had reached by the end of their program. She found that about half of the students reached the expected B2 level. This proved, according to the author, that it was necessary to take action to help students improve their language proficiency not only at the classroom level, but also at curricular level.

Third in this group was a paper that reported on a quantitative study by Janssen and Meier (2013), who aimed at determining the efficacy of the reading subsection in a placement test for doctoral students. With the use of descriptive statistics, reliability estimates, and measures of item facility and discrimination, the researchers found that this section of the test was highly reliable. Nonetheless, the study revealed that some items, specifically those involving vocabulary and grammar, appeared to be very easy to the test-taker population and the researchers suggested that test developers should create more challenging items of these kinds. Janssen and Meier also addressed the relevance of involving local instructors in continuous test development processes, which could result in sounder assessment practices.

Lastly, Palacio et al. (2016) examined the validity and reliability of tests designed in alignment with an English program for adults in a private university. These were criterion-referenced, discrete-point tests

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1 The ECAES (Quality of Higher-Education Test, for its acronym in Spanish) examines the students' competences in the last year of undergraduate programs.

administered at certain moments during the semester. Using the same tools as Janssen and Meier (2013) plus correlational analysis, the researchers found that the developed set of tests were reliable and valid. The validity arguments for these classroom assessments that the researchers created were categorized in terms of content—meeting course standards—, consequences— pass/fail decisions that might delay graduation for students—, and values implications—as designed tests reflected the institutional teaching values. They also found that this involvement of teachers in the design of curriculum-related items for the tests impacted teaching and assessment practices. The common finding in this category is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Common Finding in the Category of Testing

Studies	Common finding
López & Janssen (2010) Janssen & Meier (2013) Palacio et al. (2016)	What researchers aimed at in these studies was to determine the validity and reliability of different tests. They highlighted the importance of involving teachers in this type of studies since it helped them improve their classroom assessment practices.

Teacher Education and Development

This review showed that the researchers advocated teacher training in assessment or evaluation; the emphasis, however, was on teacher development (targeting in-service teachers) rather than on teacher education (targeting preservice teachers). To start with, López-Mendoza and Bernal-Arandia (2009), in their study to examine teachers' perception about language assessment, reviewed the curricula of 27 undergraduate and seven graduate language teacher education programs in Colombia. They found that very few of these programs offered training in either educational or language assessment. Because of this finding—and the impact that training in assessment had on teachers' perceptions (see category Beliefs About Assessment) and, therefore on assessment practices—, the researchers strongly suggested that

> all prospective teachers take at least a course in language testing before they start teaching, and should strive to better themselves through in-service training, conferences, workshops and so forth to create a language assessment culture for improvement in language education. (López-Mendoza & Bernal-Arandia, 2009, p. 66)

Janssen et al. (2014)—in an article that exemplified the use of classical testing theory and item response theory—tried to provide language teachers with assessment knowledge that they could use to develop sound classroom assessments. The authors demonstrated the use of these two theories to understand the performance of a placement test. This they did, responding to their belief about promoting assessment literacy and hoping that "program teachers begin to inform themselves from a variety of perspectives about the quality of the instruments they are designing and employing" (Janssen et al., 2014, p. 181) so that the uses teachers make of tests are fair, proper, and valid. Herrera and Macías (2015) advocated teacher development in language assessment calling for the improvement of teachers' LAL. However, as the key point in this article of reflection was LAL, I decided to group it in the following category.

Also dealing with LAL, but highlighting the professional development of preservice language teachers, Giraldo and Murcia (2019) looked into the impact that a language assessment course had in students of an undergraduate language teaching program. The course first presented students with theory about language assessment and how this was reflected in designed

tests. The second part of the course was devoted to the design of items and tasks for language assessment and carried out peer-assessment to improve them. In the last part of the course, students discussed issues related to language assessment in Colombia. The study revealed that the course had great impact on the students' conceptions of language assessment and provided them with a wide theoretical framework used to design language assessments. Table 5 shows the common finding in this category.

Table 5. Common Finding in the Category of Teacher Education and Development

Studies	Common finding
López-Mendoza & Bernal-Arandia (2009) Janssen et al. (2014) Herrera & Macías (2015) Giraldo & Murcia (2019)	Researchers advocated the professionalization of language teachers in assessment, not only through teacher development programs but also in their initial language teaching education.

Language Assessment Literacy

LAL is one of the most recent trends in the discussion about language assessment. In Colombia, based on this journal review, the first researchers to address this topic explicitly were Herrera and Macías (2015). In an article of reflection, the authors attempted to raise awareness of the relevance of LAL and claimed that more preparation and development were necessary. They defined both assessment literacy and LAL, presenting a review of studies in LAL in teacher education, and suggesting what could be included in the knowledge base of LAL based on contributions by different authors. Furthermore, Herrera and Macías recommended a questionnaire—adapted from Fulcher's (2012)—to diagnose teachers' LAL needs. This instrument, the authors argued, helped teacher educators to "determine EFL teachers' current knowledge and awareness of the many aspects that are involved in LAL" (Herrera & Macías, 2015, p. 308). Finally, they claimed that, in teacher education, coursework assessment should be given the same attention as instruction.

Later, Giraldo (2018b)—in another article of reflection—showed how the scope of LAL has expanded to different stakeholders, for example. He also presented a list of LAL contents for language teachers based on his theoretical exploration. The author acknowledged that "this list is not meant to be an authoritative account of what LAL actually is for language teachers" (Giraldo, 2018b, p. 191); instead, he expected that this would serve to stimulate discussion in LAL for language teachers in particular.

Backing up his attempt to raise awareness of the relevance of LAL and its implications in the design of sound assessments, Giraldo (2019a) states that "language assessments can be influenced by three major components: theoretical ideas that apply to language assessments, technical issues that represent professional design, and contextual and institutional policies in which language assessment occurs" (p. 133). In this article of reflection, the author described the central qualities of language assessments and provided guidelines for the design of useful assessments. Also, the author used a sample of a listening exam to prove how the poor design of any assessment can be detrimental. Giraldo closed his reflection by noting that teachers needed to reflect on the assessments they designed and to consider the three components that, in his view, influenced language assessments; in this way teachers would be able to make sound interpretations of their students' language ability and potentiate their learning.

Giraldo (2019b) also examined the LAL of five Colombian teachers of English through their practices and beliefs regarding assessment. In this qualitative study, the author identified six major categories to describe his participants' contextual LAL: practices, beliefs, knowledge, skill, principles, and needs. According to the researcher, the study revealed that the participants used both formative and summative assessments in their classrooms; the knowledge that participating teachers reported aligned with what the literature evidenced in terms of validity and methods of assessment. First of all, the teachers reported having affective skills related to assessment—which the author connected to the particularities of the context. Furthermore, feedback was regarded as a principle of language assessment practice in their classrooms. In addition, the author believed that teachers would benefit from more training in language assessment focusing on theoretical and practical issues of testing. Finally, the author claimed that these findings could serve as a baseline for LAL development programs.

In another article of reflection, Giraldo (2020a) discussed the need to expand research method-ologies to better understand teachers' LAL. He proposed adopting the post-positivist and inter-pretive paradigm to help reveal the complexities of LAL as situated practice. The author described different research constructs in the field as well as different qualitative methodologies that could be used in the further construction of knowledge about teachers' LAL.

Last in this group, Giraldo (2020b) showed, in a reflection article, how language teachers could benefit from the use of basic statistics to understand test scores in their classrooms. In doing so, the author introduced descriptive statistics—aimed at describing scores and their behavior—, and evaluative statistics—focusing on the determination of test quality. Giraldo, in agreement with Janssen et al. (2014), considered that the use of statistics helped teachers not only to decide on the quality of the tests they use in the classroom, but also to raise their LAL levels which, in the end, would redound in more appropriate assessment practices, better teaching, and, therefore, better learning. Table 6 shows the common finding in this category.

Table 6. Common Finding in the Category of Language Assessment Literacy

Studies	Common finding
Herrera & Macías (2015) Giraldo (2018b) Giraldo (2019a) Giraldo (2020a) Giraldo (2020b)	In these articles of reflection there was a common concern about providing teachers with different tools to help them become more language-assessment literate, which—according to the researchers—would redound in sounder classroom assessment practices.

Conclusion and Further Considerations

This review shows that Colombian scholars' interests in language assessment in the last decade have been varied, as varied are the assessment practices some of them found in their research. Not only is this enriching for the discussion in the field, but it is also necessary to have a more comprehensive understanding of language assessment, its possibilities and implications. With regard to the issues involved in the current global discussion, presented in the introduction of this paper, none of the articles I reviewed addressed the issue of justice in language assessment. There was, however, some interest in addressing the issue of fairness when, for example, some scholars proposed the use of democratic practices of assessment or when the principles of assessment

were tackled. LAL, for its part, appeared as an emerging interest in the Colombian language teaching community.

The researchers who addressed the issue of assessment practices found that these varied widely due to lack of training, personal experiences, and absence of an approach established by the teacher education programs. Although this seems to be negative, it sheds light on what needs to be addressed in an attempt to help our teachers carry out sounder assessment practices. Carrying out varied assessments is recommended as long as they are sound practices that respond well to the context where they are developed and result in improving learning.

On the other hand, beliefs have been proved to play an important role in the practices of assessment—on the teachers' part—and this is why some scholars recommended taking into account teachers' beliefs so that changes can really happen. The relationship between beliefs, practices, and training is a cycle expected to become virtuous as long as teachers become aware of their practices, reflect on them, identify needs, address them, and modify their beliefs concerning assessment. On the students' part, beliefs were studied to determine how they experienced particular forms of assessment. This is also helpful in the reflection about practices and identification of needs in the assessment cycle.

Regarding the improvement of language skills, the use of self-assessment and peer-assessment was frequent. Whenever there was explicit reference to peer-assessment, self-assessment appeared to be involved. This shows high scholarly interest in the promotion of alternative assessment to foster students' autonomy and language learning. We teachers need to make students aware of the benefits of these practices and train them in carrying them out constantly. Despite the fact that some students considered that assessment was a teachers' job, teachers do not need to check their work all the time to make sure that assessment, in the form of feedback, is correct. If learning goals are clearly stated and students know them, they can track their learning themselves and do the same with their peers.

Scholars were also interested in discussing principles of language assessment and testing. This is indeed relevant. However, it is also important to bring this discussion to the classroom setting and examine more often whether classroom-based assessment meets those principles that need to be adapted to the context.

Finally, there was a common call for training in language assessment in teacher education and development programs. This was strongly linked to the discussion involving LAL. Some scholars ventured to propose what could constitute a knowledge base of LAL, others suggested instruments to establish knowledge and needs of LAL. There were also recommendations to use tools that help teachers understand and take advantage of tests results, and suggestions about research methodologies and constructs to expand the knowledge of LAL for teachers. These, however, were presented mostly in articles of reflection, based on the experience of the author or theoretical reviews. While this is not negative at all, it is necessary to have more empirical-based research that looks into the particularities of contexts, for example. This is an invitation for language teachers to be more attentive to their assessment practices and take notes more systematically on what happens in their classrooms so that more action research, to say the least, allows us to build more knowledge about classroom assessment within the language teacher community.

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English Language Teachers' Perceived Classroom Assessment Knowledge and Practice: Developing and Validating a Scale

Percepciones de docentes de inglés sobre el conocimiento y la práctica de la evaluación en el aula: desarrollo y validación de una escala

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This study sought to develop and validate a classroom-based language assessment literacy scale to measure teachers' perceived classroom-based assessment knowledge and practice. Exploratory factor analysis revealed that the scale items clustered around four factors: (a) purposes of assessment and grading, (b) assessment ethics, (c) student involvement in assessment, and (d) feedback and assessment interpretation. Moreover, the scale was administered to 348 Iranian English as a foreign language teachers. The findings showed that the majority reported to be literate in classroom-based language assessment and agreed to the allocation of more space to classroom-based language assessment in teacher education courses. The findings suggest that the newly-developed scale can serve as a valid and reliable tool to explore language teachers' classroom-based assessment literacy.

Keywords: classroom assessment, classroom-based language assessment literacy, English as a foreign language teachers, scale development

Este estudio desarrolló y validó una escala de literacidad de evaluación del lenguaje para identificar las percepciones de 348 docentes de inglés iraníes sobre el conocimiento y la práctica de la evaluación en el aula. Los ítems de la escala se dividieron en: a) propósitos de evaluación y calificación, b) ética de la evaluación, c) participación de los estudiantes en la evaluación y d) retroalimentación e interpretación de la evaluación. Varios participantes informaron ser competentes en la evaluación del lenguaje en el aula y estuvieron de acuerdo con asignar más tiempo para este aspecto en los cursos de formación docente. La escala desarrollada puede ser una herramienta válida y confiable para explorar la competencia de evaluación en el aula de los profesores de idiomas.

Palabras clave: desarrollo de escalas, evaluación en el aula, evaluación del lenguaje en el aula, literacidad, profesores de inglés

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Introduction

Recent years have witnessed calls for teachers to view classroom assessment as an inseparable part of the teaching and learning process, and to use assessment data to enhance instruction and promote students' learning (DeLuca et al., 2018; Shepard, 2013). In line with the educational shift in the conceptualization of assessment, it has been contended that teachers need to gain competency in utilizing a variety of methods in assessing students' learning, irrespective of whether the assessment is employed to support learning through provision of feedback (Lee, 2017), or it is used to measure learning outcomes (Campbell, 2013). Despite repeated calls for teachers' capitalization on various assessment methods and skills (e.g., Taylor, 2013), research has generally shown that teachers lack adequate assessment proficiency—or what has come to be known as assessment literacy—to take advantage of and inform their instructional practice (DeLuca & Bellara, 2013; Fives & Barnes, 2020; Popham, 2009). In one of the early attempts to introduce the concept of assessment literacy, Stiggins (1995) defined it as teachers' understanding of "the difference between sound and unsound assessment" (p. 240). Popham (2011) defined assessment literacy as "an individual's understandings of the fundamental assessment concepts and procedures deemed likely to influence educational decisions" (p. 265).

The term language assessment literacy (LAL) has recently appeared in the literature on assessment literacy owing to the distinctive features of the context of language teaching and learning (Inbar-Lourie, 2008; Levi & Inbar-Lourie, 2019). Although the concept of LAL is relatively new, it is a large and gradually developing construct in applied linguistics, which has been conceptualized in various ways in the literature (Fulcher, 2012; Inbar-Lourie, 2008, 2017; Lan & Fan, 2019; Lee & Butler, 2020). Due to the increasing importance of LAL in meeting the increased demand for and the use of assessment data by language teachers and other

stakeholders for the new age (Inbar-Lourie, 2013; Tsagari & Vogt, 2017), researchers have paid close attention to the investigation of teachers' LAL (e.g., DeLuca et al., 2018; Lam, 2019; Xu & Brown, 2017). The majority of these studies have utilized multiple-choice or scenario-based scales inquiring into preservice or in-service language teachers' assessment knowledge, beliefs, and/or practice (e.g., Ölmezer-Öztürk & Aydin, 2018; Tajeddin et al., 2018). The scales used in these studies have been tightly aligned with the seven Standards for Teacher Competence in Educational Assessment for Students (American Federation of Teachers [AFT] et al., 1990). However, as Brookhart (2011) noted, the 1990 standards are outdated in terms of not considering current conceptions of formative assessment knowledge and skills as well as of accountability concerns. Moreover, the previous scales have briefly touched on teachers' classroom-based assessment literacy. According to Xu (2017), classroom assessment literacy refers to "teachers' knowledge of assessment in general and of the contingent relationship between assessment, teaching, and learning, as well as abilities to conduct assessment in the classroom to optimize such contingency" (p. 219). The present study, therefore, addresses the classroom-based assessment gap by developing a classroom-based language assessment literacy (CBLAL) scale to come up with items that solicit realistic and meaningful data applicable to the classroom context. Also, the study seeks to explore Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' status of classroom-based language assessment knowledge and practice using the newly-developed scale.

Literature Review

Conceptualization of Language Assessment Literacy

The term LAL has been conceptualized by many scholars in the past two decades (e.g., Fulcher, 2012; Inbar-Lourie, 2008; Pill & Harding, 2013; Taylor, 2013).

LAL was defined by Inbar-Lourie (2008) as "having the capacity to ask and answer critical questions about the purpose for assessment, about the fitness of the tool being used, about testing conditions, and about what is going to happen on the basis of the test results" (p. 389). Fulcher (2012) defined LAL as "the knowledge, skills and abilities required to design, develop, maintain or evaluate, large-scale standardized and/or classroom-based tests, familiarity with test processes, and awareness of principles and concepts that guide and underpin practice, including ethics and codes of practice" (p. 125).

Taylor (2013) put forward a model of assessment competency and expertise for different stakeholder groups. Placing language teachers at an intermediary position between the measurement specialist and the general public, Taylor argued that LAL is best defined in terms of the particular needs of each stakeholder group. Likewise, Pill and Harding (2013) rejected a dichotomous view of "literacy" or "illiteracy," arguing for viewing LAL in terms of a continuum from "illiteracy" to "multidimensional literacy." They contended that non-practitioners do not require assessment literacy at the "multidimensional level" or the "procedural level;" rather, it would be desirable for policy makers and other non-practitioners to gain "functional level" of assessment literacy in order to deal with language tests.

Research on Language Assessment Literacy

The last two decades have witnessed an increasing number of studies investigating teachers' self-described levels of assessment literacy (e.g., Lan & Fan, 2019; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014; Xu & Brown, 2017), approaches to assessment (e.g., DeLuca et al., 2018; DeLuca et al., 2019; Tajeddin et al., 2018), perceptions about language assessment (e.g., Tsagari & Vogt, 2017), and assessment use confidence (e.g., Berry et al., 2019). For instance, Vogt and Tsagari (2014) explored the current level of language testing and assessment (LTA) literacy of foreign language teachers from seven European countries

through questionnaires and teacher interviews. They found that the LTA literacy of teachers was not very well-developed. Xu and Brown (2017), utilizing an adapted version of the Teacher Assessment Literacy Questionnaire developed by Plake et al. (1993), investigated 891 Chinese university English teachers' assessment literacy levels and the effects of their demographic characteristics on assessment literacy performance. The findings of the study revealed that the vast majority of the teachers had very basic to minimally acceptable competencies in certain dimensions of assessment literacy. Tajeddin et al. (2018) aimed at exploring 26 novice and experienced language teachers' knowledge and practices with regard to speaking assessment purposes, criteria, and methods. The researchers concluded that, although divergence between novice and experienced teachers' knowledge and practice of assessment purpose was moderate, the data revealed more consistency in the experienced teachers' assessment literacy for speaking.

DeLuca et al. (2018) sought to explore 404 Canadian and American teachers' perceived skills in classroom assessment across their career stage (i.e., teaching experience). The researchers observed that more experienced teachers, as opposed to less experienced teachers, reported greater skill in monitoring, analyzing, and communicating assessment results as well as assessment design, implementation, and feedback.

More recently, DeLuca et al. (2019) looked into 453 novice teachers' classroom assessment approaches using five assessment scenarios. The researchers observed that teachers were quite consistent regarding their learning principles. However, they showed some difference in their actual classroom practice, indicating the situated nature of classroom assessment practice. In another study, Lan and Fan (2019) explored 344 in-service Chinese EFL teachers' status of LAL. They observed that teachers' classroom-based LAL was at the functional level, namely "sound understanding of basic terms and concepts" (Pill & Harding, 2013, p. 383). The researchers concluded that teacher education

courses should acquaint teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills for conducting classroom-based assessment literacy.

Considering the variety of conceptualizations of the term LAL and its intricacies, more studies must be carried out in local contexts (Inbar-Lourie, 2017) with a focus on language teachers' perspectives (Lee & Butler, 2020) in order to help the field come to grips with the dynamics of the issue. Also, as the above literature review shows, we still have a limited understanding of language teachers' classroom-based assessment literacy. Against this backdrop, the main purpose of this study is twofold: developing and validating a new CBLAL scale to assess language teachers' perceived classroom-based assessment knowledge and practice, and looking into Iranian EFL teachers' perceived classroom-based language assessment knowledge and practice. The following are the questions that guided this study:

1. Which factors underlie language teachers' perceived classroom-based assessment knowledge and practice?

2. What is Iranian EFL teachers' perceived classroom-based assessment knowledge and practice?

Method

Participants

The participants of the study for the initial piloting of the scale were 54 Iranian EFL teachers, including 23 male (42.6%) and 31 female (57.4%) teachers. It should be noted that the pilot study participants, albeit identical to those in the main study, did not take part in the later study. A total of 346 EFL teachers, including 143 men (41.3%) and 203 women (58.7%), participated in the development and validation of the scale as well as the investigation of the classroom-based assessment literacy of EFL teachers. The teachers were all teaching general English (i.e., integrated four language skills) to various levels and age groups in private language schools in the Iranian context. In these language schools, teachers are required to follow a fixed syllabus using well-known communication-oriented international textbook series (Sadeghi & Richards, 2015). The private school supervisors commonly use written examinations and interviews to recruit qualified teachers and regularly observe their performance for promotional and career growth purposes (Sadeghi & Richards, 2015).

The participants' ages ranged between 18 and 67, with the average age of 32. All teachers, based on a convenience sampling procedure, voluntarily took part in the study. More than half of the teachers had majored in teaching EFL. Moreover, almost half of the teachers had taken a language testing/assessment course at university (see Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic Information of the Participants

	Category	*n*	%
Gender	Male	143	41.3
	Female	203	58.7
Educational level	BA student	71	20.5
	BA graduate	50	14.5
	MA student	38	11
	MA graduate	130	37.6
	PhD student	41	11.8
	PhD graduate	16	4.6
Field of education	TEFL	187	54
	English language literature	108	31.2
	Translation studies	14	4.1
	Linguistics	12	3.5
	Other	25	7.2
Taken assessment/ testing course at university	Yes	167	48.3
	No	179	51.7

Scale Development

The process of developing the CBLAL scale began with a review of previously validated assessment literacy scales in the literature (e.g., Fulcher, 2012; Mertler & Campbell, 2005; Plake et al., 1993; Zhang & Burry-Stock, 1994). It was observed that most previous studies exploring teachers' assessment literacy used the Teacher Assessment Literacy Questionnaire (Plake et al., 1993), or its adapted version—the Assessment Literacy Inventory (Mertler & Campbell, 2005). Both scales included 35 items assessing teachers' understanding of general concepts about testing and assessment, which were tightly aligned to the seven Standards for Teacher Competence in Educational Assessment for Students (AFT et al., 1990).

To address the recent conceptualizations of classroom-based assessment needs of language teachers (Brookhart, 2011), we set out to develop a CBLAL scale based on Xu and Brown's (2016) six-component interrelated framework of teacher assessment literacy in practice (TALiP). Assessment knowledge base, constituting the basis of the framework, was used for developing the CBLAL scale in this study. According to Xu and Brown, teacher assessment knowledge base refers to "a core body of formal, systematic, and codified principles concerning good assessment practice" (p. 155). The key domains of teacher assessment knowledge base are briefly defined next:

- Disciplinary knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge: knowledge of the content and the general principles regarding how it is taught or learned.
- Knowledge of assessment purposes, content, and methods: knowledge of the general objectives of assessment and the relevant assessment tasks and strategies.
- Knowledge of grading: knowledge of rationale, methods, content, and criteria for grading and scoring students' performance.
- Knowledge of feedback: knowledge of the types and functions of various feedback strategies for enhancing learning.

- Knowledge of assessment interpretation and communication: knowledge of effective interpretation of assessment results and how to communicate them to stakeholders.
- Knowledge of student involvement in assessment: knowledge of the benefits and strategies of engaging students in the assessment process.
- Knowledge of assessment ethics: knowledge of observing ethical and legal considerations (i.e., social justice) in the assessment process.

It should be noted that as the present study sought to develop a language assessment-specific scale to be used for pinpointing language teachers' classroom-based assessment knowledge and practice, the first domain of the assessment knowledge base (i.e., disciplinary knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge) was not taken into account in the scale development process. It was reasoned that an adequate understanding of the disciplinary content and the general principles regarding how it is taught or learned is a pre-requisite for all teachers regardless of the content area they are teaching (Brookhart, 2011; Firoozi et al., 2019).

After existing assessment literacy scales were reviewed by the researchers, 25 assessment knowledge items (i.e., 62.5%) which corresponded to the subcomponents of the Xu and Brown's framework (i.e., assessment literacy knowledge base) were identified. Next, they were borrowed and reworded in order to measure teachers' (a) perceived classroom-based assessment knowledge, and (b) perceived classroom-based assessment practice. According to Dörnyei (2003, p. 52), "borrowing questions from established questionnaires" is one of the sources that successful item designers mostly rely on. Then, 15 assessment knowledge items (i.e., 37.5%) were originally developed by the authors to ensure an acceptable number of items for each subcomponent. Later, 40 assessment practice items were developed corresponding to the 40 assessment knowledge items. The final draft of the CBLAL scale comprised a demographics part and two

other sections. The demographics part consisted of both open-ended and close-ended items inquiring into the participants' demographic information. The first of the other two sections aimed at exploring language teachers' knowledge of classroom-based assessment. A pool of 40 items was generated in line with the six components of Xu and Brown's framework. The items asked teachers to evaluate their own knowledge of assessment on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*), 2 (*slightly disagree*), 3 (*moderately agree*), to 4 (*strongly agree*). The items in the second part of the last two sections of the scale corresponded to the preceding one in terms of the targeted construct (i.e., the six components of Xu and Brown's framework). However, they were modified to probe into the teachers' perceptions of their classroom-based assessment practices. There was a total of 40 items on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never*), 2 (*rarely*), 3 (*sometimes*), 4 (*very often*), to 5 (*always*) in the last section of the scale.

Prior to subjecting the scale to psychometric analysis, it was filled out by six teachers to check the intelligibility of the items. Having resolved the ambiguities and unintelligible items based on the teachers' feedback, the researchers pilot-tested the scale on 54 teachers to assure its reliability using Cronbach's alpha. As for the validity of the scale, a panel of four instructors doing their PhD in applied linguistics was consulted to review the content validity of the scale. Also, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed in the main phase of the study to extract major factors and item loadings of the scale. To do so, the scale was distributed among a large pool of language teachers through both online media (e.g., email) and personal contacts. Overall, a total of 346 teachers filled out the scale and their results were subjected to EFA. Regarding the status of language teachers' classroom-based assessment knowledge and practice, descriptive statistics were run based on the teachers' responses to the CBLAL scale.

Results

Having validated and administered the CBLAL scale to Iranian EFL teachers, the researchers explored teachers' status of classroom-based assessment knowledge and practice. The findings are presented in the following sections.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

The initial 80 items of teachers' CBLAL, including 40 classroom-based assessment knowledge items on a 4-point Likert scale and 40 classroom-based assessment practice items on a 5-point Likert scale, were subjected to EFA, namely principal axis factoring (PAF) with direct Oblimin rotation. The suitability of data for factor analysis was investigated prior to performing PAF. First, the normality of the distribution of the data was checked by considering the skewness and kurtosis measures of the items. It was found that all items' statistics ranged between -2 and +2, satisfying the assumption of normality (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Second, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was used to estimate the sampling adequacy for the analysis. As can be seen in Table 2, the KMO value was .91 for assessment knowledge items and .92 for assessment practice items, exceeding the recommended minimum value of .6 (Pallant, 2016; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Further, as shown in Table 2, Bartlett's test of sphericity reached statistical significance for both measures, which indicated that correlations between items were sufficiently large for PAF.

Table 2. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's Test

		Assessment knowledge	Assessment practice
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy		.916	.922
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. Chi-square	9367.020	9664.243
	df	780	780
	Sig.	.000	.000

After running PAF on the assessment knowledge items, an initial 7-factor solution emerged with eigenvalues exceeding 1, explaining 40.4%, 5.8%, 4.7%, 4.2%, 3.1%, 2.8%, and 2.6% of the variance, respectively. However, an inspection of the scree plot and parallel analysis showed only four factors with eigenvalues exceeding the corresponding criterion values for a randomly generated data matrix of the same size (40 variables × 346 respondents; Pallant, 2016). The final 4-factor solution of assessment knowledge measure explained a total of 55.3% of the variance. The internal consistency of the assessment knowledge scale as a whole was estimated and its Cronbach's Alpha was found to be .95.

Regarding assessment practice items, an initial 7-factor solution emerged, with eigenvalues exceeding 1, explaining 40.6%, 7.2%, 4.5%, 4.0%, 3.3%, 2.9%, and 2.5% of the variance, respectively. The inspection of the scree plot and parallel analysis, however, yielded a 4-factor solution for the assessment practice scale, which explained a total of 56.5% of the variance. The internal consistency of the assessment practice scale as a whole was estimated and its Cronbach's Alpha was found to be .94.

To aid in the interpretation of the extracted factors, Oblimin rotation was performed. Also, only variables with loadings of .4 and above were interpreted, as suggested by Field (2013). It should be noted that Items 25 and 26 were omitted from the assessment knowledge scale due to their low coefficients (see Table 3). Moreover, Item 21 was omitted from the assessment knowledge scale due to cross-loadings. Regarding the assessment practice scale pattern matrix (Table 4), Items 14, 15, 16, and 40 were suppressed by SPSS from the factor solution because of their low coefficients.

Table 3. Pattern Matrix of the Extracted Factors for Assessment Knowledge

Assessment knowledge factors				
Item #		1	2	3	4
1	I am familiar with using classroom tests (e.g., quizzes) to pinpoint students' strengths and weaknesses to plan further instruction.	.875			
2	I know how to use classroom tests for the purpose of assigning grades to students.	.766			
3	I know how to use classroom tests to track students' progress during the course.	.603			
4	I am knowledgeable about using classroom tests for the purpose of planning future instruction.	.721			
5	I have sufficient knowledge to use classroom tests to help me divide students into different groups for instructional purposes.	.704			
6	I know how to use various types of classroom tests (e.g., speaking tests or grammar quizzes) depending on the intended course objectives.	.770			
7	I can adapt tests found in teachers' guidebooks to fit intended course objectives.	.577			

8	I know how to use a detailed description of intended course objectives to develop classroom tests.	.754		
9	I am familiar with using different types of classroom tests to assign grades to students.	.636		
10	I maintain detailed records of each student's classroom test results to help me assign grades.	.497		
11	I know how to grade each student's classroom test performance against other students' test performance.	.623		
12	I can develop rating scales to help me grade students' classroom test performance.	.703		
13	I have sufficient knowledge about grade students' classroom test performance against certain achievement goals.	.742		
14	I know how to consult with experienced colleagues about rating scales they use to grade students' classroom test performance.	.555		
15	I know how to consult with my colleagues about assigning grades to students.	.486		
33	I recognize students' cultural diversity and eliminate offensive language and content of classroom tests.		.745	
34	I know how to match the contents of my classroom tests with the contents of my teaching and intended course objectives.		.464	
35	I know how to use the same classroom tests and the same rating scales for all students to avoid bias.		.631	
36	I observe assessment fairness by avoiding giving lower grades to students from lower socioeconomic status.		.497	
37	I am knowledgeable about how to help students with learning disability during classroom tests.		.586	
38	I know how to avoid using new items in my classroom tests which did not appear on the course syllabus.		.440	
39	I know how to inform students of the test item formats (e.g., multiple choice or essay) prior to classroom tests.		.417	
40	I know how to announce students' classroom test scores individually, rather than publicly, to avoid making them get embarrassed.		.459	
27	I encourage students to assess their own classroom test performance to enhance their learning.			.472
28	I help my students learn how to grade their own classroom test performance.			.446
29	I can ask top students in my class to help me assess other students' classroom test performance.			.811
30	I know how to encourage students to provide their classmates with feedback on their classroom test performance.			.740

31	I know how to give students clear rating scales by which they can assess each other's classroom test performance.	.635	
32	I know how to explain to students the rating scales I apply to grade their classroom test performance.	.464	
16	I provide students with regular feedback on their classroom test performance.		-.529
17	I provide students with specific, practical suggestions to help them improve their test performance.		-.690
18	I praise students for their good performance on classroom tests.		-.688
19	I know how to remind students of their strengths and weaknesses in their classroom test performance to help them improve their learning.		-.620
20	I know how to encourage my students to improve their classroom test performance according to the feedback provided by me.		-.689
21	I use classroom test results to determine if students have met course objectives.	.411	-.465
22	I know how to use classroom test results to decide whether students can proceed to the next stage of learning.		-.606
23	I can construct an accurate report about students' classroom test performance to communicate it to both parents and/or institute managers.		-.466
24	I speak understandably with students about the meaning of the report card grades to help them improve their test performance.		-.597

The assessment knowledge items that clustered around the same factors (bolded items) in the pattern matrix presented in Table 3 suggested that factor one, containing 15 items, represented "Knowledge of Assessment Use and Grading." The items elicit teachers' familiarity with the purpose of classroom tests and how to choose appropriate classroom tests to fit intended course objectives. Factor one also probes into teachers' knowledge of grading students' classroom test performance and how to get assistance from experienced colleagues in this regard. Factor two comprised 8 items which represented "Knowledge of Assessment Ethics." It elicits teachers' knowledge of how to observe assessment fairness and

to avoid assessment bias in classroom tests. Factor three comprised 6 items which tapped on "Knowledge of Student Involvement in Assessment." The items examine teachers' knowledge of strategies to encourage students to assess their own and their peers' classroom test performance. Finally, factor four consisted of 8 items which represented "Knowledge of Feedback and Assessment Interpretation." The items inquire into teachers' knowledge of providing students with regular feedback (i.e., practical suggestions) to help them improve their test performance. The items also elicit teachers' familiarity with reporting and communicating students' classroom test performance to both parents and/or school managers.

Table 4. Pattern Matrix of the Extracted Factors for Assessment Practice

	Assessment practice factors				
Item #		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
1	Using classroom tests (e.g., quizzes) to pinpoint students' strengths and weaknesses to plan further instruction.	.790			
2	Using classroom tests for the purpose of assigning grades to students.	.700			
3	Using classroom tests to track students' progress during the course.	.739			
4	Using classroom tests for the purpose of planning future instruction.	.786			
5	Using classroom tests to help me divide students into different groups for instructional purposes.	.620			
6	Using various types of classroom tests (e.g., speaking tests or grammar quizzes) depending on the intended course objectives.	.648			
7	Adapting tests found in teachers' guidebooks to fit intended course objectives.	.558			
8	Using a detailed description of intended course objectives to develop classroom tests.	.636			
9	Using different types of classroom tests to assign grades to students.	.560			
10	Maintaining detailed records of each student's classroom test results to help me assign grades.	.461			
11	Grading each student's classroom test performance against other students' test performance.	.621			
12	Developing rating scales to help me grade students' classroom test performance.	.698			
13	Grading students' classroom test performance against certain achievement goals.	.574			
17	Providing students with specific, practical suggestions to help them improve their test performance.		.429		
32	Explaining to students the rating scales I apply to grade their classroom test performance.		.497		
33	Recognizing students' cultural diversity and eliminating offensive language and content of classroom tests.		.724		
34	Matching the contents of my classroom tests with the contents of my teaching and intended course objectives.		.591		
35	Using the same classroom tests and the same rating scales for all students to avoid bias.		.752		
36	Observing assessment fairness by avoiding giving lower grades to students from lower socioeconomic status.		.582		
37	Helping students with learning disability during classroom tests.		.546		

38	Avoiding using new items in my classroom tests which did not appear on the course syllabus.	.758	
39	Informing students of the test item formats (e.g., multiple choice or essay) prior to classroom tests.	.651	
26	Participating in discussion with institute managers about important changes to the curriculum based on students' classroom test results.	.477	
27	Encouraging students to assess their own classroom test performance to enhance their learning.	.587	
28	Helping my students learn how to grade their own classroom test performance.	.729	
29	Asking top students in my class to help me assess other students' classroom test performance.	.803	
30	Encouraging students to provide their classmates with feedback on their classroom test performance.	.860	
31	Giving students clear rating scales by which they can assess each other's classroom test performance.	.771	
18	Praising students for their good performance on classroom tests.		-.586
19	Reminding students of their strengths and weaknesses in their classroom test performance to help them improve their learning.		-.723
20	Encouraging my students to improve their classroom test performance according to the feedback provided by me.		-.775
21	Using classroom test results to determine if students have met course objectives.		-.422
22	Using classroom test results to decide whether students can proceed to the next stage of learning.		-.507
23	Constructing an accurate report about students' classroom test performance to communicate it to both parents and/or institute managers.		-.412
24	Speaking understandably with students about the meaning of the report card grades to help them improve their test performance.		-.469
25	Speaking understandably with parents, if needed, about the decisions made or recommended based on classroom test results.		-.507

As for assessment practice items, those that clustered around the same factors (bolded items) in the pattern matrix presented in Table 4 suggested that factor one, comprising 13 items, represented "Assessment Purpose and Grading." It elicits the frequency of the use of classroom tests to track students' progress during the course, to plan future instruction, and to assign grades to students. Factor two, consisting of 9 items, represented "Assessment Ethics." Factor two items inquire into observing assessment fairness and avoiding assessment bias in classroom tests. Factor three, comprising 6 items, implies "Student Involvement in Assessment." It explores the frequency of assisting students to learn how to grade their own and their peers' classroom test performance. Finally, factor four, with 8 items, refers to "Feedback and Assessment Interpretation and Communication."

The items elicit the frequency of reminding students of their strengths and weaknesses in their classroom test performance and of using classroom test results for decision-making purposes.

Overall, the classroom-based assessment knowledge and practice items loaded on four thematic areas with 37 items falling under classroom-based assessment knowledge and 36 items relating to classroom practice.

Teachers' Classroom-Based Assessment Knowledge and Practice

The newly-developed CBLAL scale was used to probe into Iranian EFL teachers' knowledge and practice of four factors of these teachers' classroom-based assessment knowledge base (Xu & Brown, 2016). Table 5 presents the percentages of the teachers' responses on classroom-based assessment knowledge factors.

Table 5. Mean and Response Percentages of Classroom-Based Assessment Knowledge Factors

Factors	Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree	*Mean*	*SD*
Knowledge of Assessment Use and Grading	3.93%	19.47%	41.25%	35.35%	3.08	0.82
Knowledge of Assessment Ethics	2.60%	14.93%	34.55%	47.93%	3.27	0.78
Knowledge of Student Involvement in Assessment	6.73%	22.18%	39.93%	31.15%	2.95	0.87
Knowledge of Feedback and Assessment Interpretation	0.95%	10.99%	35.69%	52.38%	3.39	0.69

As can be seen in Table 5, the teachers in the present study reported to be knowledgeable about classroom assessment by moderately or strongly agreeing with the items. More specifically, around 76% of the teachers self-reported to be knowledgeable about the uses of assessment and grading procedures in language classrooms. Regarding knowledge of assessment ethics, around 82% of the teachers believed that they were knowledgeable about ethical considerations in the classroom. As for knowledge of student involvement

in assessment, 71% of the teachers believed they were knowledgeable about how to encourage students to assess their own and their peers' classroom performance. Finally, regarding knowledge of feedback and assessment interpretation, 88% of the teachers were of the belief that they knew how to provide accurate feedback as well as report on students' class performances.

As for the teachers' classroom-based assessment practice, Table 6 presents the percentages of their responses on a 5-point Likert scale.

Table 6. Mean and Response Percentages of Classroom-Based Assessment Practice Factors

Factors	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Very often	Always	*Mean*	*SD*
Assessment Purpose and Grading	4.03%	10.54%	24.08%	37.22%	24.13%	3.66	1.05
Assessment Ethics	2.73%	6.10%	19.33%	34.19%	37.64%	3.97	1.01
Student Involvement in Assessment	7.98%	13.63%	26.90%	31.50%	19.98%	3.41	1.15
Feedback and Assessment Interpretation and Communication	1.98%	5.50%	19.90%	37.06%	35.56%	3.98	0.94

Table 6 shows that around 61% of the teachers stated that they use classroom assessment for the purpose of grading students' performance as well as informing future instruction. Also, around 71% of the teachers were of the belief that they very often consider ethical issues in their everyday classroom assessment tasks. As for student involvement in assessment, more than half (51%) of the teachers reported that they help students learn how to grade their own classroom test performance. Finally, as for feedback and assessment interpretation and communication, around 72% of the teachers were of the belief that they practice constructive feedback in their classes to help students set goals for their future success.

Discussion

The present study sought to develop and validate a new scale to tap teachers' classroom-based assessment knowledge and practice. To do so, a total of 40 items on classroom-based assessment knowledge and a corresponding set of 40 classroom-based assessment practice items were developed and subjected to EFA. It was revealed that the six factors of Xu and Brown's (2016) teacher assessment knowledge base collapsed into four factors in the context of the present study. The items on the scale clustered around the following themes: (a) purposes of assessment and grading, (b) assessment ethics,

(c) student involvement in assessment, and (d) feedback and assessment interpretation. It can be reasoned that since a large number of students strive for international examinations (i.e., IELTS) at private language schools in Iran (Sadeghi & Richards, 2015), teachers' view of assessment is largely quantitative (i.e., grade-based), and they see grading as the principal purpose of assessment procedures. As a result, the items on assessment purpose and grading loaded together in the EFA.

Moreover, not only was knowledge of assessment feedback and assessment communication and interpretation found to be interrelated in the context of the study, but it was also found that there is a high negative correlation between the factor of "feedback and assessment interpretation" and other three factors. It may be contended that teachers look at feedback and interpretation as part of "good" teaching practice rather than good assessment (Berry et al., 2019). In other words, teachers regard the process of providing feedback as a teaching mechanism helping students notice their strengths and weakness in order to facilitate their learning. Such a perspective has, however, been explained as "assessment for learning" in the literature (Lee, 2017).

Having validated the scale, the researchers investigated the status of Iranian EFL teachers' classroom-based assessment knowledge and practice. The findings of the study reveal that most participants (around 80%)

reported to be knowledgeable, to different extents, about classroom-based assessment by moderately or strongly agreeing with the items on the four factors. Also, most teachers (around 65%) reported practicing classroom-based assessment quite frequently in their classrooms in terms of the four classroom-based assessment practice factors. These findings corroborate those of Crusan et al. (2016) in that teachers reported to be familiar with writing assessment concepts and use various assessment procedures in their classes. The findings of the study, however, run counter to those of Lan and Fan (2019), Tsagari and Vogt (2017), Vogt and Tsagari (2014), and Xu and Brown (2017). For instance, Vogt and Tsagari (2014), exploring language testing and assessment (LTA) literacy of European teachers, concluded that the teachers' LTA literacy is not well-developed, which was attributed to lack of training in assessment. Similarly, Lan and Fan (2019) investigated in-service Chinese EFL teachers' classroom-based LAL. They observed that teachers lacked sufficient procedural and conceptual LAL for conducting classroom-based language assessment.

Language teachers' high levels of self-reported assessment knowledge and practice in the present study might also be attributed to demographic (i.e., educational level) and affective (i.e., motivation) variables. Since many teachers teaching in Iranian private language schools hold an MA or PhD in teaching EFL, they may have been familiarized with some of the recent developments on the use of language assessment in classrooms (Sadeghi & Richards, 2015). Also, as private language school teachers face relatively less "meso-level" (i.e., school policies) constraints (Fulmer et al., 2015) and enjoy considerably more autonomy (i.e., space and support) in their teaching context (Lam, 2019), the chances of developing practical assessment knowledge and trying out renewed conceptualization of assessment in their classes is increased.

Reviewing the teachers' responses to open-ended questions in the first section of the CBLAL scale (i.e., demographic information) showed that more than half of the participants (51.7%) had not taken any course with a particular focus on assessment. The remaining teachers (48.3%) unanimously reported to have taken such a course at university, indicating that teacher training courses (TTCs) offered at private language schools do not hold a special position in shaping teachers' assessment literacy. To further support this contention, teachers' responses to open-ended questions revealed that the topics covered in language testing courses offered at universities (i.e., including designing test items, test reliability and validation, and testing language skills and components) did not equip them with the dynamics of classroom assessment. Moreover, the teachers' responses to open-ended questions confirm that most (around 80%) agreed to the allocation of more time to language assessment component in their preservice and/or in-service TTCs. They conceived of assessment as an essential component of the teaching process without which instruction would not lead to desirable outcomes. However, they unanimously stressed the need for the inclusion of a practical classroom-based assessment component in preservice and in-service teacher education courses.

Conclusion

The principal purpose of the present study was to develop and validate a new CBLAL scale, and then to explore Iranian EFL teachers' status of classroom-based assessment knowledge and practice. It was found that teachers' assessment knowledge base is composed of four main themes. Also, private language school teachers' responses to the CBLAL scale revealed that they self-reported to be moderately assessment literate. However, the findings of the open-ended section of the scale painted a different picture. The majority of teachers expressed their need for a specific course on language assessment, which demands a cautious interpretation of the findings of the study.

The findings imply that in the absence of an assessment for learning component in teacher education

courses for language teachers to equip them with recent updates on classroom assessment, teachers would resort to their past experiences as students, or what Vogt and Tsagari (2014) call "testing as you were tested." Teacher education courses should then adopt Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, particularly his concept of the "zone of proximal development." With its emphasis on the contribution of mediation and dialogic interaction with teachers' professional development (Johnson, 2009), a sociocultural theory perspective on teacher education can cater for an opportunity for teachers to "articulate and synthesize their perspectives by drawing together assessment theory, terminology, and experience" (DeLuca et al., 2013, p. 133). By externalizing their current understanding of assessment and then reconceptualizing and recontextualizing it, teachers can discover their own assessment mindset orientation and develop alternative ways of engaging in the activities associated with assessment (Coombs et al., 2020; DeLuca et al., 2019; Johnson, 2009).

The findings have important implications for language teacher education and professional development in that, by spotting classroom-based assessment needs of teachers and considering them in teacher education pedagogies, teachers' conceptions and practices can be transformed (Loughran, 2006). Also, the findings have implications for materials developers, who are responsible for providing and sequencing the content of teaching materials. By becoming cognizant of the intricacies of classroom assessment, materials developers can include appropriate topics and discussions in their materials to help teachers acquire necessary classroom-based assessment knowledge base.

A number of limitations were, however, present in this study, which need to be acknowledged. The study only probed into language teachers' self-reported account of classroom-based assessment knowledge and practice without any evidence of their actual practice. A further limitation was that teachers may have intentionally marked their assessment knowledge and

practice items positive for some behavioral and "social desirability" reasons (Coombs et al., 2020). Therefore, future studies are invited to observe language teachers' assessment practices (i.e., rather than their perceptions) to obtain a more realistic picture of their classroom-based assessment literacy. Future studies could also consider the implementation of "focused instruction" (DeLuca & Klinger, 2010) on the use of both formative and summative assessments in classrooms and the potential impact of such a course on language teachers' classroom-based assessment literacy development.

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Learning English From a Critical, Intercultural Perspective: The Journey of Preservice Language Teachers

Aprendizaje del inglés desde una perspectiva crítica intercultural: una experiencia de profesores de inglés en formación

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Critical language teaching education has become an inescapable endeavor for language teacher education programs. To contribute to this effort, this paper outlines the implementation of an English course from a critical, intercultural perspective, during the first semester of a language teacher education program in Colombia. It also reports the ways preservice teachers responded to this implementation as evidenced in data stemming from their oral and written outcomes and from course evaluations. Results indicate that this approach to language teaching allowed preservice teachers to affirm their multiple identities as they developed and strengthened their language skills in English. Data also indicate that looking at the world from a more critical perspective entailed contradictions and challenges for preservice teachers and the teacher educator.

Keywords: critical interculturality, critical language education, culture, English as a foreign language, preservice teachers

La formación de maestros de lenguas desde una perspectiva crítica es una labor inevitable para los programas de formación docente. Para contribuir a esta labor, este estudio describe la implementación de un curso desde una perspectiva crítica intercultural dirigido a futuros maestros de inglés, durante el primer semestre de un programa de formación docente en Colombia. Se analizó la participación en clase de los futuros maestros, así como sus trabajos escritos y orales y las evaluaciones del curso y se encontró que la enseñanza del inglés desde esta perspectiva permitió a los participantes afirmar sus múltiples identidades mientras fortalecían sus conocimientos en inglés. Asimismo, se evidenció que la incorporación de esta perspectiva crítica trajo consigo contradicciones y retos para los futuros maestros y los formadores de maestros.

Palabras clave: cultura, formación crítica de maestros, inglés como lengua extranjera, interculturalidad crítica, maestros en formación

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Introduction

In English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching in Colombia, the concept of culture has been approached through a constant contrast and comparison between the students' culture and the "dominant" cultures associated with English. Moreover, culture has been conceived of as a competence, which can be taught instrumentally, so that students "learn" to relate to English speakers "appropriately". Consequently, issues of race and power, inherent in all cultures, become invisible in the language classroom (Walsh, 2010).

Growing awareness of the need to disrupt relations of power has led critical scholars to advocate for the education of intercultural citizens with a commitment to reading not only words, but also the world critically (Freire, 1968/2000) and unlearning colonial ideals (Walsh, 2010). These scholars also advocate for the promotion of dialogue across differences (Walsh, 2010) and the need to educate students concerned with issues of inclusion (Tubino, 2005). Critical interculturality can greatly contribute to attaining this goal since it offers an approach to language teaching which does not neglect the local cultures and languages, and thus values diverse ways of being. Achieving this transformation in EFL teaching and turning these principles of critical interculturality into actual teaching practices requires a conscious effort in language teaching programs.

Theoretical Framework

Language and culture have organically developed a connection in the English language teaching (ELT) field. This connection allows language learners to see themselves and the Other through their cultural lenses, while learning a language that carries along with it the wealth and ideological weight of the places and cultures where it is spoken. Understanding that neither language nor culture are neutral and objective is the cornerstone of the promotion of interculturality founded on principles of equity and justice. The following section provides an account of how these concepts support this paper

and advocates for the incorporation of this critical, intercultural perspective in the language classroom.

Language and Culture

Language has been used as a tool of domination, conquest, and colonization throughout history (García, 2019). In the field of ELT, language has been defined in multiple ways, from a Eurocentric view that sees it as a mere linguistic code, to an "ideational signifying system that plays a central role in how we understand ourselves and the world" (Pennycook, 1990, p. 13). According to Pennycook, moving away from this functional view of language means that content can no longer be approached in a trivial fashion and that uncritically achieving communicative competence cannot be the ultimate goal of language teaching and learning. Because language is not neutral (Janks, 1993; Lankshear, 1994), it constitutes a tool of power that can be used to reproduce and maintain dominant discourses or to challenge and deconstruct them to disrupt the status quo (Shor, 1999). Accordingly, texts are not neutral either; regardless of the mode texts take, they portray social, political, and historical ideologies that position the authors and audiences in specific ways.

Culture, like language, has been defined differently throughout history and is no longer conceived of as unchangeable and homogenous (Atkinson, 1999; Canagarajah, 2006). In the language classroom, the concept of culture has had numerous connotations such as cultural competence (Byram & Risager, 1999), intercultural competence (Byram, 2000; Byram et al., 2009), and intercultural communicative competence (Byram & Feng, 2005) to name a few.

Many of these connotations, however, have been criticized for treating culture as a skill that can be objectively taught and assessed (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2001; Dervin, 2010, 2015; Kramsch, 1993). Along with this critique, Kumaravadivelu (2003) contends that the incorporation of an "objective" approach to culture in the language classroom results in the denial of the

cultural diversity that students bring to the classroom and ascribes them to a single national and linguistic identity. All these critiques make the growing need to incorporate culture in the language classroom from a more comprehensive perspective evident. Consequently, several scholars have challenged this static notion of culture with myriad propositions that surpass stereotypical attributes and acknowledge its complexity (Dervin, 2016). Thus, it is no longer enough to grasp factual information about the Other, but to recognize how they have come to exist in their diversity which is central to an intercultural encounter (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2001).

Critical Interculturality and Language Teaching

Critical interculturality has its foundations in the decolonial turn (Maldonado-Torres, 2010; Mignolo, 2010) and focuses on the analysis of how power relations have systematically kept underserved communities and their languages and cultures in unprivileged conditions. At its core, decoloniality denounces coloniality as a pattern of structural, colonial, racial power in which different peoples, cultures, knowledge, and territories have been hierarchized through relations of domination (Restrepo & Rojas, 2010). Disrupting this pattern requires an *epistemic decolonization* (Mignolo, 2010) in which peoples' cultures, experiences, and knowledges are centered in education.

Hence, critical interculturality becomes a pedagogical lens for social critique of our societies and their colonial, naturalized power relations of racialization which are intended to strengthen and encourage the ways of life and knowledge that have systematically been hidden and annihilated through coloniality (Walsh, 2009, 2010). From this perspective, social exchanges in our multicultural societies are no longer grounded on the assimilation of marginalized groups into the dominant cultures (Tubino, 2005). Instead, critical interculturality challenges the role educational settings continue to play in a colonial society in which only

Western knowledge, values, and cosmogonies have a place (Caicedo & Castillo, 2008). Furthermore, it allows students and teachers to reflect on the hierarchical relations among languages, the ways such relations have been naturalized, and the unequal relations among speakers of different languages (García-León & García-León, 2014).

Literature Review

Initial understanding of what culture meant resulted in equally reductionist approaches to teaching culture in the form of *cultural celebration*, which downgrades its complexity (Sleeter, 2012). This approach to culture also fails to discuss theories of domination and results in a lack of understanding of how some powerful groups, languages, and literacies came to be in power (Janks, 2000). This reality is not unlike Colombia, where a study done by Ortiz et al. (2020) demonstrated that English language teachers and learners notice the lack of a critical incorporation of issues related to students' own cultures and local languages. Students in a similar study reflected on the need to tailor course content so that it is more meaningful and allows their identities to become visible (Gutiérrez et al., 2021).

Another study done at Universidad de Antioquia found that Indigenous students faced constant discrimination in the education system and, although they feel compelled to learn English, some of them fear their languages and cultures might be further endangered (Usma et al., 2018). In line with this finding, a study done by Arismendi-Gómez and Ramírez-Jiménez (2019) established that, to fight this process of assimilation, language teacher educators play a significant role in sustaining Indigenous students' identities in the foreign language classroom.

Fortunately, evidence indicates that a growing number of scholars in the field of ELT in Colombia has joined the quest for a more just, critical, intercultural education. (Álvarez-Valencia, 2014; Álvarez-Valencia & Bonilla-Medina, 2009; García-León & García-León,

2014; Gómez-Rodríguez, 2015; Granados-Beltrán, 2016; Usma et al., 2018). These scholars have made explicit connections between language learning and critical interculturality, thus making a case for the incorporation of this perspective in the language classroom and enabling practical applications. These practical applications have taken the form of the exploration and analysis of texts to scrutinize "the discourses that lie beneath the cultures that engage in interaction, the subjects, and the wider society" (Álvarez-Valencia & Bonilla-Medina, 2009, p. 163). They also engaged in critical analysis of issues of deep culture using foreign multicultural stories (Gómez-Rodríguez, 2015) while developing students' language skills.

From these studies, we can conclude that critical interculturality can be a powerful pedagogical tool in language education as it connects to a view of English teaching and learning as political activities (Pennycook, 1989). We can also conclude that scholars and language educators have advanced the field of ELT toward the construction of a more just society, through an approach to language teaching and learning that results in enhanced linguistic skills and critical understanding for students, and in a joint effort to build a more equitable society in which all languages, cultures, and identities are valued. Achieving these goals calls for the envisioning of critical language teaching programs and teacher educators committed to pushing the boundaries in EFL.

Method

This study aligns with a critical research paradigm (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005), and is framed as an interpretative case study (Stake, 2010; Yin, 2011). From this perspective, issues are approached in a particular context and the participants' points of view and values are at the core, which allows centering their voices in the study. This design also allows for multiple sources of information to be incorporated (Yin, 2003). The following paragraphs describe the process of data collection and analysis, the context and participants, and the pedagogical unit.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection in this project included preservice teachers' (PST) oral and written class productions, anonymous institutional course evaluations which ensured that PST did not feel pressured to answer the questions in a given way, and class recordings of lessons that took place during remote learning. Participants were asked for consent to use and analyze their class productions and course evaluations and to record the lessons and conversations in breakout rooms. In addition, the language program committee consented to the use of course evaluations for this study.

Following Richards (2003), data analysis was done through a descriptive and interpretative analysis of participants' views and experiences as manifested in their class productions and course evaluations. Additionally, class recordings were transcribed and analyzed inductively, followed by memo writing. At the end of every semester, data were displayed using charts which were systematically compared and contrasted using NVivo. Once initial patterns began to emerge, a deductive analysis was done that resulted in the creation of three main categories: (a) affirmation of PST's life stories, which indicated the personal connections participants made to class topics; (b) linguistic development, which referred to the multiple ways participants perceived their linguistic growth; and (c) responses to critical reflections, which contained PST's reactions to the critical perspectives that framed this course.

Context and Participants

This study was done in an English course offered to PST during the first semester of a language teaching program at a public university in Medellín, Colombia. This course is part of a curriculum renewal framed in critical literacies and interculturality and it is intended to equip foreign language teachers with strong aca-

demic literacies and to spark in them a commitment to social justice. Due to the university strike that took place in 2019 and COVID, classes were interrupted and the duration of the semesters 2019–2 and 2020–1 was extended. This caused a significant decrease in the number of participants who enrolled or were able to continue in the program. Thus, the total number of PST who participated in this study and signed their consent form was 35 spread across five academic semesters between 2018–2 and 2021.

Participants in this study came from diverse social and economic backgrounds and had English proficiency levels ranging from emergent knowledge about vocabulary to high written and oral commands of the language. They came from multiple urban and rural territories and, in a few cases, from Indigenous Reservations located throughout the country. Their ages ranged from 17 to 45 and most participants did not have any teaching experience; the few who did, taught private lessons or worked hourly at private language institutes.

Pedagogical Implementation

This section describes the pedagogical implementation that took place over the course of three years in the first semester of this language teaching program. Although the main text type suggested for this course is descriptive and focuses on present tenses, the materials chosen and explored did not necessarily follow discrete grammar items or vocabulary. Speaking, writing, listening, and reading were included and, to meet students at their English levels, modeling, scaffolding, and autonomous work were fostered consistently. In addition, to tackle the challenges brought by dissimilar English proficiency levels, whole class discussions were limited, and a variety of grouping strategies were implemented so that PST could at times be paired with classmates who had a similar English proficiency or act as support for those whose linguistic proficiency was emergent. This was enforced by consistently positioning PST both

as teachers and students. Finally, all PST's outcomes served as examples for PST entering the program the following semester, which set the purpose and audience for their outcomes.

Introductory Unit: Being Critical Starts From the Self: My Name, My Identities

This unit aimed at providing spaces for PST to learn about themselves and about their classmates, and to uncover the stereotypical ideas we often construct and perpetuate. To achieve this, this unit explored the ways their identities and names are connected and covered a number of oral and written texts that delved deeper into what comes with a name: history, a story, a life. This theme exploration began by reading an adaptation of the text "My Name" from *A Long Walk to Freedom* by Nelson Mandela (1995). The following is an excerpt of this text:

> On the first day of school, my teacher, Miss Mdingane, gave each of us an English name. This was the custom among Africans in those days and it was due to the British influence of our education. The education I received was a British education, in which British ideas, British culture, British institutions, were automatically assumed to be superior. African culture was not important. (p. 3)

Aside from considering the origin of their names and its relationship to coloniality, PST discussed other aspects of colonization, abroad and in Colombia. After analyzing this text and the similarities they found with our own country, PST researched the history and the story of their names, both of which are usually unknown by them. In addition, they analyzed and adapted a version of a research article explaining the impact stereotypical representations have on people due to their names (e.g., teachers and how they grade students, white/black sounding names and opportunities to advance in society) and discussed how this topic could affect their perceptions about their own students.

Finally, PST watched the first minutes of the TED Talk *The Muslim on the Airplane* (Kassir, 2016). The following is an excerpt from this TED Talk:

> My name is . . . unapologetic Muslim woman, Syrian, American, hijabi . . . my name is writer, teacher . . . but at the airport, my name is random search. And on the street, it's terrorist . . . oppressed. On the news, it's ISIS . . . suspect. (1:03)

This also allows the stereotypical representations expressed by the speaker to be connected to the ones about our own country which is a smooth transition to the next unit about countries, languages, and cultures.

Unit 1: Debunking the Myth of Monolithic Countries

To uncover the multiple stereotypes we have about countries, which have historically been reinforced by media and education, PST examined a PowerPoint presentation portraying diverse-looking people and attempted to answer the question: Where are these people from? After looking at the actual information and challenging our biases, they analyzed why we tend to associate one country with one physical appearance and one language. To gather more evidence on this topic, PST do research on countries such as Australia, Nigeria, and Colombia and find information about the languages spoken in those countries and the presence of Indigenous communities. This research is intended to connect PST to the exploration of colonization, its influence on language loss, and the role of education in perpetuating single-sided stories of countries, languages, and cultures. Through this, PST attempt to debunk the idea that countries are monolithic and ask why our knowledge about our own country and languages is so limited.

In this unit, PST were also troubled about the idea of English as the language of success while they explore the texts *No Speak English* by Sandra Cisneros and the picture book *I Hate English* by Ellen Levine.

Aside from questions to check their understanding of main ideas and specific information, these texts set the ground for questioning why some people are afraid of losing their languages, why some people might resist learning English, the connections between languages and cultures, and the consequences of language loss. In addition, this unit explores countries, nationalities, and factors that affect routines in Colombia and abroad such as access to water and electricity. Finally, PST analyze which communities are systematically affected by these factors.

Unit 2: Family–Families

Aside from describing family members and their professions, this unit leads PST to ask why diverse family structures become invisible in school contexts. After examining myriad family structures, PST read the picture book *Families Are Different* by Nina Pellegrini and answer questions such as: What types of families are represented in this story? What families are not included? Why do you think these families are not represented? What family structures are usually invisible in schools/books? What family structures are common in our society? To further this conversation, PST read an adapted version of the online text "The 'Perfect' Family" (https://bit.ly/3EryumA) which allows them to question common myths surrounding family structures such as "harmony is the rule," or "the nuclear family is the norm." This unit closes by having PST write a text and create a video about their family.

Unit 3: Our Communities

This unit provides PST with the linguistic repertoire to describe and compare places in their communities. These linguistic goals are addressed as students write, read, listen, and talk about diverse people and places in different communities. The great bulk of these goals are scaffolded as students read an adapted version of the story *The Dirty Kid* by Mariana Enriquez. The following is an excerpt from this story:

But if you know how to handle yourself, if you understand the dynamics, the schedules, it's not that dangerous. Or not as dangerous. I know that, on Friday nights, if I approach Plaza Garay, I may get trapped in a fight between various combatants: the small-time drug dealers of Ceballos Street, the brain-dead addicts who attack one another with bottles, the drunken transvestites determined to defend their stretch of pavement. (p. 2)

Over the last few weeks of the semester, PST discuss how this text relates to their communities, how transvestites are represented in this story, and the reasons behind these issues. This story also opens the door to talk about ways in which people can make a difference in those communities. Hence, this final unit leads PST to plan an interview of a leader or someone who is usually marginalized in their communities. Finally, it is important to mention that PST are allowed to do these interviews in Spanish. Aside from furthering their linguistic development in English, the purpose of this unit is to learn about the diversity of their communities and the multiple ways people are marginalized and/or contribute to building a better society. To attain both goals, all videos must contain subtitles in English; this undoubtedly requires a lot of support from the teacher, but this experience allows PST to expand their linguistic knowledge as they go beyond the linguistic boundaries of this unit.

Findings

Results from this implementation indicate that the incorporation of a critical perspective in language teacher education programs opened spaces for future educators to grow aware of and affirm their multiple life stories. Secondly, it resulted in great development of PST's language skills. Finally, it made it evident that becoming critical of oneself and of the world around us is not a simple, straight path. Instead, it is a path full of contradictions, challenges, and vulnerability.

Affirming PST's Life Stories

The implementation of these units created safe spaces for PST to affirm their life stories, be vulnerable, and openly write about and discuss some of the struggles they had encountered previously in relation to their names and belonging to diverse family structures. As evidenced in the following excerpts from students' texts, by approaching class topics critically, conversations and class assignments became spaces in which PST confronted, affirmed, and embraced their identities.

For example, I love my mother's name, it is Yanuba del Carmen. Yanuba is an indigenous name from the Quimbaya tribe. However, it was not always like that. I remember that when I was young, I was ashamed of saying my mother's name because the kids in the school would laugh at it. (Pablo,[1] written text, 2020)

I was one of the first people who started getting separated from the religion imposition. It was a Christian catholic school so my partners and even one teacher started calling me "Mateo *el ateo*" [Mateo the atheist]. (Mathew, written text, 2021)

Like these examples above, there were multiple instances in which PST stated how they had grappled with stereotypical representations about their names and personal backgrounds. Nonetheless, aside from bringing their stories to the classroom, class conversations encouraged them to think critically about their own stereotypical representations and the power educators have to revert or perpetuate harmful prejudices in the classroom: "I think we have to reflect and inform ourselves about the lies we accept as truths…as teachers, any relevant decision could be in our hands, and if we are full of stereotypes, we will probably ruin someone's life" (Dani, written text, 2021).

Similar realizations were evident during the exploration of the unit about families. Every semester, when the myth of the perfect nuclear family was

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1   All students' names are pseudonyms.

challenged, PST consistently began opening up about their own family struggles and embraced vulnerability talking about their multiple family compositions and stories.

> My parents used to argue a lot, so it is better for everyone the way it is now. Like this, everything is more peaceful . . . We are a good example of how single parent families can be just as functional as nuclear families—and sometimes even more. (Vero, video script, 2018)

> I believe that the fact of living in a *Resguardo Indígena*[2] doesn't make us very different from other families. (Jack, video script, 2019)

In addition, as shown in the course evaluations, this class provided opportunities for students to affirm their own identities and honor their life stories: "This language has developed self-value in me, starting from inside to outside, I mean, to know myself to then know others"[3] (Pedro, course evaluation, 2019). Likewise, embracing vulnerability led to reflections about the multiple stories that their future students will bring to the classroom and the need to affirm and validate them through teaching practices responsive to their needs and diversity.

In this line of thought, by consistently positioning PST as educators, they began to envision themselves as educators even in this beginning stage of the teaching program: "[This course] has made more intricate my perspective and identity as a future teacher" (Manu, course evaluation, 2019–1). "This has been a great way to start my major, I have started to have clearer foundations on what I want to do in my teaching career" (Juan, course evaluation, 2019–2).

Seeing themselves as educators takes significant relevance given that, often, a number of PST begin to position themselves as such at a later stage in education

programs. In addition, findings indicate that, although this course was not explicitly oriented toward building PST's teaching repertoire, they saw it as a model they could use for their future teaching practices: "This course has helped me to think as a teacher and place myself in the teacher's shoes, which has helped me to visualize myself and to want to learn more how to be a good teacher" (Sara, course evaluation, 2020). "This course is not only based on how to teach English and increase our skills, it is also about learning how to teach what we are learning" (Ivan, course evaluation, 2019–2). This finding indicates that a recurrent engagement in language learning from a critical perspective might have an impact on future language teachers' practices and contribute to a more just education as PST enhance their English learning.

Language Development

As PST dove into the exploration of myriad topics, they advanced in their writing, reading, speaking, and listening beyond the grammar boundaries set in the course. The videos, class discussions, and written texts they produced as well as the complexity of their responses to listening and reading comprehension workshops provide countless instances of this linguistic development. Moreover, PST repeatedly commented on this:

> Despite having an advanced English level, this class helped me notice many mistakes I didn't know I was making . . . It helped me to have a basis in English not centered just on its grammar and production but more connected to the world. (Samu, course evaluation, 2019–2)

> I started this class from scratch, and I have made great progress. (Vale, course evaluation, 2019–1)

As noted, regardless of their English proficiency levels, PST grew aware of their language enhancement. This, by no means, indicates that all students reached a similar language proficiency level. It does mean, however, that students who entered the program with a high

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2 Politically recognized Indigenous lands.

3 Quotes from course evaluations are originally in Spanish. Quotes from written and oral texts are originally in English and are kept as uttered by the participants.

level of proficiency in English were still challenged to further their thinking and language use while students whose English level was emergent advanced in their linguistic development to meet, and often exceed, the linguistic and content objectives of the course.

This disparity in English proficiency did not always come without challenges, though. For students who enter the program with basic knowledge of English, participating in class conversations can at times be a daunting and frustrating experience. Nonetheless, students found that the supportive environment created in the classroom eased this learning experience: "The teacher . . . has bolstered bonds between us and has instilled a sense of support and understanding with those who know less" (Jero, course evaluation, 2019). This finding might mean that, by positioning PST as teachers as they interacted with their classmates, they engaged in a more caring, trusting environment to learn.

However, when it came to peer-assessment, PST perceived this strategy differently: "Correcting each other's work is not always the best way to realize our mistakes" (Mariana, course evaluation, 2018–2). "With the teacher's support we help each other and correct our mistakes, which has helped me realize my strengths and weaknesses" (Pilar, course evaluation, 2019–2). These responses might indicate that PST will experience this strategy differently, depending on their expectations from the teacher.

In sum, this finding indicates that language teacher educators can reconcile literacy development in English with critical, intercultural reflections although this road can be full of contradictions as will be further discussed.

Responses to Critical Reflections

Although PST demonstrated high levels of reflection about their own biases and stereotypes related to names toward the end of the introductory unit, once the unit about countries began, a new set of stereotypes emerged. For instance, to the question: "What do Colombians look like?", which was intended to show our long-held multiple stereotypical representations, students readily began answering and describing a unified physical appearance which, for obvious reasons, did not even reflect half of the people in our classroom. An example of this can be evidenced in the following whole class conversation:

Teacher: What do Colombians look like?
Manuela: They look like the woman in the first slide (dark skin, tall).
Dylan: They look like the eighth guy (light skin, tall).
Teacher: OK. Let's see. So, do all Colombians look like them?
Manuela: Well, not all, many…well, some! (Everybody laughs)
Teacher: So, Manuela, you are not Colombian.
Manuela: (She laughs) Teacher, according to my theory, no, I'm not Colombian. (Everybody laughs)

This conversation triggered discussions about the reasons why, even in light of overwhelming evidence, we are invested in repeating and perpetuating our long-held misrepresentations and essentializing versions of the world. At this point, many PST agreed that media has a role in creating these ideas and laughed at the absurdity of repeating these unquestioned beliefs. Nonetheless, as soon as they started working in small groups, some students often attempted to reinforce stereotypical representations about entire communities, both local and foreign. This, however, did not always go uncontested by their classmates.

Another significant finding indicates that PST began to see how colonialism influences our perceptions of languages. This can be shown in the following conversation about language loss when answering the question: "Why do some languages become more powerful than others?"

Juli: I think that, maybe, because they become easier, for example the English, hmm, *pero es que no sé cómo explicarlo* [But I just don't know how to explain it].

Mauro: I believe is more like the consequence of like the colonization, 'cause like, maybe you think Spanish is more difficult because some ways and things like that, and English is more practical, that doesn't mean our main language is English just because is more practical.

These are a few instances of the ways PST began to unpack language ideologies around English. Similarly, PST engaged in conversations that questioned the role of education in sustaining colonial views of the world while making indigenous languages and cultures invisible. The following is a conversation between two students in a breakout room in April 2021:

Mateo: The way we are educated at the school like, the teachers don't usually tell us like "hey, preserve this country and find the principal things about… (He's interrupted by his classmate)
Diego: Yeah, they don't say about languages, about Indigenous languages, the teachers never mention them, like you only know because like, you investigated by yourself…
Mateo: Yeah, just the English and that is all.
Diego: Yeah, you're right.

Likewise, some of them understood how necessary it was to take specific actions such as learning ancestral languages, to allow Indigenous communities to become visible and valued.

Something that I think is very relevant is, for example, the things that the Language School is doing, because they teach Creole, Embera, and like, preserving that is very important. Because is another way, is what we should do to comprehend, not help, but make those communities be seen because we forget them. (Dani, breakout room, March 2021)

These findings also seemed to indicate that approaching language learning from this perspective allowed PST to see it in explicit connection with culture: "This class has been very significant because, thanks to it, I have strengthened my knowledge about English and I have integrated it with culture; something I hadn't done before" (Isabel, course evaluation, 2019–1). "You integrate the language and the world, so you understand more the culture you know and others in the same language" (Santi, course evaluation, 2019–2).

The incorporation of this critical perspective also seemed to spark a desire in PST to vindicate marginalized or misrepresented communities. Instances of this were recurrent as they chose to interview myriad people such as a street vendor, an immigrant from Venezuela, a transgender language teacher, and a teacher from Putumayo (a region in the southern part of Colombia) who supports fellow teachers whose basic resources are scarce. These are only a few of the examples of all the experiences and communities we learned from by engaging in this class assignment: "All the activities we've done have addressed not just technical content but spaces to reflect and analyze cultural or personal situations" (Jhoan, course evaluation, 2019–1). "Beyond advancing my knowledge about English, this class has allowed me to know about other contexts and realities I had stereotyped before" (Maria, course evaluation, 2019–1).

Finally, although this has not been a recurrent finding, it is worth noting that the exploration of certain themes from a critical perspective represented a challenge specifically for a student with strong religious beliefs who argued that, for instance, the composition of gay families was against the laws of God. In this particular conversation, PST asked me for help to "explain to him why his belief was not right." This situation led me to continue reflecting on the ways PST's view of the world and multiple identities, and my own, could in some ways clash, and how necessary it was to constantly fight the urge to find consensus in the classroom. Hence, instead of finding an ultimate answer, we all engaged in conversations around what factors shape our worldviews, why it might be difficult to transform our perspectives and how, as teachers, those perspectives might be oppressive to other people.

In sum, although this was not a linear path, findings suggest that approaching class topics from a critical perspective provided spaces for PST to interrogate and expand their worldview in conversation with that of their classmates. This approach also created opportunities to reflect on the influence of colonialism in education and language ideologies. At the same time, these findings demonstrate that foreign language learning can make available myriad opportunities to critically connect students to their own realities and affirm their life stories, as they increase their linguistic repertoire in English.

Discussion

The above-mentioned findings show that the road to achieving social justice and critical language development can take multiple forms. It might take the form of encouraging students/PST to question their worldviews and challenge their stereotypes as they approach texts critically. It might also happen through the creation of spaces in which they affirm their identities and learn about their own and other contexts (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009), or it can be enacted through "an evolving repertoire of practices of analysis and interrogation" (Comber, 2013, p. 589).

This endeavor does not require the search and selection of specialized texts or the incorporation of texts that explicitly address social issues. In fact, because texts are never neutral, any issues or topics that relate to students' life experiences and interests can be used to build curriculum that advances their critical literacy development (Vasquez et al., 2019).

These findings also demonstrate that approaching topics from a critical perspective allows subjectivities to emerge as students and educators make sense of class content (Pessoa & Urzeda-Freitas, 2012). This allows us to bring forward buried life stories such as those about diverse family structures most of us belong to but are often ashamed to speak about in spaces where family trees portray a universal nuclear family. Along this line, Echeverri-Sucerquia (2020) contends that, to push the boundaries of second language education, educators and students should engage together in understanding their own realities in order to "foster awareness of our own identities and what shapes them" (p. 27). Likewise, conversations about indigenous languages and cultures demonstrated that even spaces in which a colonial language such as English is learned can provide powerful opportunities to interrogate PST's own cultures and languages. That is to say, foreign language education does not need to (and should not?) shy away from taking an active role in interrogating, affirming, and sustaining students' identities as they learn another language (Arismendi-Gómez & Ramírez-Jiménez, 2019). In fact, "because language, culture, and identity are integrally related, language teachers are in a key position to address educational inequality" (Hawkins & Norton, 2009, p. 32).

Conclusions

This implementation is far from perfect, and I am convinced educators committed to the construction of a better society can think of myriad ways in which these units could be done better, include better materials, be scaffolded better, and more. What I offer here is not a recipe of how to do critical, intercultural language teacher education, but a reflection of the tiny steps I took in this direction and the ways it impacted my students.

Teaching this class during the past three years has consistently shed light on the potential language teaching education programs have to make language teachers aware of their power (and responsibility?) to contribute to the construction of a fairer society. This does not mean all PST achieved the same levels of reflection or demonstrated the same dispositions toward the themes explored, but becoming a homogenous whole was never the goal. An attempt to do this would have denied that our lived experiences will always inform the way we understand the world. Thus, teacher educators should be aware that looking at the world from a more critical intercultural perspective is a bumpy journey that can

often be fraught with contradictions, resistance, and eye-opening moments, both for PST and teacher educators themselves. There is no straight path for becoming critical, just as there is no definite bar set to claim one has become critical. This is a never-ending process in which, once we uncover ways in which we oppress and have been oppressed, new forms of oppression become visible, just as new ways to contribute to build a better society do.

In addition, PST bring along with them multiple beliefs, values, and identities, which might create discomfort during interactions. In fact, these conversations might be uncomfortable for teacher educators themselves who also bring a realm of beliefs and life experiences to the classroom. This realization should take us then to the understanding that exploring the multiple perspectives that converge in texts and in people's interaction rather than indoctrinating students or homogenizing our understanding of the world is what lies behind. This takes particular relevance not only as educators, but as teacher educators whose demeanor and modeling often has an impact on PST.

Implications

Although findings indicate that this implementation positively affected PST's critical understanding of themselves, their communities, and the world around them, this approach to language teaching cannot be relegated to a single course. Instead, language teaching education programs should place critical literacies and interculturality at the core of their syllabi. As a result, PST can be continually encouraged to question their own worldviews and the ways these might impact their future teaching practices. Likewise, constant exposure to this approach might not only result in PST's stronger literacy development in English but also in an understanding of this language as a pedagogical tool to contribute to the construction of a more just society. Additionally, teacher educators can impact PST by becoming models of language teaching from a critical perspective. This

might instill in future teachers a desire to build a teaching repertoire throughout their major and find alternatives to the years of colonial education they have received throughout their schooling.

Finally, transforming language teacher education programs from this perspective will imply drawing on teacher educators' dispositions to transform their teaching practices and to engage in continuous self-reflection about their beliefs and values and how they influence their selection of class materials, the questions they ask and choose not to ask when exploring texts. This might bring to the surface their own biases and contradictions, a process that is needed to understand how teaching practices are shaped. This might be a contested transformation because some language teachers might find that their beliefs do not align with critical literacies and interculturality aims. Hence, further research could delve into the struggles and gains language teachers find in teaching this way as they also navigate their own understanding of critical theories in language teaching. It could also explore the impact this critical perspective has on PST's teaching practices.

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About the Author

Claudia Patricia Gutiérrez is a Fulbright doctoral student of Language, Literacy, and Culture at University of Washington. She holds an MA in foreign language teaching from Universidad de Antioquia, Colombia. She has been a teacher educator and researcher for over 10 years. Her research interests include critical literacies, critical interculturality, and decoloniality.

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PROFILE

Issues in Teachers' Professional Development

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The *Profile* journal is published twice a year (January and July). Its main goal is to share the results of research carried out in the field of English language teaching and learning. As such, this publication can be classified in the big areas of Language Education and Applied Linguistics. This journal accepts mainly three types of documents: research articles, articles of revision, and reflections. Research approaches can have a, qualitative, or mixed orientation and they include but are not limited to, action research, narrative inquiry, discourse analysis, case studies, statistical analysis, and so on. The journal also includes articles written by teacher educators and guest teachers who are willing to disseminate their reflections, innovations, and research findings.

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Table 1. Ways of Doing Compositions

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Appendix A: Lesson Plan Sample

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Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. Bergman Ramos, Trans.). Bloomsbury. (Original work published 1968)

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Chapter in an Edited Book

Richards, J. C. (2012). Competence and performance in language teaching. In A. Burns & J. C. Richards (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to pedagogy and practice in second*

language teaching (pp. 46–56). Cambridge University Press.

Conference Session or Paper Presentation

Inbar-Lourie, O. (2017, July 17–21). *Language assessment literacies and the language testing community: A mid-life identity crisis?* [Conference session]. 39ᵗʰ Language Testing Research Colloquium, Bogotá, Colombia. https://www.iltaonline.com/page/2017InvitedPlenaries

Proceedings Published in Book Form

Bailey, K. M. (2004). Plenary: Language teaching journals and reflective teaching. In A. Pulverness (Ed.), IATEFL *2003 Brighton Conference Selections* (pp. 80–91). International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language.

Entry in a Dictionary

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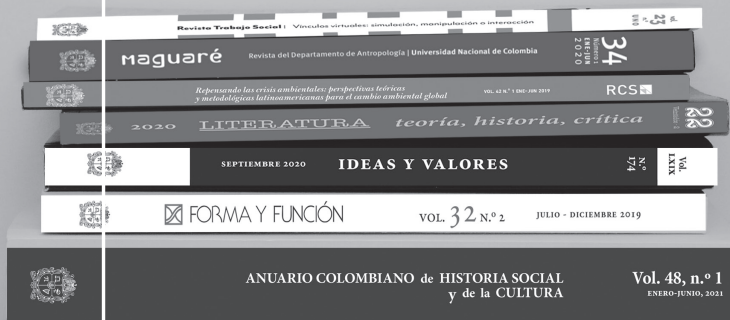
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