Language Pedagogy and Teacher Identity: A Decolonial Lens to English Language Teaching From a Teacher Educator's Experience

Pedagogía de la lengua e identidad docente: una lente decolonial para la enseñanza del idioma inglés desde la experiencia de un formador de maestros

Diego Ubaque-Casallas

Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Bogotá, Colombia

This paper describes a narrative study that emerged from various conversations with an English language teacher at a public university in Bogotá, Colombia. This research is based on intersectional narratives to locate the intersections between English language pedagogy and the identities of English language teachers. Second, the study examined discourses that can construct English language pedagogy and teachers' identities by avoiding simplistic generalizations and essentialisms. Findings suggest that although there are still colonial roots that repress other ways of being and doing, English language pedagogy goes beyond the instrumental sense of teaching. As such, English language pedagogy is about transformation as it is never static because it is an extension of identity.

Keywords: colonialism, English language teaching, intersectional narratives, narrative, pedagogy

Este artículo describe un estudio narrativo que surgió de varias conversaciones con un profesor de inglés en una universidad pública de Bogotá, Colombia. En primer lugar, esta investigación se basa en narrativas interseccionales para localizar las intersecciones entre la pedagogía del idioma inglés y las identidades de los profesores de inglés. En segundo lugar, el estudio examinó los discursos que pueden construir la pedagogía del idioma inglés y las identidades de los profesores al evitar generalizaciones y esencialismos simplistas. Los hallazgos sugieren que todavía existen raíces coloniales que reprimen otras formas de ser y hacer. Sin embargo, la pedagogía del idioma inglés va más allá del sentido instrumental de la enseñanza. Como tal, la pedagogía del idioma inglés trata sobre la transformación, esta nunca es estática ya que es una extensión de la identidad.

Palabras clave: colonialismo, enseñanza del idioma inglés, narrativa, narrativas interseccionales, pedagogía

Diego Ubaque-Casallas ⓘ https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8116-9163 · Email: dfubaquec@udistrital.edu.co

Introduction

Pedagogy is a critical category in education. One can find the following notions: place-based pedagogy (Calderon, 2014); queer pedagogies (Sumara & Davis, 1999); inquiry-based pedagogies (Huber, 2006); multiliteracies pedagogies (Reyes-Torres & Portalés-Raga, 2020); and community-based pedagogies (Sharkey et al., 2016), among many more. One can also find scholars who write about andragogy and pedagogy, the former being "the methods and approaches used in adult education and [that] is directed towards self-actualization, gaining experience, and problem-solving" and the latter, "an education method in which the learner is dependent on the teacher for guidance, evaluation, and acquisition of knowledge" (Murray, 2018, p. 32).

Although pedagogy is an essential category in English language teaching (ELT), its understanding in this field is closer to Murray's (2018) conceptualization. For instance, English language pedagogy (ELP) has functioned as an umbrella term to plan how teachers should utilize knowledge in teaching. There have been linguistic and social aspects of the English language that have been incorporated to the notion of pedagogy through theories, methods, approaches, techniques, and strategies (see Richards, 2015). Moreover, the English language's global importance as a communication tool for the knowledge economy and knowledge-skills (Robertson, 2005) has maintained what Flores and Rosa (2015) refer to as imperial projects and economies evidencing how English is planned to be taught. As a result:

> The ELT field has seen one method after another rollout of Western universities and through Western publishing houses to spread out all over the world. On each occasion, teachers in other countries and other cultures have been assured that this one is the correct one and that their role is to adapt it to their learners or their learners to it. (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 20)

Similarly, identity is a central category in ELT. For instance, several studies have been conducted to document English language teachers' identities (ELTIS) and how they are constructed (see Salinas & Ayala, 2018; Costa, 2019). However, identity continues to be seen and researched within what Mignolo (2009) labels as the colonial difference. For Mignolo:

> The colonial difference operates by converting differences into values and establishing a hierarchy of human beings ontologically and epistemically. Ontologically, it is assumed that there are inferior human beings. Epistemically, it is assumed that inferior human beings are rational and aesthetically deficient. (p. 46)

In this respect, the ELT field has witnessed how colonial constructions of ELTIS have been combined with factors such as race, gender, ethnicity, class, language, and others (Pennycook, 1998). However, these dynamics have also been a piece of the puzzle in the globalizing agenda as a neoliberal resource planned and executed by those who have maintained instruction on teaching methodologies (Kumaravadivelu, 2003) as a unique mechanism to exist and know in the field.

Therefore, this manuscript seeks to locate the multiple intersections between ELP and ELTIS through personal experience and, as well, examine dominant discourses that can construct them. Additionally, I aspire to reclaim and relocate ELP and its "ethical goal that goes into the construction of intersubjective meanings" (Granados-Beltrán, 2018, p. 175).

Theoretical Considerations

The rationale underpinning this theoretical section draws on Zabala's (2016) decolonial strategies for education: counter storytelling, healing, and reclaiming. I choose to resort to the decolonial strategies Zabala constructs as "a particular kind of border thinking, a reenvisioning from the margins" (p. 2) to rethink what we understand as ELP and identity. With this framework, I aim to name hegemonic notions of ELP to position my own "geo-political and body-political location" (Grosfoguel, 2011, p. 5) as a teacher-researcher. Moreover,

I attempt to explain how ELP intersects with ELTIs in the ELT field. Figure 1 illustrates how each element in it interlocks in a dynamic rather than linear relationship; "each is a dimension of the other" (Zabala, 2016, p. 2).

Figure 1. Intersectional Narratives: A Theoretical Framework Based on Zabala's (2016) Decolonial Strategies for Education
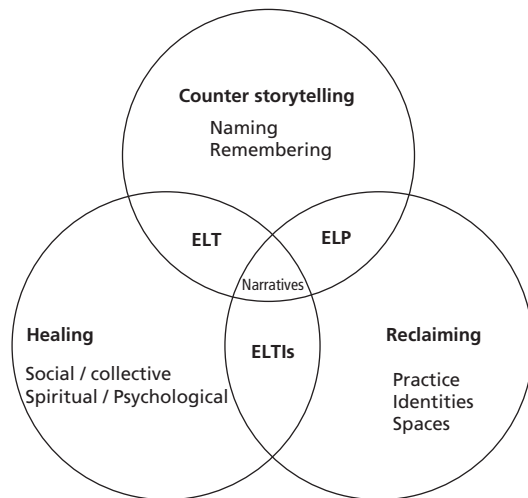
English Language Pedagogy

ELP is a remnant of coloniality. In particular, ELP in ELT has separated the subjects from their bodies and their geographical location regarding the teaching practice (see Ubaque-Casallas & Castañeda-Peña, 2021). This attempt is evident in the insertion of the notion of competence as the only discourse mostly reproduced in teaching and teacher education (Biesta, 2012). This unidirectional/dimensional discourse is what has caused that "English language teaching and learning identities are more oriented towards that goal of identifying decontextualized forms of being in the field of teaching" (Castañeda-Peña, 2018, p. 18). For instance, Grosfoguel (2010), when discussing coloniality, claims that:

> By breaking the link between the subject of enunciation and the ethnic/racial/sexual/gender/epistemic place, Western philosophy and science manage to create a myth about a real universal knowledge that masks, that

is, conceals not only the speaker but also the epistemic, geo and body-political place of the structures of colonial power/knowledge from which the subject speaks. (p. 387)

Such a separation has adopted a homogeneous epistemology on language teaching and learning (Mastrella-de-Andrade & Pessoa, 2019) that has even reached the research-based dimension.

In this respect, Lopes (2013) argues that "the research on foreign language teaching-learning and acquisition is still based on the search for identifying patterns of how to teach well—to detect what teachers do, or could do, efficiently that leads to student success" (p. 954). Without a doubt, in Colombia, this argument is supported by the inventory of BA graduate projects in education programs where "featured causality, technicality, and language instrumentality" (Granados-Beltrán, 2018, p. 189) are the most common approaches to research. Nevertheless, this study is interested not in pointing to the evident but to reclaim ELP capability of leading towards unlearning, learning, and relearning (Escobar-Gómez, 2019). *Otherwise*,[1] ELP is understood

> as something given, as in handed, revealed; as in breaking through, transgressing, disrupting, displacing, inverting inherited concepts and practices, those psychic, analytic, and organizational methodologies we deploy to know what we believe we know to make different conversations and solidarities possible; as both epistemic and ontological project bound to our beingness. (Alexander, 2006, p. 22)

Therefore, if we think of ELP otherwise, as Mignolo and Walsh (2018) define it, the otherwise becomes "the ongoing serpentine movement toward possibilities of other modes of being, thinking, knowing, sensing, and living" (p. 81); a movement only possible if those who enact ELP name it, reclaim it, and commit to "changing, disrupting, and dismantling the hegemonic relations"

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1 This refers to the possibilities to construct and display strategies that are not nested in colonial/modernity frames.

(Pennycook & Makoni, 2020, p. 31) that have hindered alternative ways of doing and being (Kumaravadivelu, 2016) in ELT.

English Language Teaching and Teachers' Identity(ies)

This study conceives ELT as the field in which instructional and procedural applications of theoretical knowledge about language teaching are regulated. As teachers' target language proficiency and their beliefs about language learning are significant factors determining their classroom teaching practices (Kamhi-Stein & Mahboob, 2006), the ELT field seems to be a colonial construction as well. According to Canagarajah (1999), there has been an evident hegemonic influence of native speakers; "in fact, teacher trainers, curriculum developers, and testing experts are predominantly from the Center [industrialized English-speaking countries]" (p. 85). Such a perception is the challenge ELT faces. This implies that theories and practices in ELT are not just the results of colonial powers but also the product of colonial ideologies (Pennycook, 1998) that have become the unique knowledge teachers are to utilize to make sense of their teaching. This tendency has not only made teachers "static and unwitting in their own epistemic beliefs" (Ubaque-Casallas & Aguirre-Garzón, 2020, p. 132), but has also caused an evident subalternization of knowledge and ways of being within the field.

In ELT, much of the related literature, mostly published in English, covers the term *knowledge* from its singularity (Castañeda-Londoño, 2019). This corresponds to a universalized understanding of knowledge that has become not only standard but also normative and legitimate. This normativization has also affected ELTIs as these have been subjected to "a dominant/colonizing way of existing" (Castañeda-Peña, 2018, p. 29) in which English language teachers are the result of what they know. This interwoven relationship, however, is what calls for an epistemological/ontological shift to the *Otherwise*, not just to move away from epistemic violences (Andreotti, 2011), but to reclaim teachers' agency. Given such a call, identities, in the plural, should be understood as "produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices by specific enunciative strategies" (Hall, 2003, p. 4).

Intersectionality in Narratives

For Gill and Pires (2019), "intersectionality works well within the cracks of messy processes of subjectification forged by the modern/colonial project to make more space for inclusive theorizing and practice" (pp. 288–289). Therefore, I would like to resort to intersectionality to allow the recognition of whom we are based on what we do. As "who we are and from where we speak is highly relevant for the intellectual projects we are likely to pursue" (Moya, 2011, p. 79), intersectionality can assist in claiming agency (Stone-Mediatore, 2003) in spaces and territories where colonial histories have been present. Furthermore, suppose intersectionality in narratives is seen as a mechanism to foreground how ELT, ELP, and English language teachers co-exist and intersect, as illustrated in Figure 1. In that case, intersectional narratives are then discursive representations of experience in which there is conceptual integration among those conversing. In fact, intersectional narratives serve this study to ground concepts and interpretations for "knowledge co-creation, in which researchers and participants develop shared understandings and develop new ideas" (Galafassi et al., 2018, p. 9). This is why intersectional narratives in this study comprise a relevant theoretical construct indispensable to investigating epistemological ruptures (Arroyo-Ortega & Alvarado-Salgado, 2016) in ELP.

Consequently, intersectional narratives result from alterative conversations in which subjectivities are dynamic and relational (Ortiz-Ocaña & Arias-López, 2019) among those who engage in conversation. Nevertheless, as "implementing narrative intersectionality requires finding ways of exploring and analyzing the

material, structural and political realities that infuse and shape individual stories" (Chadwick, 2017, p. 10), I will, in the methodological considerations, elaborate on how I attempt to engage with intersectionality as praxis through narrative research.

Method and Data Analysis

This study adopts a narrative research methodology, that is, narrative inquiry. Regarding this methodology, it is "an umbrella term for a mosaic of research efforts, with diverse theoretical musings, methods, empirical groundings, and/or significance all revolving around an interest in narrative" (Smith, 2007, p. 392). This means that narrative inquiry helps intersectional narratives to be seen from Andrey's[2] conversations to dismantle colonialist remnants in ELP and break with the colonial genealogy in research (Patel, 2016). Consequently, as "the narrative is not exclusive to any scientific tradition, nor to its paradigmatic foundation" (Yedaide et al., 2015, p. 30), a narrative approach to research commits only to the particular location within the global structures (Anzaldúa, 2009) of those who employ it. In that line of argument, I aim to merge intersectional narratives with narrative research as intersectionality commits to "social justice goals, [by] granting epistemic and authoritative privilege to the stories, definitions and perspectives of marginalized persons" (Chadwick, 2017, p. 9) who, like Andrey, have not only suffered "the construction and imposition of terminology [that] reinforce[s] and instill[s] inferiority complex in the minds of the subaltern" (Kumaravadivelu, 2016, p. 78), but who have also been tied to a single type of existence (Castañeda-Peña, 2018); an ontological form of colonization and subalternization that is still reproduced through discourses of professional identity (Block, 2006).

Therefore, four conversations, mostly held in English, were transcribed and converted into hermeneutic units within a twelve-month period to be

further analyzed using Atlas.Ti, a specialized qualitative data analysis software that helped me locate analytical categories and their relationships within the conversations I sustained with Andrey. Although using Atlas.Ti may not fit into the lens of the decolonial attempt this study adopts, I think of this as an opportunity to find a methodological and epistemological rupture in which it "becomes an ethical and political bet of those [like me] who want to rethink the forms [of] traditional research" (Arroyo-Ortega & Alvarado-Salgado, 2016, p. 138), not by denying the use of analytical tools but to imbue them with a different epistemological interest to enunciate otherwise. This is why the analysis of each conversation included Zabala's (2016) decolonial strategies as a path to understanding how ELP and ELTIS intersect. This process as a whole, far from looking for methodological accountability, intended to work as an angle of analysis to the meanings attributed to the experiences here co-constructed and, in so doing, locate intersectionality in ELP.

Contextualization of the Study

I invited Andrey, an English language teacher and teacher educator who works for a public university in Bogotá, Colombia, to talk about his beliefs and practices about ELP and ELTIS as with him I found a shared interest in conversing about "practices, knowledge, and feelings" (Ortiz-Ocaña & Arias-López, 2019, p. 15) within the ELT field. Although his teaching experience in varied educational contexts was pivotal in locating the multiple intersections between ELP and ELTIS, his participation in this study was also influenced by his pedagogical experience with different teacher education programs, in which not only has he aimed to educate future English language teachers, but has also tried to challenge imported discourses and models of teaching that, for many years, have influenced Colombian teachers themselves (Muñoz-Giraldo et al., 2002). Therefore, it is a must saying that his voice and experience intersect with my own locus of enunciation as an ELT researcher

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2 A pseudonym for this study's participant.

concerned about teacher education. This concern situates this study within a personal attempt to break the hegemonic/colonial chains that still tie ELTIs and ELP in teacher education programs. The aforesaid is fundamental as Andrey and I try "to change the terms and not just the content of the conversation" (Mignolo, 2010, p. 313) when it comes to the construction of these terms in the field.

Findings

Findings begin from the intersectional narratives framework presented in Figure 1. Based on Zabala's (2016) decolonial strategies for education, I permanently made connections with the literature that I had consulted and that I continued consulting during the analysis stage.

First, I took into consideration that for Zabala (2016), *counter storytelling* is about engaging in dialogue and reflection, a process whereby people name their social worlds as "a deliberate attempt to develop a language of critique that enables colonized peoples to understand their present situation as encircled by colonialism and its structural arrangements and cultural logics" (p. 3). In this respect, the conversations here reported aimed to trigger remembering within/against coloniality.

Second, I also considered that for Zabala (2016), to trigger a decolonial methodology in education, it is also relevant, while naming and remembering, to promote *healing*. This is precisely my attempt in this study: to "challenge dominant, Western notions of education as a cognitive activity" (p. 4) in order to recover from any damage English language teachers have been subjected to, either ontologically or epistemologically, as colonized people. As a matter of fact, such an attempt assumes that conversations between Andrey and I were a bridge to (re)connect to ELP and its ethical purpose. Third, I bore in mind Zabala's notion of *reclaiming*, as this strategy involves "recovering who people are, their practices, and their relation to place

(land, cosmos)" (p. 5). Consequently, as this study intends to locate the multiple intersections between ELP and ELTIs, I thought of intersectionality among and within the strategies above to delve into the diverse realities behind individual stories (Chadwick, 2017).

As the above grounded my understanding of Andrey's conversation, I generated different categories and subcategories that I aim to discuss in this section. Nonetheless, these categories did not follow the qualitative logic applied to preconceived categories or codes to the data (Charmaz, 2006); instead, they emerged from the inspection of conversations as intersectional narrative accounts in which there was co-construction of data between those conversing. In doing so, I acknowledged that my positioning was not intended to elicit information from Andrey, but instead, I was trying to configure his and my subjectivity by engaging in an alterative conversation (Ortiz-Ocaña & Arias-López, 2019) in which other knowledges are created. As such, starting from Figure 2, I argue that this intersectional approach proposes conversations from the interaction pertaining to the life experience here reported.

I will now elaborate on some of the categories (see Figure 2) that emerged in the study. These categories will serve to understand ELP and identities, both *Otherwise*, from an intersectional perspective. Therefore, I begin from the assumption that these categories, although differentially experienced, portray experiences that are fluid and mutually constituted.

In this paper, I have stated that ELP is the result of a colonial narrative over teaching. Consequently, although intersectionality has been mainly used to foster theorization of the intersection of multiple inequalities in gender theory (Walby et al., 2012), I believe it can not only assist me in representing other positions, including those who do not exclusively experience an evident marginalization (Bauer, 2014), but it can also become "a tool for capturing actors' socially-constituted everyday subjective meanings in the context of unequal

Figure 2. English Language Pedagogy: Tree of Relations Among Categories
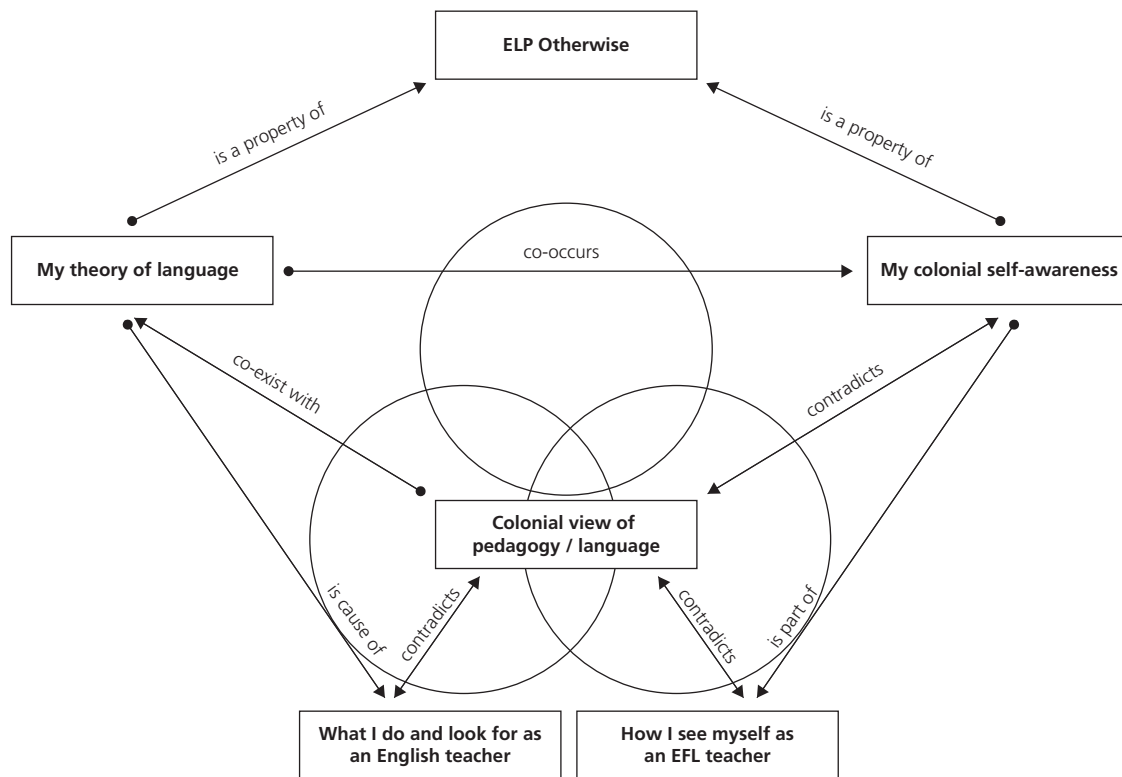
structural positioning of social categories" (Atewologun & Mahalingam, 2018, p. 150) that, both epistemologically and ontologically, have been present in the ELT field.

My Theory of Language

From Andrey's conversations, I noticed that how one views language and learning may explain how one approaches teaching. These two views are universal principles in any method. For instance, in any course about methodology in teacher education programs, student-teachers are walked through how a method is composed of a theory of language and a theory of learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). They are told that, for example, in the audiolingual method, language is seen from a structuralist perspective. It is seen as a system for the coding of meaning, and learning must be then a process of habit formation, a behavioral approach to learning. This and many other theoretical

principles are transmitted to English language teachers in teacher education programs. This explains, perhaps, why we continue teaching structural drilling exercises for pronunciation practice when we become English language teachers.

Although these theories of language and learning are seen as crucial elements in teaching, it cannot be refuted that both carry colonial legacies that have imposed dominance over ELP, subjugating, at the same time, ELTIs to disciplinary notions. Echoing this, Pennycook (1998) contends that "ELT theories and practices that emanate from the former colonial powers still carry the traces of those colonial histories, both . . . derive from broader European cultures and ideologies that themselves are products of colonialism" (p. 19). Consequently, theoretical constructions of language and learning have maintained an unquestionable dominance over personal constructions of ELP (language-learning) and ELTIS.

For instance, "the term 'native speaker' undoubtedly has positive connotations: it denotes a birthright, fluency, cultural affinity, and sociolinguistic competence [and] the term' non-native speaker' carries the burden of the minority, marginalization, and stigmatization" (Braine, 2010, p. 9); with this, we may understand why the notion of method keeps on being a conflicting operating principle in ELT (Kumaravadivelu, 2016) as these continue to be imposed upon nonnative speakers.

Even though English language teachers have kept alive an identity of themselves as subalterns by subduing to theoretical principles about teaching, conversations here documented that personal theories of language can co-exist, but mostly contradict hegemonic theoretical constructions imposed in the ELT field.

> I think I started thinking that language, when I was at the university, was about linguistics, full of semantics, syntax. But later, perhaps due to my personality development, the language was a cognitive transformer for me. I began to relate it as with a "Gender Key" as I relate it a lot to gender research. When I no longer lived in the country, I saw it as a matter of social transformation, and now I continue to see it as a matter of social, personal transformation, but from a pedagogy, as I feel that all the exercises that I have to do, at the personal and professional level, have to go for the sake of transforming myself, my environment, in one way or another, the environment of the people who are there. Sometimes I consider that we see language as an exercise in reflection and, for me, it is important that language begins to change and transform the reality of the people who approach it, so I feel that there is a humanizing character and, let's say there is a rebirth from the point of view from what the language does. Forty years ago the language was, well it still is, a determinant of which culture was more important than the other, but now . . . language and thought go hand in hand and, language transforms the way we think, so if we think differently then we begin to energize that differently since people do something

with the language and change the spaces of others; from pedagogy is from where we begin to transform life from the bottom up. (Andrey)

Despite language being linked to its linguistic system, it is also imbued with other attributes. For instance, from Andrey's experience, his theory of language co-exists with canonical notions in which language is the linguistic knowledge teachers acquire and develop. However, co-existence between Andrey's and canonical theories of languages should be seen as an interrelating co-existence in which language is situated in time and space. In fact, Andrey engages in a reflection in which language becomes an element of cognitive transformation. In the literature available, cognitive transformation is guided but not self-initiated. For example, timing on feedback (Mathan & Koedinger, 2005), or even the nature of feedback content (Shute, 2008) have been present. However, for Andrey, his pedagogy is the means to change others' realities. Consequently, Andrey constructs his theory of language as a personality-driven characteristic that intersects his identity. This intersection is a possibility to not only reclaim his identity but ELP in a field in which linguistic knowledge and procedural skills are valued above all (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012).

Another salient element in Andrey's conversation is agency. As agency is a fundamental factor for ELTIS, it cannot be ignored, it is an essential element for "reducing inequalities" (Archanjo et al., 2019, p. 73). Andrey's efforts to not just co-exist with linguistic discourses and theories about language, but to *name* the purpose of his practice as an educator, puts on the table an intersection between language, pedagogy, and identity. In fact, when it comes to English language teachers, Ferrara (2012) claims that they are influenced by epistemology or beliefs about teaching and learning. If English language teachers are static in their views of language, this could overshadow the epistemological/

cognitive justice (De Sousa-Santos, 2009) that should take place in the classroom.

My Colonial Self-Awareness

This category shows how Andrey's theories of language intersect with this identity as both are contingent and relational. In other words, "who we are as humans varies according to who we are talking to, where, and for what purposes" (Vásquez, 2011, p. 539) and involves agency, emotions, meaning systems, and the self (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Paradoxically, in the canonical narrative in ELT and teacher education programs, new external identities are established making teachers abandon their previous ones and adopt the external at the different levels of subjectivity. Language has been used to construct superior notions of self; it is not surprising that nonnative English language teachers have constructed themselves, consciously or unconsciously, as inferior (Pennycook, 1998) compared to native speakers.

Although this native-speaker ideology has been predominant in ELT (Holliday, 2005) and has been as well an axis for forms of expression in the modern/colonial world (Maldonado-Torres, 2011), Andrey reveals that pedagogical practices are embodied as they transit ELTIs. Andrey's purpose to reclaim praxis over colonialist and objectified views of language, in which the latter has been subjected to Western principles regarding English teaching, leverages the intersection above about his purpose in teaching through language. As such, Andrey's theory of language exercised through his ELP serves as a mechanism to expose and transform his own colonial self. According to Castañeda-Peña (2018), "English language teaching and learning identities are more oriented towards that goal of identifying decontextualized forms of being in the field of teaching" (p. 18); however, my conversation with Andrey exposes that one's identity is not limited to ontological forms of colonization and subalternization; instead, it is *healed and reclaimed* when language and identity intersect.

What I Do and Look for as an English Teacher

I believe that what I am looking for is to transform. I don't know if it is a methodology, but I can say it is a kind of pedagogical perspective. It is a transformed pedagogical perspective because I start from the student's need, I start my classes from what the student wants and what the student wants to transform in their practice; I do not start from my needs, or from what I believe. This is a setting in which the learner's need prevails over the need of the person who provides the learning. For example, there are three courses that I teach. First, I plan with the students. I tell them: "Here you have some sheets, you are going to write to me what you want to learn according to what you have transferred in" and from all their university studies. I do this mostly with students who are about to finish their degrees. Second, with the students who are starting, I guide that reading because they do not have all the necessary tools, so I present them some paths and they decide which way they go, but I give them the ability to choose. (Andrey)

Pedagogy is about transformation. Andrey evidences this claim by setting it as an objective of his practice. Such a perspective invites English language teachers to think that ELP requires changes in the relationships between teachers and student-teachers as "openness and transformation in education could also mean what choices are given to the learner in any system of education" (Vambe, 2005, p. 285); choices that are not part of the modern/colonial ELT principles. For Andrey, the ultimate goal is to give back student-teachers' agency. In critical pedagogy, transformation implies a profound shift in perspective (Cranton, 2011) that embraces changes in actions (Mayo, 2004). The literature suggests that agency has mostly been linked to terms such as autonomy (Toohey, 2007), yet, barely has it been thought of as the outcome of ELP.

A glimpse at the literature shows that "agency can be considered a combination of intention and

action that influences experience" (Hadar & Benish-Weisman, 2019, p. 138); such influence and action are self-initiated (Biesta et al., 2015). Similarly, for Priestly et al. (2012), "the extent to which teachers can achieve agency varies from context to context, based on certain environmental conditions of possibility and constraint, and that an important factor in this lies in the beliefs, values and attributes that teachers mobilize" (p. 191). However, from Andrey's conversation, agency is to be given to student-teachers. This is quite relevant as the curriculum has always imposed a set of fixed knowledge to be learned, resulting in measuring agency through self-efficacy (Bandura, 2001); yet this paradigm is what teaching and learning as a practice of freedom contradict (Freire, 1968/1993), a practice Andrey seems to look for in his teaching.

How I See Myself as an EFL Teacher

Although this paper was not looking for ontological underpinnings of identity, it was impossible to gloss over this finding as identities are "effective pedagogical tools" (Motha et al., 2012, p. 14) and, as such, they shape ELP. The following excerpt from my conversation with Andrey will be used to comment on the argument above.

> I have to think about what I am from many perspectives. The first perspective is the system where I am. As you probably know, it is a not very dynamic system, it is a system in which things are not constantly renewed, but it is a system that allows teachers a lot of freedom to be and carry out practices; call them innovative or disruptive practices. In that sense, I see myself as a teacher who tries to make an adaptation of socio-emotional learning. What does that mean? It means that I link to a focus beyond the disciplinary and communicational field. The well-being and understanding of the student, but more from the socio-emotional aspect. So, as an educator, I see myself inside and outside the system, I feel in that constant search to improve practices, to make them better for my students. I am fully aware that the

people, who I am training, will be my colleagues in a very short time. (Andrey)

Andrey's ontological positioning not only intersects with his ELP, but it also intersects with the institution he refers to as the system. What seems an exciting outcome is that Andrey sees himself as someone who plays in and out of the system. In the ELT field, identities and ELP have been subjected to a top-down approach where "traditional methods of education have not typically aimed to effect constructive social change [and] their practices tend to promote assimilation rather than transformation" (Puett, 2005, p. 264). However, Andrey can make the most of it by acknowledging that although the system may not be as dynamic as it should, it allows English language teachers to innovate and disrupt. Therefore, in the pursuit of improving his practice, Andrey is also subverting relationships between teacher and students, funds of knowledge to be "taught" to student-teachers, and power dynamics. The aforesaid is relevant as "classrooms are host to multiple practices that are simultaneously colonizing and decolonizing" (Motha, 2006, p. 76) and that are, without a doubt, being transgressed by English language teachers and ELP.

Conclusions

As intersectionality modifies how a research problem is conceptualized, investigated, and even how findings are used to advance social justice (Hankivsky, 2012), I believe it is then necessary to say that I first engaged in reflexivity as a means to examine how research processes and knowledge production in this study could reflect my locus of enunciation (Grosfoguel, 2011). With this, I refer to my preconceptions, values, social positions, and interests (Jootun et al., 2009) as a teacher-researcher. Then, I would like to begin by situating Andrey and myself within multiple and shifting dynamics of oppression that are inherent in intersectionality (see Figure 1). This attempt is twofold.

First, I mean to "contend already existing discourses within the educational field which operate inhibiting the emergence of other identities through the colonial mechanisms rooted in global capitalism" (Ubaque-Casallas & Castañeda-Peña, 2020, p. 26); but I also attempt to provide a different glance towards ELP and its existing paradigm in ELT.

In the Colombian ELT, there are still colonial roots that repress other ways of being and doing. Although "the methods used to teach the language were derived from Western culture and systems of knowledge" (Rodrigues et al., 2019, p. 5), English language teachers are transgressing this hegemonic heritage through ELP. Therefore, the conclusions I am drawing from my conversation with Andrey intend to open space to continue reflecting upon the importance of reclaiming ELP in ELT as it may contribute to the "restoring of agency to professionals in the periphery communities" (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, p. 540).

First, ELP is about transformation. Pedagogy is never static, nor is it tied to colonial notions about teaching. As such, ELP is embodied, and not only is an extension of ELTIS, but it is also a mechanism to reclaim agency. In this respect, this echoes Walsh (2013), who claimed that it should be understood as "an essential methodology within and for social, political, ontological, and epistemic struggles for liberation" (p. 29). Therefore, what emerged from my conversation with Andrey is that ELP co-exists with colonial views of pedagogy. However, in such co-existence, teachers' agency challenges decolonial approaches to teaching as ELP reclaims its purpose in liberating practices and individuals by handing over to them different ways of being and doing in the ELT field.

Second, ELP is the result of English language teachers' theory of language teaching. English language teachers are invited to think about their conceptions of language and critique what its purpose might be in teaching as it has been a source of marginalization in ELT. Then, this study invites English language teachers to "critique issues of coloniality and inequality affecting not only their educational contexts, but also their lives as subjects" (Granados-Beltrán, 2016, p. 184) since language has been limited to its instrumental application and, as a result, has been stripped of its personal, emotional, and even social dimension. Therefore, although English language teachers have been classified in three domains: as workers, as instructors, and as learners (González et al., 2002), they also possess an agentic dimension that builds them as human beings that engage in teaching and learning through their understanding of language in their teaching practices.

Third, ELP is context related and not dependent. If ELT has kept dominance over methods and methodologies, ELP is a decolonial act as it transgresses hegemonic epistemological, ontological, and methodological legacies. As my conversation with Andrey revealed, teachers' agency is determinant in co-existing with the top-down approaches and discourses in education. Although those reading this paper may consider a decolonial option is not about co-existing but resisting, I hold the view that in ELT, we cannot ignore that English language teachers must work within institutional discourses about teaching and, as such, any bottom-up approach to dismantle the hegemonic chain must begin from within.

Lastly, discourses about ELP and ELTIS have maintained the colonial architecture in ELT. Although these discourses construct pedagogy as a colonial political praxis (Madge et al., 2009) and identity as a monolithic disciplinary-based category, a final conclusion drawn in this study suggests that Andrey's critical stance echoes other teachers in the field (see, Castañeda-Londoño, 2019; Granados-Beltrán, 2016; Ubaque-Casallas & Castañeda-Peña, 2020). They all seem to agree on ELP as a path for teachers to configure "horizons of theorizing, thinking, doing, being, feeling, looking and listening—individually and collectively—towards the decolonial" (Walsh, 2013, p. 67); a path only possible if English language teachers choose to transgress the colonial legacy.

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About the Author

Diego Ubaque-Casallas is a language teacher and teacher educator who currently works at Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas (Colombia). He holds an MA degree in Applied Linguistics to TEFL from the same university.