Recognising invisibility
The positioning of rural English language teachers in the Colombian context

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King's College London

Recognising Invisibility:

The Positioning of Rural English Language Teachers in the Colombian Context

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

School of Education, Communication and Society

Faculty of Social Science and Public Policy

King's College London

May 2017

To

Emmanuela

A permanent bright light in my life, who came in the middle of this journey.

Acknowledgments

This PhD research would not have been possible without the support of many people to whom I am profoundly grateful. Firstly, I owe a debt of gratitude to my participants for their enthusiasm and willingness to take part in this study. Not only did they contribute enormously by sharing their insights and experiences, they also served as a valuable source of encouragement to complete my fieldwork despite the long road trips and some rather extreme weather conditions.

Secondly, I would like to show my greatest appreciation to my supervisors, Dr Martin Dewey and Dr Nick Andon for their patience, commitment as well as for their continual critical and supportive insights throughout the whole process, which helped me to add clarity and strength to the ideas I wanted to develop. Without their guidance and persistent help, this thesis would not have materialised.

Thirdly, I would also like to thank other professors and colleagues at King's College London for their invaluable support and feedback in formal academic discussions at the Research Workshop in Language and Literacy. I am particularly thankful to professors Ben Rampton and Constant Leung for their extremely helpful comments and probing questions and for opening opportunities to further take advantage of my time at King's.

On a more personal level, I would like to also thank my family and friends for their emotional and intellectual support. I am particularly grateful to Ximena, my wife, for her unconditional support and love as well as for her illuminating suggestions on many drafts of my chapters. Likewise, I would like to acknowledge the continual encouragement from my parents, Israel and Doralba, and the assistance given by Orley, one of my brothers, who did everything in his power in order to make my being away from Colombia as smooth as possible.

Last but not least, I would like to express my gratitude to COLCIENCIAS for financing my doctoral studies and to the Newton Caldas Fund for providing additional resources. Without their help, this research would not have been possible.

Abstract

This research focuses on exploring the current state of affairs of the teaching of English in Colombian rural areas. Despite the fact that policies for English Language Teaching (ELT) have been playing a prominent role in the educational landscape of the country for over a decade now, there is still little awareness, in public and academic discourses, about the complexities of the rural ELT classroom. In fact, an important premise underpinning this study is that rural teachers of English and their struggle to both deal with national educational demands and sort out the social issues of rural contexts (e.g. poverty, underequipped schools, few opportunities to access higher education) have remained rather 'invisible'. On the basis of this situation, this research aims to tackle this invisibility by investigating the connections between language policy and practice with matters of social justice and inequality in the specific case of rural education. The study is particularly concerned with examining the ways in which meanings teachers have constructed about their practice and about their image as professionals may have been influenced by both policy and the rural sociocultural landscape.

The study follows a combination of narrative and ethnographic approaches. Teachers' written and oral accounts of their experiences as well as in-site observations have contributed to a comprehensive description of their understandings, feelings, aspirations, undertakings, and decisions which are important to recognise the place of these teachers in the national ELT landscape. Data analysis mainly draws on principles of critical pedagogy, theories of social justice, policy enactment theory as a well as on a sociocultural view of teacher identity. Findings show that issues such as economic marginalisation, deprivation and a lower appreciation of rurality in general have played an important role in the ways teachers have constructed and shaped both their practices and identities. These factors, for instance, have led teachers to reinterpret policy goals in more socially sensitive terms, ignore curricular guidelines and, in turn, develop teaching practices in such a way that they make the most of their expertise, their cultural values and the resources at their disposal. However, the study also shows that there are other external pressures such as national tests teachers cannot ignore and, thus, also come to affect directly their practices and their sense of who they are as professionals. At the same time, the study indicates that although teachers may appear unsuccessful in the terms set out by policy makers, they have developed an alternative

narrative of what success may mean. Interestingly, this study further suggests that religion can be a very important factor in both teachers' sense of who they are and what they should do.

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Chapter 1   Introduction

1.1 Background

In response to widespread views of English as the language of opportunity and economic growth, Colombia and many other so-called developing countries have witnessed an exceptional promotion of English through different sorts of education policies Coleman (2011). However, as has already been found in Latin American countries such as Guatemala (Coelho & Henze, 2014) and Mexico (Sayer, 2012) as well as in Asian countries such as Bangladesh (Erling, Seargeant, Solly, Chowdhury, & Rahman, 2012), Thailand (Hayes, 2010) and China (Hu, 2003), these policies tend not to consider the uneven sorts of local and regional circumstances, social needs, as well as attitudes towards English affecting language instruction. In consonance with the arguments to be made in this thesis, these same reports highlight how these issues can be intensified in rural contexts where the idealisations of policy and thus of the opportunities English is thought to open up are at odds with the communities' needs, problems and aspirations.

In the Colombian case, in particular, English language teaching (ELT) has played a central role in education policies, especially over the last 12 years. In this period, the country has witnessed a series of initiatives, reforms and administrative actions oriented towards the promotion and incorporation of English in the education system. In an era of globalisation, English has come to be seen as a crucial element in ensuring, among other things, a high quality of education, more opportunities to study and work, access to knowledge, cultural openness, competitiveness and economic growth (MEN, 2005, 2013b, 2014b). On these grounds, as has also been the case in the aforementioned countries, huge amounts of resources have been invested in creating curricular proposals, acquiring pedagogical materials, testing teachers and learners, and in attempts to further train teachers. These

actions have been reflected in active educational reforms aimed at promoting the learning of this language.

In Colombia, the last two presidents, in particular, have enacted the implementation of different programmes for ELT. The latest developments took place in 2015 when the current *Colombia Bilingue Programme* (CBP) was put into operation. This new programme came about as a surprise to many since in 2014 as part of the plan of government for his second presidential period[1], Juan Manuel Santos, along with the minister of education of that time, had already presented the *Programa Nacional de Inglés (PNI): Colombia very well*, (National Programme of English). It appears that the main reason for such a sudden change was the appointment of a new Minister of Education, who in turn wanted to undertake her own strategies. Although official documentation of the nature of CBP is still limited, it has been made clear in both programmes that the promotion of English is a key component of a larger project of making Colombia 'the best-educated country in Latin America by 2025'(Santos, 2014). This project, according to president Santos, will be fulfilled if "at least one of our universities manages to be amongst the [world] best 100 by 2025 and [if] our results in the PISA[2] (Programme for International Student Assessment) exams are above the other countries in Latin America" (Santos, 2014, p. 15).

President Santos has been concerned with making Colombia a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). As a result, he has framed his project of making Colombia the best-educated of the region within the scope of the requirements of this organisation. In fact, as he explained in the launch speech of the PNI, an ELT programme is also important because with it Colombia will be fulfilling one of the requests of the OECD for prospective members: to promote a second language, a condition to facilitate the emergence of an economy of knowledge in the country (MEN, 2014a; OECD & World-Bank, 2012). Ironically, the fact that for some ethnic minorities Spanish is their second language

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[1] The political system of Colombia allows presidents to be re-elected but cannot be in power for more than two presidential periods. Juan Manuel Santos was first elected president in 2010 and as he was re-elected in 2014, he will leave office in 2018.

[2] Since 2006 when Colombia started participation in the PISA examinations, the country has regularly performed poorly in these exams. The country has usually been located in the low ranks below other Latin-American countries such as Chile, Mexico and Argentina (Delgado, 2014). In the same speech launching the PNI, the president explains this has happened just because Colombia has been compared to the best countries in the world, not just with the 'mediocre' ones (see MEN, 2014a).

has been ignored. In any case, the ELT programmes have been presented as an important strategy to pursue political agendas on the internationalisation of education and economic competitiveness.

As shown in table 1.1 below, these programmes at the same time have been preceded by other two initiatives, which have shared similar goals and strategies for implementation. The first was the *Programa Nacional de Bilinguismo* (PNB) (2005-2019)[3], (National Programme of Bilingualism). It started with highly ambitious goals to be achieved by 2019. These included, for instance, that 100% of school leavers would reach an intermediate level of proficiency in English (B1 CEFR) or that all teachers of English in basic education (from 1st to 9th grade) would reach a C1 level of proficiency (MEN, 2005). Between 2010 and 2014, during the first presidential period of Juan Manuel Santos, and in the frame of the education plan he called 'Education for Quality: A Road to prosperity', a second programme was implemented: *Programa de Fortalecimiento al Desarrollo de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras* – (PFDCLE) (Programme of Strengthening of the Development of Competences in Foreign Languages). The PFDCLE redefined the objectives of the PNB thus: a B1 level of proficiency was expected in 40% of high school leavers, and teachers of English in basic education had until 2014 to demonstrate a B2 level. That is, the percentage of school leavers expected to achieve an intermediate level of proficiency was lowered considerably and, at the same time, teachers were given more time to show they hold the desired proficiency level.

ELT Policy	GOALS ACCORDING TO TARGET POPULATION				
	Teachers of English in secondary education	Teachers of all other areas in Secondary education	High School leavers	undergraduates from English teaching programmes	undergraduates from all other programmes in HE
PNB 2004-2019	100% B2	100% A2	100% B1	100% B2 (2010) C1 (2019)	100% B2
PFDCLE 2010-2014	100% B2		40% B1	80% B2	20% B2
PNI 2015-2025	85% B2		50% B1	85% C1 (2018)	55% B2
Colombia Bilingüe CB 2015-2018	100% teachers in A1/A2 move 1 or 2 levels		8% B1 (from 2% by 2014) 35% A2 (from 7% by 2014)	100% B2	English compulsory at all levels of HE

Table 1.1: *Trajectory of the goals of ELT policy in Colombia* (MEN, 2005, 2014b)

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[3] This programme was originally conceived to last up to 2019, an important date where the country will celebrate 200 years of independence. However, the other two programmes have modified this timeframe.

The outcomes obtained in the first two programmes, nevertheless, fell significantly short of the expectations. In a document presenting the third programme –PNI– the MEN shows that up to 2014, only 2% of public school students were finishing their high school with an intermediate level of English, a figure that went up to 6% when private schools were considered too (MEN, 2014b). In the same report, the MEN also showed that although the actual level of proficiency in teachers is unknown, it is estimated that approximately between 63% and 86% of state school teachers do not comply with the desired B2 level.

With these figures in mind, the MEN presented the PNI as a longer-term strategy with a budget of 1.3 billion COP (approx. USD 640 million) to pursue a set of goals that had been redefined once again. The PNI aimed at, among other things, having 50% of high school students achieve a B1 level by 2025, whilst 85% of teachers were expected to demonstrate they have reached a B2 level by 2018 (MEN, 2014). Nevertheless, as already stated above, the PNI was modified and replaced by the current CBP. According to this new programme, by 2018 all teachers are expected to move up one or two CEFR levels while the percentage of students reaching the desired proficiency is expected to move up from 2% to 8%. Although it appears as if the CBP has set out more flexible goals, it has come at the expense of most of the state schools because current efforts are focused on a reduced number of schools (see further discussion on this in chapter 2). As part of the goals it is also expected that all new teachers of English demonstrate at least a B2 level of proficiency and that English becomes mandatory in all levels of higher education (see further descriptions of these levels in section 2.2.1).

1.2 Research focus

The programmes for ELT described above have undoubtedly positioned the teaching of English as a very important element in the educational landscape of the country. However, after over a decade of implementation these nation-wide policies, in Colombian public and academic discourses there seems to be little awareness of how ELT practices have come about in rural contexts, let alone of the impact of ELT policies on such practices in these locations. This is because attention from both the government and the academic community

seems to have centred on urban contexts and, as a consequence, the implications of both the goals and implementation of these policies for rural areas are still to be fully appreciated. With regards to the government, as I discuss below and throughout this thesis, the less than ideal conditions that rural teachers and students face seem to have hitherto been neglected by policy makers.

The lack of appreciation of the rural context is evident, for example, in the dearth of specialised research. In a review of publications of research reports of well-known local journals in the field of ELT in Colombia, reference to the rural context tends to be limited to sporadic allusions to how much more difficult it must be for teachers in these locations to successfully teach English. In addition to my own previous research (Bonilla & Cruz Arcila, 2014; Cruz-Arcila, 2013), I have been able to find only two studies (e.g. Jaraba Ramírez & Arrieta Carrascal, 2012; Ramos Holguín, Aguirre Morales, & Hernández, 2012) on ELT practices in rural schools, and a very recent small-scale case study on the relevance of ELT policy for a small town in Antioquia (Roldán & Henao, 2017). As a result, rural teachers of English and their struggle to deal with educational policies and situated sociocultural demands have remained almost entirely absent from current political and academic debates. This study attempts to contribute to tackling this problem by researching how a group of rural teachers from different regions of the country have developed their professional practice considering the demands of language policies on the one hand, and the challenges that the rural sociocultural context brings to them, on the other.

In this fashion, this study stems from the idea that, at the national level, teachers of English (especially those based in rural schools) are being challenged by the attainment of ambitious and socially insensitive language learning goals. As table 1.1 also shows, one of the most controversial goals of the different programmes has been the idea that students by the end of their high school should reach a B1 level of proficiency in English (usually measured by national standardised tests). This ambitious goal in particular, I argue, has burdened teachers with the weight of an assigned responsibility that appears to be socially insensitive. From the perspective of rural education, this social insensitivity arises because undertaking this aspect of the language policy is likely to be at odds with socioeconomic and cultural realities. In Colombia, what is rural is usually undervalued since the development model of the country

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has traditionally been urban-oriented, as has been discussed in a research report by the United Nations Programme for Development (PNUD for its initials in Spanish) – (see PNUD, 2011). In their report, it is also shown that one third of people who live in rural areas are in conditions of extreme poverty; and that there are considerably fewer opportunities to access education. The PNUD shows that, on average, coverage of education in highly rural areas can be as low as 27.52% compared to 74.39% in urban zones. In addition, the dropout rates in rural settings are significantly higher for several reasons, including the need for children to travel long distances, lack of schools, parents not being able to afford their children's education or children being required to work (Lackin & Gasperini, 2004; WorldBank, 2007). In a similar vein, López and Núñez (2007) have shown that only 3.5% of rural students can gain access to higher education compared with a 22.1% of students in urban settings.

These social issues have an impact on the rural English classroom since in many of these regions, the priority for families is to try to cope with economic constraints. An example of this can be found in a recent study I conducted (see Bonilla & Cruz Arcila, 2014). The study showed that, in the view of some teachers, it is hard for both parents and students to make sense of learning English at some rural schools since they neither have much meaningful contact with it nor see English to be of much help to meet their economic needs and cultural values. As a consequence, teachers in rural environments have to deal with the fact that in local communities, the world of English might be seen as "remote and threatening and far removed from family and friends" Canagarajah (1999, p. 9). In short, neither the goals nor the strategies of these programmes seem to account for the social reality of rural areas where teachers and students experience much more unfavourable conditions, and are thus further challenged when it comes to meeting the English language learning demands proposed by the MEN.

Another aspect that further illustrates the social insensitivity of the language programmes is a substantial lack of support in rural areas. Some reports (see e.g. Lackin & Gasperini, 2004; Novoa Barrera, 2004; WorldBank, 2007) show that learning resources in rural schools are limited, rooms are usually overcrowded, and teachers are usually isolated and poorly paid. Moreover, although Internet access and use of ICT in education have increased in recent years, limited access is still a major disadvantage in rural institutions (see Fedesarrollo, 2011;

MEN, 2010). In terms of professional development, rural teachers, especially those who work in remote locations, find it more difficult to access the opportunities for professional development offered by the MEN. Even if they do gain access, as suggested in a previous study (Bonilla Medina & Cruz-Arcila, 2013), they might not find training in mainstream teaching methodologies very useful. The study suggests that rural teachers might benefit more from alternative modalities of professional development oriented to understanding and getting involved in the local community.

All in all, a general argument underlying this PhD research is that rural teachers of English and their struggle to deal with both national educational demands (especially with regard to language policies) and the social issues of rural contexts such as poverty, underequipped schools, few opportunities to access higher education (see López & Núñez, 2007; Perfetti, 2003; PNUD, 2011) have remained rather 'invisible'. This study aims to tackle this invisibility by investigating the connections between language policy and practice with matters of social justice and inequality in the specific case of rural education. The study is particularly concerned with examining the meanings teachers have constructed about their practice, their professional self-understandings and identifications, as well as the ways these may have been influenced by both policy and the rural sociocultural landscape. Furthermore, by researching rural teachers, the study attempts to contribute to making their work, and with it, their achievements, needs, concerns and aspirations 'visible'. In the same vein, the study may also contribute to including the rural classroom in existing debates on the role ELT is playing in Colombia nowadays.

1.2.1 Research questions

On the basis of my research aims, this study is guided by one central research question and three sub-questions:

What perceptions do English language teachers have around their professional practice and identity in rural Colombia in light of the local sociocultural context and ELT policy?

- How do teachers interpret, respond to and position themselves in relation to the policy, their own practices, beliefs, students' experiences and cultural values?

- What role do language policy and the rural sociocultural context play in the configuration of these teachers' professional identities?

- How do issues of social inequality manifest themselves in ELT educational practices in rural settings?

1.2.2 Why address social justice?

As I attempted to show above and as will be further discussed in section 2.6, in Colombia social issues such as cultural relegation, extreme poverty, lack of economic and academic opportunities, as well as lack of support tend to be more prominent in rural contexts. These are addressed in this study as issues of social justice that may come into play in ways in which ELT practices are shaped. This study explores this possible influence by taking social justice as an important theoretical concept (see section 3.2). By doing this, I attempt to develop a theoretical account that resonates with everyday practices in the media, political debates, and in informal conversations that recurrently touch on the social issues of the country. This everyday practice comes from the fact that our country is one of the most socioculturally diverse but also economically unbalanced in South America and the globe. According to The National Department of Statistics (DANE for its initials in Spanish: *Departamento Nacional de Estadistica)*, although Colombia has been reducing the rates of inequality in recent years, it is still amongst the most unequal (DANE, 2012, 2016). This problem has been caused by several factors such as large amounts of money devoted to the internal armed conflict with guerrilla groups, displacement, inefficient public policies and urban-centeredness (PNUD, 2011). It is not surprising to know that on average, since 2008 over 20% of all the expenses at the national level are caused by military investment (WorldBank, n. d.) and that currently 27.6% of Colombian people are living in conditions of poverty (DANE, 2016). At the same time, due to the "civil war" that up to 2016 had been ongoing in the country, many people have been forced to leave their homes and try to start a

new life in big cities. As a result of these and other related issues, Colombian social reality is framed by huge social gaps between the rich (still a minority) and the poor, between big capital cities and some small towns and rural areas, as well as between private and public schools. All these issues have spawned widespread interest in talking about social justice, which this study also takes up but from a more theoretically informed angle.

Another reason why this study draws on the notion of social justice is that on paper, the issues mentioned above have not been alien to public policy in general and to ELT education policies in particular. 'Pluralism', 'justice', and 'equity' are among the aims established in the General Law of Education (MEN, 1994, Article 5). Likewise, the pillars of the current national programme of development proposed by president Santos are thought to be peace, equity and education (Departamento-Nacional-de-Planeación, 2014). At the same time, as shall be further discussed in section 2.5.5, in the frame of peace negotiations with the guerrilla group called FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – *Revolutionary armed forces of Colombia*), the promotion of education programmes for ELT has been lately associated with peace building and social justice. In fact, as the MEN (2016b) explains on their CBP website, the current ELT initiave is one of the five strategies[4] being undertaken in order to respond to the postulates of the Nacional Programme of Development regarding peace, equity and education.

Although there seems to be a lot of emphasis on and interest in making the country more socially just, it appears that the notion of social justice has been addressed in a very vague manner and that it has worked more as a fashionable term to associate public policy with. There does not seem to be clarity as to what it may exactly imply to take up the banners of social equity and peace. Using social justice as a theoretical concept shall be useful to add precision as to what needs to be considered when these agendas are included in education policy, more concretely in the field of ELT.

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[4] The other strategies are *Jornada Unica* (a programme to extend hours at school), *Excelencia Docente* (a programme aimed at enhancing teaching quality), *Colombia Libre de Analfabetismo* (a programme to fight illiteracy), and *Calidad en la Educación Superior* (a programme to enhance quality in Higher Education).

1.4 Thesis Outline

This opening chapter has presented the background, focus, motivations and interests of this PhD research. Although some background information on ELT policy has already been addressed in this chapter, **Chapter 2** delves deeper into this matter by providing a critical account of the trajectory of ELT programmes in Colombia since 2004. With a focus on rural contexts, the chapter weighs up the pros and cons of such programmes. In doing so, the chapter highlights that the sociocultural and educational conditions of rural regions are still unaccounted for and thus, research studies such as this thesis are sorely needed.

In **Chapter 3** I discuss the main theoretical underpinnings informing the aims of this study. The first part deals with how a critical perspective on the pedagogy of ELT appears to offer appropriate theoretical ground to understand the socio-political and cultural dimensions embedded in second language education (SLE). To develop this case, I review some of the most representative work in the field of SLE that has been influenced by critical views on education. Following this discussion, the second part goes on to discuss in detail some of the theoretical developments about the notion of social justice and reviews the modes in which this notion has been and could further be researched in the field of SLE. Finally, the third part of this chapter moves on to discuss the literature on teacher identity. I explain that a sociocultural approach to this notion seems to best suit the aims of this research.

In **Chapter 4** I explain the relevance of narrative inquiry as the main qualitative approach to the research carried out for the study. The chapter details how this framework of qualitative research was pertinent to guide the procedures of data collection and analysis, the role of participants, and my own role as a researcher. Before that, however, the chapter deals with ways in which narrative inquiry appears to back up some general beliefs about knowledge construction underlying this study. To develop these ideas, the chapter starts with a discussion on theoretical understandings of narrative research. It then moves on to a description of the practical considerations and procedures such as the profile of participants, the recruitment process, strategies for data collection and analysis, ethical issues and specific research procedures and challenges.

Data is analysed through chapters 5 to 7. **Chapter 5** examines what it means to teach English in Colombian rural contexts in light of issues of social inequality affecting rural communities. It attempts to identify 'concrete' issues of social inequality that need to be addressed if there is a serious intention of making English learning an instrument to pursue social development. **Chapter 6** focuses on scrutinising teachers' views on the ELT policy and how such views come to bear in their actual practices. Drawing especially on the theory of policy enactment and following on the findings of chapter 5, this chapter examines how education policies are made sense of taking into consideration school contexts, external pressures, values of teachers and schools, as well as infrastructure and resources available. The chapter is also concerned with how these understandings of policy and of their professional practice more generally are translated into their actual actions as professionals. **Chapter 7** focuses on the construction of teachers' selves. The analysis considers how the rural sociocultural context and policy demands come to play in the ways teachers identify, self-understand and relate to rural and professional ELT communities.

Chapter 8 summarises the main points made through the course of the data chapters. On that basis, implications are discussed, especially in relation to ELT policy making, teacher professional development, and the ways to understand English from a social justice perspective. In particular, the chapter shows what it would mean to embrace agendas of social development in language policies from the viewpoint of rural contexts. The chapter ends with a description of possible future directions, where it is pointed out that findings of this research can be enriched by carrying out related studies that include the voices of more members of rural communities, located in a wider variety of contexts through the use of alternative methodological paths.

Chapter 2 English Language Teaching in Colombia: The Case of Rural Areas

2.0 Introduction

In an attempt to further provide contextual information of the nature of this project, in this chapter I develop a critical account of the trajectory of ELT programmes in Colombia since 2004. I shall argue that the sociocultural and educational conditions of rural regions appear to still be unaccounted for in the ways these programmes have been put forward, despite large amounts of money being invested, despite active legislative action on how these programmes should work, and despite ideas of social development that these same programmes have progressively been associated with.

To develop this argument, the chapter first provides a bird's eye view of both the sociolinguistic diversity and education system of Colombia, which will be useful to understand the subsequent discussions. Then I review what for the MEN are some of the most significant developments of the different ELT programmes. From a critical angle, I will then attempt to weigh up some of the most evident positive points of impact of these programmes with some of the most salient points of criticism that have arisen. Following that, and on a more specific level, I shall touch on the additional challenges that the different ELT programmes represent for rural communities. I will provide a detailed description of some social issues in rural areas that seem to be at odds with the nature of the ELT programmes. I will also discuss the pedagogic initiatives that rural teachers and students seem to have at their disposal to back up language learning processes. I will finish the chapter by stressing the need to do research on how ELT is experienced in rural locations in the country.

2.1 Sociolinguistic overview of Colombia

Colombia is an ethnically diverse, multicultural and plurilingual country, and as such has been recognised in the current National Constitution (Colombia, 1991). In addition to Spanish, the official national language, there are approximately another 65 indigenous languages, two creoles (Islander and Palenque) and a national sign language (González de Pérez, 2010). The National Constitution claims that ethnic groups with their own language would have their mother tongue as the official language of their territories, which at the same time entitles them to receive bilingual education (Colombia, 1991, Article 57). As I further discuss in section 2.5.2, although official, the indigenous languages are usually awarded lower status, only 2% of the population speak them and their use is commonly restricted to the interactions in the family life (García León & García León, 2012). As Garcia León and Garcia León explain, due to contact with Spanish, these langages are losing ground as Spanish tends to be the mother tongue among new genrations. Furthermore, unlike Mexico, Guatemala, Perú and Bolivia – the home to most of the 42 million indigenous people of Latin America (WorldBank, 2016) – only 2% of the population in Colombia is classified as indigenous. As a result, all of the 65 indigenous languages are used by a reduced number of speakers. According to Banco de la de la Republica (n.d.), currently, indigenous langages are spoken by a total of approximately 400,000 people in 22 of the 32 regions (*departamentos)* of the country; most of them (34 of the 65 languages) have fewer than 100 speakers and only 3 have over 50,000 speakers. Most of these speakers inhabit remote rural locations (e.g. Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta) and, to the best of my knowledge, there are no official figures available as to how many of them are fully proficient in Spanish as well.

With regards to creoles, as González (2010) explains, Islander, is caribbean English-based. It is spoken on the Islands of San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina where it co-exists with Spanish and English in a diglossic relationship: "Spanish is the language of business, banking, the government, and education. Creole is the language of informal and everyday situations; and English is restricted mainly to religious services' (Sanmiguel, 2007 as cited by Gonzalez, 2010, p. 333). It is also important to highlight that English is also used as an important means of communication in the torurism business of the islands. As I discuss in

sections 2.3 and 2.4, the MEN has taken advantage of the fact that English is spoken on this island to run immersion programms of teacher development.

2.2 The Colombian education system

Colombia is administratively split into a central government, 32 departments[5], and 1101 municipalities (DANE, 2014).   This organisation is reflected in a decentralised administration of the public education system, which has three main levels: National, Departmental and Municipal. Thus, education is administered at the national level by the MEN, at the departmental level by Secretariats of Education (the regional educational fund created to administer the resources transferred by the central level), and at the municipal level by local regional administrations. However, as law 715 of 2001 (Congreso-de-la-Republica, 2001) establishes, districts as well as municipalities with more than 100,000 inhabitants may have their own regional office of education with the same level of autonomy as those of the departments (Borjas & Acosta, 2000; MEN, 2009). In this context, currently in Colombia, there are 94 Secretariats of Education which have been certified (departments, districts and big municipalities). The MEN (2009) explains that being certified implies that the state transfers the responsibility to this territorial entity for the provision of education for technical, administrative and financial matters.

 As table 2.1 below shows, each level has a specific set of functions that make possible the integration of this structure of education. In broad terms, the MEN is responsible for establishing technical, curricular and pedagogical norms that are thoutght of as orientations for the other administrative levels. The Secretariats of Education are responsible for planning, administering and coordinating the teaching service and for decentralizing it in the municipalities. They are also responsible for training teachers, for administering the funds of cofinancing with their own resources, among other functions. In turn, the municipalities are responsible for a) administering the prescool, primary, secondary, and medium service on

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[5] A department is a political and administrative division in the country. Each department covers an extensive region which would have a local governor, a capital city and their own Secretariat of Education. Each department also serves to differentiate economic, cultural and geographic features of the country.

the terms that the department delegates, b) making the necessary investments in infrastructure and maintenance of the educational establishments and c) inspecting and supervising the provision of educational services. This is the way education has been set out in the country in the National Constitution of 1991 and the general law of education. As table 2.1 also shows, a decentralised system of education in Colombia has mainly consisted of a transfer of authority, responsibility and resources from the central government to departments and municipalities (MEN, 2009).

The central government distributes economic resources to territorial entities (departments, districts, municipalities) through a mechanism called General System of Participation (*Sistema General de Participación*). Such economic resources should be used to finance public services such as health and education (MEN, 2009). The MEN (2009) also explains that the number of students who attend school, the number of students who can potentially join the schools and the level of poverty of the region are the criteria used to allocate resources. Thus, institutions with high number of students, which are located in underprivileged locations are supposed to receive more resources.

Sector	Functions
Nation (Ministry of Education)	• Establish policies and objectives as well as technical, curricular, and pedagogical norms that will be used by the territorial entities as an orientation.
Departments, districts and certified municipalities	• Plan, administer, and coordinate the teaching service, and to decentralise it in the municipalities (the case of departments). • Direct, plan and administrer the physical, human and economic resources. • Be responsible for the provision, coverage and quality of education. • Offer technical development to institutions. • Administer the funds of cofinancing with own resources and to take care of the infrastructure and investments in the educational establishments
Municipalities	• Administer the pre-school, primary, secondary, and middle service on the terms that the department delegates. • Provide information and cofinance projects in infrastructure and maintenance of the educational establishments.

Table 2.1: *Distribution of education functions in Colombia*

2.2.1 Levels of education

At the same time, the education system of the country is divided into four main levels: preschool, basic education (split into primary and secondary), middle education, and higher education (see table 2.2 below). In the framework of the National Constitution, education in Colombia is considered a fundamental right. Hence, the State is responsible for guaranteeing the coverage and quality of education as well as ensuring that citizens have the necessary conditions for having access and being able to stay at school (MEN, 2009). From pre-school up to 9th grade, education is supposed to be free[6] and compulsory.

Education Level	Description	Student ages
Preschool	Children should do at least one year of preschooling before going to primary education. They may decide to do three.	3-5/6
Basic	**Primary**: five years of primary education (1st to 5th grade) **Secondary**: four more years of secondary education (6th to 9th grade).	7-11 12-15
Middle	2 years of schooling (10th to 11th grade) End of High School **Complementary Cycle:** two additional years (12th to 13th grade) in a few schools with a special emphasis on pedagogy. With this cycle non-professional teachers are formed.	16-17
Higher Education	Technical programmes (2-3 years) Technological programmes (3 years) Undergraduate programmes (4-5 years) Graduate programmes: Specialisations (1 year), Masters (2 years), Doctorates (4-6 years) and Postdoctorates	Ages vary

Table 2.2: *Levels of education in Colombia*

To become a professional language teacher, people should do 4-5 year undergraduate programmes. Currently in the country there are approximately 40 universities offering this sort of programme. Most of them offer English in addition to Spanish as the areas of emphasis

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[6] However, the National Constitution (Article 67) states that although education is free, schools may charge fees to families that can afford to pay for their education.

in the teacher programmes. Another common language is French. Although most of the programmes are on-site, there are a few programmes that can be developed on-line or in blended modalities. Most of them are located in the big capital cities of the country (Guiaacademica, 2015a).

2.3 Developments of ELT programmes

The above description of the education system of Colombia allows us to conclude that although education is decentralised and there is some level of autonomy in the regional offices of education, the MEN still holds the authority and power to establish the policies as well as curricular and pedagogic norms all regional offices need to address. This has been the dynamics behind the implementation of the different ELT programmes this study considers, and which have been outlined in chapter 1. In this context, it is not surprising that with the implementation of these programmes the second language curriculum in the country has changed completely. It passed from having flexible but vague goals to well-defined but inflexible ones. By the time the PNB started in 2004, the general law of education established as one of the goals in the primary level "to acquire elements of conversation and reading in at least one foreign language" (MEN, 1994, Article 21, own translation)[7], and in the secondary level to "account for the comprehension and capacity to understand and express oneself in a foreign language" (Article 22). In the framework of this law, schools – in principle at least – had the autonomy to decide which foreign language to include in their curriculums. However, they did not have clear parameters to aim at since what was meant by 'acquiring elements of conversation and reading' was subject to multiple interpretations.

With the implementation of PNB, the story changed dramatically. English started to be seen as an indispensable element in the curriculums of all schools. Moreover, the goal of teaching foreign languages in the early stages of schooling shifted from being a matter of 'acquiring elements' to understand, read or write in a foreign language to reaching an intermediate level of proficiency (B1, CEFR) in English by the end of secondary education. Thus, there started to be a more explicit and more clearly defined level of proficiency to be achieved, particularly

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[7] All the translations included in this chapter have been made by the author.

in English, as the only chosen target language. Nonetheless, the goals of the programmes, as has already been pointed out, have been rather unrealistic.

This dramatic change has been accompanied by a series of administrative decisions and actions that in turn have provoked the emergence of a number of critiques. In this section, I present what for the MEN have been the key developments in the trajectory of ELT programmes. In the succeeding section, I shall refer to some of the criticism.

As table 2.3 shows, since the PNB started, there have been several crucial decisions and actions the MEN have taken in an attempt to accomplish the goals of the language policies. For example, they decided to adopt the CEFR by decree (see MEN, 2006a), a decision that in the view of the MEN (2006) "will allow Colombia to examine advances in relation to other nations and introduce international parameters at a local level" (as cited by De-Mejía, 2012, p. 150). In light of this decision, in the same year, and in agreement with the British Council, the MEN published a set of curricular standards for ELT grounded in the theoretical underpinnings and classificatory scales of the CEFR (see MEN, 2006b). According to the MEN, this action helped to have "clear and public criteria to establish the levels of quality children *of all regions of the country* are entitled to…" (MEN, 2006b, p. 3, my emphasis). In other words, the standards represented a homogenous set of goals any child regardless of their contextual conditions was supposed to achieve. Yet, as I will argue in the second part of this chapter, in the contexts of rural areas (and probably many urban areas too) these goals are likely to clash with students' and teachers' sociocultural realities. By the same token, national examinations (*Pruebas Saber*) started to be aligned with the CEFR too. Thus, all exams students take at the end of their high school (Saber 11) or at the end of their undergraduate programmes (Saber Pro) include a component in English, designed and assessed in reference to this framework.

In consonance with these actions, another legislative reform to the way ELT has been structured in Colombia was the passing of law 1651 of 2013 or the so-called "law of bilingualism". It modified the general law of education. Law 1651 establishes as goals for the primary and secondary levels of education "the development of communicative skills to read, understand, write, listen, speak and express accurately in a foreign language" (Congreso-de-la-Republica, 2013). There are two important aspects to highlight in this

reform. First, this law establishes as a target the development of all the main communicative skills in a foreign language, not just reading and writing (as the previous law had established). Second and perhaps more importantly, this law gives priority to English as *the* foreign language to be taught in public educational institutions.

Another important development that started to take place with the implementation of the PNB was a series of teacher training programmes. These include immersion courses for a period of four weeks on Colombian islands where English is spoken, as well as training programmes in language proficiency and teaching methodology. Thanks to these strategies, as table 2.3 below reports, up to 2014 about 9500 teachers have participated in them (MEN, 2014b). It is important to note that after the appointment of another minister of education in 2015, immersion courses to San Andres, one of the islands, have now stopped running and a different plan of teacher development opportunities was put in place. Currently the MEN offers different sorts of teaching training strategies which include immersions to the USA, India, and inside Colombia as well as online courses (see MEN, 2016b).

Other important developments that the MEN highlight is the availability of pedagogical resources, support given to Secretariats of Education of the country and the implementation of a study (called 'Teach Challenge') intended to identify the profile of all state school teachers of English. The pedagogical resources are aimed to support teachers and students in primary education (*Bunny Bonita, My ABC Kit*) and the last three grades of secondary education (*English, please!*), which I shall return to in section 2.6.2. The MEN also reports that they have supported 65 out of the 94 Secretariats of Education in the country with the aim to further promote the implementation of regional projects for ELT. This process has involved the development of guidelines for regional offices of education to undertake their own projects (see MEN, 2013b). With regards to the study 'Teach challenge', it was found that by 2014 there were 15300 teachers of English in the state sector and that there was a shortage of about 3800 teachers. It was also concluded that it was hard to know what the level of proficiency of teachers really is since many of them have been reluctant to take any diagnostic test.

The developments mentioned above map out what for the MEN has been the history behind the CBP, the current ELT programme. Among the most important developments of the latest

programme is that 1.3 billion Colombian pesos (approx. USD 640 million) were made available to insist on fostering ELT in the country. This money would support the undertaking of three main strategies: i) continued teacher training, ii) development of pedagogic material, and iii) follow-up and monitoring. Furthermore, the problematic decision of focusing only on 350 schools located in some of the main cities of the country was also made. As I shall discuss below, this is problematic because this decision clashes with the underlying principles of equality of opportunity the ELT policy is supposed to be rooted in (see section 2.5.5).

PNB 2006-2010	PFDCLE 2010-2014	PNI/CBP 2015-2025
- Adoption of the Common European Framework of Reference.	- Over 9500 teachers participated in teacher training programmes	- Additional budget of 1.3 billion COP made available
- Establishment of curricular standards for ELT	- Teaching resources started to be available (*English, Please! Bunny Bonita, My ABC English Kit*)	- Focus on 350 schools only
- Alignment of national exams (Pruebas Saber) with the CEFR	- 65 Secretariats of Education have been assisted	- Three strategies: Teacher training
- Beginning of teacher training initiatives	- Teachers were evaluated and followed up (Level of English diagnosed, Teach Challenge study)	Design of pedagogic material Follow-up
	- Law of bilingualism was passed	

Table 2.3: *Trajectory of ELT programmes in Colombia according to MEN (2014, 2016)*

With regards to the three strategies of the current ELT policy, it is worth noting that from the beginning of the boom of teaching English programmes in the country in 2004, teacher training has played a central role. However, a different key approach was introduced. Currently, the *Programa de Formadores Nativos Extranjeros* (Foreign Native English Trainers Programme) is being implemented. Through this programme, the MEN is committed to bringing 1400 native speakers to the 350 focus institutions to act as team

teachers who work with homeroom practitioners. This programme is described by the MEN (2016b) as "fundamental" in teacher training as the support of the foreign trainers would be a great opportunity for local teachers to enhance their English proficiency. Ironically, as press releases show (Caracol-Radio, 2016; MEN, 2017) the group of the so-called native foreign trainers include people from Italy, Spain, Czech Republic, Mexico and Argentina, which makes one wonder about the notion of native speaker the MEN holds. This also makes us wonder about the reasons why competent Colombian English users are not considered in the training scheme. I will return to this point below when I address the criticism of the ELT policy. For the time being it is also important to note that in addition to this programme of professional development, limited places are also available for teachers to do 2-4 week long stays in English speaking countries – e.g. India or USA – (see MEN, 2016b).

As far as development of pedagogic material is concerned, in 2016 the MEN made available what they called "*The Colombia Bilingue English Kit*." This kit contains additional curricular guidelines to the ones stated in the curricular standards mentioned above. The new documents are: "The Suggested Curriculum" (indicators for planning, implementation, assessment and evaluation of the English curriculum in schools (MEN, 2016c)), "Suggested Curricular Structure" (the scope and sequence as well as the syllabus for English teaching for 6th to 11th grades (MEN, 2016e)), and "the basic learning rights" (descriptors of the knowledge and skills that students must learn in the English class in grades 6th to 11th (MEN, 2016a)) All these documents are published online and according to the MEN, some training on how to use these guidelines is already underway. However, as these are very recent developments, it would be beyond this study to explore the impact of such strategies.

Follow-up and monitoring, the third strategy, consists of a group of 19 *Gestores de Bilinguismo* (Bilingualism managers), responsible for developing and implementing a development plan for teachers on issues regarding classroom practices, institutional dynamics, and actions being taken by the regional offices of education (MEN, 2016d). There is not a clear profile of who exactly these *Gestores de Bilinguismo* are but they are presented as experts who can act as what is referred to in the theory of policy enactment as policy narrators and transactors (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012). That is, this group of professionals

are thought to support the process of policy interpretation, enforcement and monitoring. Their action, however, is limited to the 350 schools the current ELT programme is focused on.

Having reviewed the trajectory of the ELT policy from 2004, I now turn to discuss some of the criticism of these developments.

2.4 The ELT programmes from a critical angle: positive areas of impact

Although there are several points of criticism that can be made with regards to the implementation of the ELT programmes, I would like to start this critical account by acknowledging what can be considered as some positive areas of impact. Considering the reports by MEN, undoubtedly a lot of attention has been given to the professional development of teachers of English. Judging from the figures the MEN shows, up to 2014 approximately 60% of teachers of English in the State sector have benefitted from professional development schemes. I think that the idea of providing ELT teachers with more and better opportunities to develop professionally is something most teachers would value. Similarly, the interest in making more pedagogic materials available counts as a positive (albeit still small) step towards making the goals more achievable. The existence of materials such as *English, Please! Bunny Bonita*, *My ABC English Kit* may represent more opportunities for learning and teaching English. However, one question this study was concerned about is the extent to which all these opportunities are actually available in rural schools (see further discussion on this in section 6.2.4).

Other quite positive effects of the language policies has been the growing body of academic publications in the field of ELT in Colombia and the strengthening of teachers' professional organisations. Nowadays, there are several well-established specialised journals (e.g. *Profile, Íkala, Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*) which periodically disseminate the intellectual work of local and international scholars. The different language policies have directly or indirectly influenced or motivated many of these publications, some of which I will reference in the remainder of this chapter and throughout this thesis. Similarly, national ELT organisations such as ASOCOPI (*Asociación Colombiana de Profesores de Inglés –* Colombian Association of English Language teachers), created and led by teachers

themselves, have come to take a leading role in granting some level of participation to local teachers to express not only their concerns and conflicts arising from current ELT policy but also their innovations. ASOCOPI's regional colloquia, annual conference and their journal (*How*) are examples of the spaces for teachers' participation that have been opened up by this association.

Through publications, for example, some scholars have also highlighted similar positive points of the implementation of the PNB or the PFDCLE. That is certainly the case of González (2010), who in a review of the tensions and possibilities of the extension and status of English in Colombia, underscores six areas of opportunity. These include, as already mentioned, more opportunities to learn English, more professional development opportunities for teachers, and the construction of local knowledge in the field.

Interestingly, González also refers to the inclusion of a Colombian variety of English in immersion programmes. She specifically applauds the fact that some of the professional development programmes have taken the form of immersions on the islands of San Andrés and Santa Catalina, where English is one of the local languages. This initiative, González (2010, p. 343) argues, provides teachers with the opportunity to "use and value a variety of English which is neither American nor British. Exposing EFL teachers to the variety spoken on the islands represents a major step towards the construction of pedagogies that include World Englishes and English as a lingua franca (ELF) in Colombia." In other words, this initiative values local cultural knowledge and favours a plural understanding of language norms beyond prestigious varieties (cf. Canagarajah, 2005; Seidlhofer, 2011). Unfortunately, as mentioned above this strategy was not considered in the current group of teaching training opportunities and the MEN has not publicly explained why this has been the case.

Another point mentioned by González (2010) is the possibility of a collaborative construction of ELT agendas between policy makers and scholars. In my view, this represents one of the most important possibilities and positive spaces the ELT programmes may have opened. With the scholarly work and publications teachers and researchers have been giving voice to their opinions and visions of how ELT is experienced in classrooms. This is local expertise that can be used to inform the decisions that are still to be made. In fact, the rationale

underlying this study precisely hinges upon the possibility to shed light on ways to better take account of the rural contexts in language policies.

In addition to the points raised by González, the national ELT programmes have also had a positive impact when it comes to valuing linguistic and cultural diversity in the country (De-Mejía, 2011). As De-Mejia (2011) argues, with the implementation of the PNB, the word "bilingualism" has become a household word in the vocabularies of Colombian citizens. This could be positive because, although the notion of bilingualism has been mainly tied to Spanish and English, "there have also been measures which demonstrate increased sensitivity towards other types of bilingualism, particularly involving indigenous languages" (De-Mejía, 2011, p. 14). It is true that up to now the country has not had a coherent national language policy that takes account of all languages in play, nonetheless, echoing De-Mejia's optimism in this regard, it can be said that ELT programmes have contributed to a higher appreciation of cultural diversity. As we shall see below, however, this is an issue that other local scholars have debated hotly.

2.5 The ELT programmes from a critical angle: controversies

On the other hand, some of the decisions made in setting up and implementing the language policies entail huge sociocultural and political implications which the MEN seems not to have been critical of. That is undoubtedly the view of a group of Colombian researchers (e.g. Cárdenas, 2006; Correa, Usma, & Montoya, 2014; Escobar-Alméciga, 2013; González, 2009; Guerrero, 2008; A. Sánchez & G. Obando, 2008; Usma Wilches, 2009) who have critically examined precisely these implications. As a result, some debates have come about around issues such as the adoption of the CEFR, a reductionist notion of bilingualism, the subsidiary role of local knowledge, the marketisation of ELT, and as I especially emphasise in this study, a contradiction in the discourses on the social impact of the policies.

2.5.1 The adoption of the CEFR

As noted earlier, the adoption of the CEFR has had a major impact on the education system nationwide. This is evident in the use of the framework for the development of national curricular guidelines for ELT, the design of national examinations and Decree 3870 (MEN, 2006a), which mandates educational institutions to also adapt their curriculums to it. Some of the criticism towards the adoption of this framework includes the idea that the sociocultural and educational particularities of the country are quite distinct from those of Europe (Cárdenas, 2006; A. Sánchez & G. Obando, 2008), which is sufficient to be sceptical about an unreserved integration of this model in Colombian language policies. In the same vein, González (2007) maintains that "there is no one single model that fits our reality regarding the diversity of settings, achievement of standards, resources, teacher preparation, student motivation, and curricula" (p. 312). On this basis, she argues that the development of a Colombian framework would have served better the goals of language policies like the ones we have seen in the country.

These critical voices have found some echo in the work done by other scholars around the world who have also suggested, for instance, the need to continually interrogate the structure, purposes, advantages and disadvantages of the CEFR and try to find alternative references (e.g. Leung & Lewkowicz, 2013; McNamara, 2011). In a critical examination of the authority of the CEFR in the field of language assessment, McNamara (2011), for instance, argues that the extensive use of this framework, and its incorporation to education policies lead to an inflexibility of language education by controlling it through standards that are thought to be "universal." In turn, this situation, he goes on to argue, erases "the historical and cultural complexity and specificity of language learning in particular settings, and the meaning of language learning in the lives of individuals" (McNamara, 2011, p. 39). McNamara also warns us that it becomes much more difficult to challenge or change fixed benchmarks once they have been made part of given policies, as has happened in Colombia. In this context, he advocates alternative more flexible and democratic frameworks such as English as a Lingua Franca, where the interlocutors are not assumed to be native speakers (as is the case in the CEFR) and where successful communication is a shared responsibility of speakers,

regardless of their linguacultural background (Jenkins, Cogo, & Dewey, 2011; Seidlhofer, 2011).

The CEFR is now entrenched in the practical and legislative set up of the ELT programmes, and as McNamara says, it is now more difficult to change it. Despite this fact, it is still necessary to maintain a sceptical view on it, as has already been suggested by local scholars.

2.5.2 A reductionist notion of bilingualism

Some other local researchers have also argued that the implementation of the first programme (the PNB) especially, plus the application of legislative regulations which push forward the learning of English – such as the ones discussed earlier – contributed to building an idea of bilingualism that was exclusive to Spanish and English. This is one of the main findings discussed by Guerrero (2008) in her critical discourse analysis of the document of curricular standards issued by the MEN. She concludes that to be bilingual in Colombia is commonly equated to just speaking English. On this basis, she argues that bilingualism has taken up a homogeneous, monolithic and hermetic connotation. Guerrero supports her views on grounds that there seems to be only one option to choose from in order to be a recognised bilingual in the Colombian context and that there are no standards for the teaching of any other language.

As a consequence, discourses on the policies have generated a sort of linguistic stratification (Usma Wilches, 2009), where English is associated with progress and development as opposed to the poverty and alleged backwardness of the local indigenous languages (De Mejía, 2006; García León & García León, 2012). In a similar vein, Escobar-Alméciga (2013) observes how in another official document called *Educacion: visión 2019* (MEN, 2006c), English is being awarded a higher value than any other language spoken in Colombia, sometimes including Spanish.

This tension has, to some extent, been avoided by the MEN by changing the names of the programmes to exclude the word bilingualism (the case of the PFDCLE and PNI) and by discussing the idea of bilingualism as pertaining exclusively to English and Spanish as a myth they needed to dispel (MEN, 2013b). There is still however, as De–Mejía (2006, 2011)

explains, a need for a more integral and equitable policy which includes all the languages and cultures present in the country and where different forms of bilingualism can be valued.

2.5.3 The subsidiary role of local knowledge

Colombian scholars have also pointed out that the implementation of the ELT programmes has served to denigrate local knowledge, to instrumentalise language teaching and learning as well as to insert foreign models and institutions at the expense of local ones (González, 2007, 2009; Usma Wilches, 2009). In this regard, González (2007) specifically laments the fact that the expertise of Colombian academics and institutions was not considered in the design and implementation of the language policies and that instead the British Council has been chosen to do so. Put in her own words,

> [t]he imposed leading role of the British Council, or of any other academic foreign institution that might have been chosen to guide the policy of Bilingual Colombia, holds back the development of a local community with enough validity to construct a language policy. (González, 2007, p. 313)

This leading role given to the British Council and other transnational institutions such as Cambridge University Press and Cambridge English Language Assessment has also resulted in a proliferation of imported models (e.g. CEFR), teaching certifications (e.g. ICELT and TKT) as well as examinations (e.g. IELTS, FCE, TOEFL)[8] and teaching materials (González, 2009; Usma Wilches, 2009). With this proliferation, following González and Usma Wilches, local expertise, teacher training programmes, institutions and alternative locally produced materials have come to be placed at a secondary level.

Furthermore, the adoption of all these models seems to accentuate the authority of native speaker teachers. Despite the current 'irrelevance' and critical views on the power and

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[8] ICELT: In-service Certificate in English Language Teaching
  TKT: Teaching Knowledge Test
  IELTS: International English language test system
  FCE: First Certificate in English
  TOEFL: Test Of English as a Foreign Language

privilege of the native speaker model in a world with emerging varieties of English (cf. Dewey, 2012, 2014; Graddol, 2006; Kramsch, 2003; Seidlhofer, 2011), imported and usually monolingual teachers, as De Mejía (2006) refers to native English language teachers, tend to be seen as prestige-givers to education institutions and thus offered ample and better remunerated job opportunities. This prestige bias towards native speakers of English is precisely what seems to be driving the MEN's current efforts to import foreign competent speakers of English as part of a programme of teacher training (Foreign Native English Trainers Programme). The fact that the name of the programme includes the words "foreign" and "native" highlight the disingenuous intention of adding prestige to this programme. As discussed above, although the work of these imported teachers may be very good, this work is not necessarily better than what local competent teachers could also do.

All these issues can be seen as a typical case of what Canagarajah (2005, p. XIV) would describe as rendering the local to be "of secondary relation or subsidiary status to the dominant discourses and institutions from powerful communities, whereby the global is simply applied, translated, or contextualized to the local." Canagarajah, in tune with the scepticism of local academics, proposes to undertake ELT projects like the ones being implemented in Colombia in more democratic terms, where the local is seen as an equal partner in the discourses of language norms, expertise, curriculum, methodology and materials (see section 3.1.5 for further discussion). Throughout the development of the different programmes, some small steps have been taken towards this more democratic integration of ELT. For example, some of the materials developed are said to be culturally sensitive (e.g. English for Colombia, see section 2.6.2 below), local universities are being involved in teacher training programmes, and some local experts have reviewed the new curricular guidelines included in The Colombia Bilingue English Kit mentioned above. Nevertheless, many more locally relevant materials are necessary, local academics can be further trusted, and competent Colombian teachers of English can at least be seen as equally valid professionals as native English language teachers, if not more so.

2.5.4 The marketisation of ELT

In connection with the proliferation of imported models, another stream of criticism towards the ethos of ELT programmes in the country has been the profitable business behind it. In this regard, González (2009) and Usma Wilches (2009) have also shown how expensive it is for Colombian learners and teachers (and citizens in general) to pay for these international tests, or certifications. For example, referring specifically to the cost of the IELTS test, Usma Wilches (2009, p. 136) states that,

> in a country where the minimum salary for 2008 equalled $461,500 [Colombian Pesos], a person would require a full month to pay for this test, two months to pay for a standard course; and at least half a month to pay for the preparation materials and books. Meanwhile, the tests administrators would be making the equivalent of $652,500,000,000, which is five times the national budget for research in 2008 in Colombia.

A similar analysis is made by Gonzalez (2009, p. 200) with regards to the teacher certifications such as ICELT and TKT. She demonstrates that these international certifications are "unaffordable for many public school teachers."

Other similar cases can be made in relation to the cost of pedagogic materials and courses offered by private institutions. From this situation, questions are raised in terms of who is mostly benefitting from the ways in which the language policies have been developing or in terms of the extent to which social exclusion and inequality are being intensified with some of the developments of the policies.

2.5.5 Contradictory views on the social impact of ELT

In this study I am particularly interested in yet another strand of criticism of the policy having to do with the contradictions that there seem to arise between associations of the implementation of the policy with social equality and peace on the one hand and the social circumstances of educational contexts, on the other. As part of the rationale for implementing

education policies in favour of English, the government has oftentimes associated the need to learn this language with social development and justice. This can be seen in the document launching the PNI, where the MEN (2014) explains that this programme contributes to social equity, inclusion and common good in so far as the policy makes English accessible to people from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

Another example can be found on the website of the Colombian Presidency, where the president is quoted from a welcome speech he gave on the arrival of 105 volunteer foreign teachers. In the report, Santos claims that "[t]o be able to teach hundreds of thousands of Colombians to have a second language, English, in this case, is also to grow peace." The same report also explains that in the eyes of the president, making the country "bilingual" is a way to promote social justice and equity since, quoting the president, "it opens opportunities to have a better job and better future not only in Colombia but also abroad" (Presidencia-de-la-Republica, 2014). Intriguingly, the president has used the implementation of the ELT policy as another action connected to what perhaps can be seen as his most important political project: peace negotiations with guerrilla groups. He has, however, not explicitly explained what exactly he means by growing peace through English. As noted above, the latest move highlighting the social impact of ELT is the development of curricular guidelines in the form of basic learning rights (MEN, 2016a).

One question that needs to be asked with regards to the rhetoric on social equality and peace is the extent to which the policy does represent real opportunities for everyone. In relation to this question, Guerrero (2008) asserts that although the programme seems to be intended for all children at school, due to the unbalanced socioeconomic and cultural characteristics of the country, the alleged opportunities for all are in fact only available to just a few. Cárdenas (2006) agrees with this view by stating that there is a marked difference between state and private institutions. In state schools there are usually very limited hours of instruction devoted to English (usually 30 minutes a week in primary school and 3 hours in secondary), the number of students per classroom is usually high (in some cases over 35 students), and there is a scarce use of this language in everyday interactions (Sánchez & Obando, 2008).

These issues are also evident in a recent study (Correa et al., 2014) aimed at exploring how language policies and implementation strategies are being interpreted by administrators and

teachers in Antioquia, one department of Colombia. Correa et al. (2014) found that although teachers welcome professional development programmes undertaken in their region, they complain about the inadequacy of those programmes. Teachers point out some drawbacks, namely lack of information, low coverage, social insensitiveness of some of the material provided, and lack of resources at schools to apply what they learn.

Furthermore, given the policy is intended to make English available to everyone, one can wonder why is it that currently the policy is focused on a very reduced number of schools? This raises a number of questions: What will happen with all the other schools? What chances can institutions in remote rural areas have to be part of the focus institutions? While there is no immediate answer to these questions, it is clear is that, under the circumstances, discourses on social equality and opportunity are highly contradictory with how the ELT policy has been set up.

The contradictions are also evident in the job market, where arguments about better job opportunities in Colombia and abroad are highly debatable. The MEN (2014) presents BPO (Business Process Outsourcing), software and tourism as the proven three key economic areas where English appears to be a growing requirement. These areas, nonetheless, are not necessarily the areas where most jobs are generated. According to National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE, 2015a), the economic sectors with the most number of jobs on offer are: i) commerce, restaurants and hotels (27.3%), ii) social, personal, and community services (16.6%) and iii) agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and cattle industry (16.4%). This is a point of discussion in a study (Herazo Rivera, Jerez Rodríguez, & Lorduy Arellano, 2012), where drawing on statistical data and official reports, it is concluded that in the labour market the demand for speakers of English is rather low and opportunities for intercultural exchange prove to be quite limited. Herazo Rivera et al. (2012) argue that these conditions diminish peoples' incentives to actually pursue the goals of a bilingual policy. These researchers also suggest that as most jobs requiring English are located in the two main cities of the country, "the desired bilingualism, if achieved, would be an urban phenomenon mostly, deepening the social educational inequity between cities and rural areas" (Herazo Rivera et al., 2012, p. 209).

In short, the rhetoric on the social impact promoted in the policy still needs to be translated

into facts. This is precisely an issue at stake in this research, where I attempt to interrogate this rhetoric considering the ways which ELT is dealt with in rural areas. The remainder of this chapter will outline the sociocultural and educational conditions of rural regions, which contrast with the aims and the taken-for-granted social impact of the ELT policy.

2.6 The case of rural areas

As discussed, the architecture of ELT programmes in the country has been heavily accompanied by political agendas on internationalisation, opportunity, economic growth and social development. Although the implementation of these programmes has had some positive areas of impact, these programmes have also spawned a great deal of critical points that still need to be addressed in order to both make the goals more achievable and allow the rhetoric on social development, for example, to be translated into tangible actions. In this vein, one important aspect to be considered is how the language policies can be operationalised in many rural regions where the discourses on internationalisation or economic growth through English clash with evident issues of social inequality. To better illustrate this argument, in the remainder of this chapter, I attempt to describe the rural context and what appears to be the current state of affairs for ELT in these contexts.

2.6.1 The Colombian and Latin American rural context

Traditionally, the term rural is defined in opposition to what is urban. That is, rurality is commonly associated with agriculture, large extensions of land, sparse population, and particular cultural values, beliefs and practices that differentiate the countryside from the big cities (Llambí Insua & Pérez Correa, 2007). In spite of these usually agreed differences, there is also the argument that there is no clear-cut distinction between rurality and urbanism (Castro & Reboratti, 2007; PNUD, 2011; Ratier, 2002). Scholars who agree with this argument share the view that what is rural should be understood as a continuum. Then, as the

United Nations Programme for Development (PNUD, 2011) proposes, municipalities could be regarded as more or less rural rather than simply as rural or urban. In this fashion, there is a recognition of the multiple cultural, economic, social and political interconnections that exist between the city and the countryside. From this angle, it is possible to think of rurality not just in opposition to what is urban. Instead, both the rural and the urban can be seen as different realities that are intricately related to one another. In addition, by applying the idea of the rural as a continuum to Colombia, it can also be concluded that the country is more rural than often acknowledged. The PNUD (2011) reports that 94.4% of the physical territory is rural, 72.5% of the Colombian municipalities are rural and 31.6% of Colombians live in rural areas.

In spite of these facts, as Pérez (2004) explains, the Colombian and Latin-American rural contexts, more broadly, are still characterised by low population density, poor infrastructure and connectivity, concentration of wealth and proliferation of poverty, inequity in land tenure, misuse and overexploitation of natural resources, among other factors (p. 182). In the region, and particularly in Colombia, these issues have arisen due to a conventionally urban-oriented development model (PNUD, 2011). Such a model has come to idealise the urban way of life at the expense of rurality, which tends to be seen as 'undesirable' (Pérez, 2004).

This is how, for over 50 years now, Colombia has focused on the idea that progress and better quality of life are more viable in urban centres. This has been detrimental to the rural society that, as a result of modernisation models oriented to urban industrialisation, has been relegated and subjected to a socio-economic structure that has worsened issues of poverty, inequality and lack of opportunities (PNUD, 2011). This is a phenomenon that 'post-development' theorists such as Arturo Escobar (e.g. Escobar, 2005; Escobar, 2007) critique as being the result of an monolithic western-biased conception of development. According to Escobar, countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa have been highly influenced by a singularised conception of development that seems to be only possible by means of industrialisation, urbanism and application of imported educational models from the so-called First World. Contradictorily, as Escobar (2005, p. 19) explains, and as has happened in Colombia, the pursuit of these ideals has marginalised "the knowledge, voices and concerns of those who, paradoxically, should benefit the most with development: poor

people."

The same report by the PNUD further asserts that the current development model in rural areas, which is based on economic openness (free trade with foreign markets) aligned with neoliberal policies (deregulation of markets from the State, privatisation and decentralisation), appears to be disadvantageous for rural dwellers in several ways. For example, among other things, it is explained that this model of trade openness i) does not promote human development but rather, makes the rural inhabitants more vulnerable; ii) has failed to converge rural and urban economies; iii) is not democratic and iv) lacks the establishment of rural institutions which could represent the political interests of people in rural areas. Each of these four issues, in turn, has its negative impact: lack of opportunities people have to fully develop their potentials and capabilities (i); the restricted options available to develop profitable economic activities and the rural and urban socioeconomic affairs being dealt with separately (ii); the economic model benefiting powerful agricultural entrepreneurs rather than small farmers (iii); as well as little or no political representation of rural people's voices and interests in public decision making (iv) (PNUD, 2011). As a consequence of these issues, poverty is a pervasive phenomenon in rural areas. As Perry (2010) explains, most people in rural areas make a living out of agricultural activities, which in most cases are not very profitable. Approximately 70% of rural workers earn less than a minimum monthly wage (COP 689.454, approx. US$ 208.80 or £156.30)[9], a phenomenon that is less frequent in urban locations with 31% earning less than this minimum.

Furthermore, if we take a look at the history of the urbanisation process in Latin-America, it can be noticed that the imposition of urban ways of life can be traced back to colonial times (Hardoy, 1974). As Hardoy argues, in the early years of colonisation, Spaniards took hold of established indigenous locations and started to found cities from where they would control the territories they had colonised. As this author explains, the Spanish instigated an urban way of life because this facilitated commercial and administrative activities: "The countryside continued to be indigenous, but its landscape changed partially with new crops, new domestic animals, and new vegetation" (1974, p. 13). Thus, it could be argued that as

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[9] This is the minimum wage for 2016. The conversions to US dollar and UK pounds were made on January 15, 2016.

differences in status between Spanish colonisers (as superior) and indigenous communities (as inferior) started to be drawn, something similar began to happen between rural and urban ways of life. However, as already stated, it is generally agreed that the rural urban gap has been particularly intensified by the economic crisis of 1930 (Hardoy, 1974) and western views of development that began to proliferate after WWII (Escobar, 2007; Pérez, 2004; PNUD, 2011). This thesis particularly considers the rural urban-gap in relation to current development models, where English has come to play an important role.

2.6.2 Education in rural Colombia

In terms of education, the study by the PNUD (2011) and other studies (e.g. Lackin & Gasperini, 2004; López & Núñez, 2007; Matijasevic, 2014; Perfetti, 2003; WorldBank, 2007) have shown how the education system of rural areas has proved unsatisfactory. As already highlighted in chapter 1 (see section 1.2), these reports show that insufficient schools, high dropout rates, under-resourced schools, and low access to higher education are some of the main issues concerning rural education in the country. As a result, only 48 out of 100 students in rural areas finish their basic education (9th grade) while 82 out of 100 do so in urban locations (Delgado, 2014). In these circumstances, it is no surprise, as Delgado (2014) also reports, that rural students are usually outperformed in all national standardised examinations. Likewise, it is in rural contexts where the highest number of illiterate people can be found. Although, the national rate of illiteracy is 5.8% (MEN, 2015), in rural areas this figure goes up to 12% (Medina, 2015).

On the other hand, it is also worth noting that the education system in rural areas has been complemented by a Rural Education Project (REP) whose aim is to increase the coverage of education from preschool to middle school and make it more pertinent (MEN, 2013c). According to the MEN, the REP consists of a group of flexible and alternative educational strategies that apart from providing further opportunities for rural students, also aims at supporting rural schools in processes of curriculum development, the use of ICTs, improvement of the teaching of a foreign language (English) and the design of pedagogical projects (MEN, 2013c). As a report by the World Bank (2007) shows, despite the fact that

the REP has contributed to providing more chances to rural citizens, its impact is still unsatisfactory because the problems of these regions are deeply serious. Below I take the case of the strategies being implemented to improve the teaching and learning processes of English in rural areas as a way to illustrate the insufficiency of these strategies.

2.6.3 The rural ELT classroom

For the reasons described above, the teaching of English in Colombian rural areas is a daunting endeavour. It is probably in rural areas where the problems of lack of qualified teachers, insufficient hours of instruction, and scarce opportunities to use English are more salient. Since access to the internet is still limited, television and radio represent the major means of information. It is also rather unusual to come across English speaking foreigners; let alone do business with them. These factors, added to the particularly challenging socioeconomic situation of these regions, make the attainment of the goals of the current ELT policies appear to be unrealistic.

It is important to highlight, however, that in an attempt to promote the teaching of English in these regions, a few strategies have been undertaken. As a product of the REP, in 2011 the MEN launched a strategy called English for Colombia (ECO). It is a 90-lesson programme that includes the use of audio-visual material to help students in remote rural areas develop an A1 level in their four communicative skills in the first three years of primary education, provided students have one hour of instruction per week. According to its creators, the contents are based on the rural particularities of the country and its lessons have been designed to be implemented through the "Interactive Radio Instruction"[10] methodology, and could be used with multilevel students with different age ranges (MEN, 2011). Although this strategy is unique in its emphasis on rural contexts of the country, its application raises

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[10] Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) is a distance education system which combines radio broadcasts with active learning to improve educational quality and teaching practices. In this methodology teachers and students are usually involved in responding verbally and physically to questions and exercises posed by radio characters and to participate in group work, experiments and other activities suggested by the radio programme (Bosch, 1997). In ECO, however, apparently the methodology does not depend on an actual radio programme but on audio-recorded programmes teachers can play at any time.

questions regarding the use of the material by homeroom teachers[11] (teachers who are assigned a certain class and usually have to teach *all* subjects) with little knowledge of English, the actual coverage or the need for complementary strategies in higher levels. In fact, in discussing the findings of this study it is highlighted that although this initiative is interesting, there is little awareness among teachers about it (see section 6.2.4).

By the time fieldwork for this study was conducted, the MEN had also made available other pedagogic strategies that, although not exclusively designed for rural areas (as ECO), are said to still be useful in these locations as they can be accessed online. The first one is called *Bunny Bonita*. It is a series of videos, flash cards and worksheets available on the MEN's website (http://www.colombiaaprende.edu.co/bilinguismo) to help primary school students reach an A1 level. It places special emphasis on developing vocabulary and communicative functions of immediate use in the classroom (MEN, 2012). The second one is *My ABC English Kit*: Supplementary Materials for English Learning and Teaching in Primary Schools in Colombia. This is a resource package – also available on the MEN's website – with games, flashcards, stories, worksheets and audio-recordings aimed to support primary school teachers with little or no training for ELT (MEN, 2013a). The use of this kit, according to the MEN, will support students to reach a level of English in the range of A1 to A2.1 levels. Sometimes, both *Bunny Bonita* and *My ABC Kit* are given as pedagogic packages directly to teachers.

In 2016, a new set of pedagogic materials were made available on the MEN's website. It is called *English Please*, a textbook series designed for grades 9th, 10th, and 11th. According to the MEN (2016b), the main objective of this material is to facilitate attainment of the desired B1 for school leavers, hence its use in the last three years of high school.

Another strategy that is worth mentioning is a free on-line course offered by SENA (*Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje,* National Service of Learning), which is a government-funded institution that offers a great range of technical and language courses. Unlike the previous ELT initiatives, SENA offers full courses of English to any Colombian citizen. These courses are led by virtual tutors and are divided into nine 60-hour levels (from beginner to expert).

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[11] Teachers who are assigned a certain class and usually have to teach *all* subjects. This is very common up to 5th grade (primary education).

Strategies like the ones just discussed above represent interesting alternatives in rural locales. However, these programmes seem to be unsatisfactory since they either aim at the primary level only (the case of *ECO, Bunny Bonita* and *ABC Kit*) or require additional resources such as internet connections that many rural schools or homes cannot count on, as in the case of *SENA* and *Bunny Bonita*. In addition, these strategies do not solve the problem of lack of qualified teachers, limited opportunities for meaningful language use in interaction, or overcrowded classrooms. Besides, in the case of *English please*, its application seems to have hitherto been widely restricted to the focus institutions where the current programme is operating more strongly. In all these cases, it is pertinent to explore the impact that these strategies may have in rural contexts.

It is clear then that although the rural communities are thought to count on a few pedagogic strategies to support the accomplishment of the goals of language policies, these strategies may not be enough given the challenging social and educational conditions in which education develops in these contexts. From an optimistic point of view, the need to address these issues represents ample opportunity to turn discourses on the social impact of the language policies into concrete actions aimed at preventing rural communities from being marginalised from education policies like the current CBP. An initial step, as I argue in the remainder of this chapter, is probably to understand the rural context better.

2.6.4 ELT in rural areas: a phenomenon to be explored

So far, in portraying the rural context in relation to ELT education policies I have discussed how as a reflection of the unfair socioeconomic structure of the country, the rural landscape is still to be fully accounted for in the current active promotion of English on the part of the MEN. I have also argued that this issue can be seen as instances of opportunity to operationalise some of the rhetoric on social equality underlying the current language policies. I think that to better inform such operationalisation, it is necessary to conduct a lot more specialised research on issues such as how ELT is experienced in these regions, how English is or can be integrated into the school ecologies or how language policies come into negotiation with the sociocultural particularities of rural zones. As mentioned in chapter 1,

even the existing academic critical debates of the ELT policy have tended to limit references to the rural context to sporadic allusions to how much more difficult it must be for teachers and students in these locations to successfully teach or learn English (e.g. Cárdenas, 2006; Correa et al., 2014; Guerrero, 2008; Herazo Rivera et al., 2012). There is almost no empirical research-based evidence that contributes to shedding light on the aforementioned issues. As a result of all this, rural teachers of English and their struggle to deal with educational policies and situated sociocultural demands have remained almost entirely absent from current political and academic debates.

In this scenario, English language teaching in rural contexts is a phenomenon that needs to be researched. Stemming from the possibility of negotiating agendas with policy makers, as Gonzalez (2010) stresses, to do research on this hitherto largely neglected area may illuminate future decisions that better integrate the rural education landscapes. This is the contextual framework where this thesis is positioned. This study investigates how a group of rural teachers have developed their professional practice in light of both the demands of language policies on the one hand, and the challenges that the rural sociocultural context brings to them, on the other. Of course, this study alone will not suffice, but it aims to contribute to the establishment of a line of inquiry on these matters. In fact, the concerns of this study resonate with those of research done in other developing countries (Coelho & Henze, 2014; Erling et al., 2012; Hayes, 2010; Hu, 2003; Sayer, 2012). These studies have shown how in the development of policies promoting English, there tends to be little analysis of the regional socioeconomic, and cultural differences among communities within a given nation state (Hu, 2003); there is a taken-for-granted assumption that English brings development opportunities for all (Erling et al., 2012; Hayes, 2010), and there is little awareness of ways in which teachers and local communities make sense of English, the policies promoting it (Coelho & Henze, 2014), and thus of the ambiguities and contradictions emerging from such policies (Sayer, 2012). In tune with the aims of this study, Sayer's ethnography of what it means to teach English in Oaxaca, for example, highlights how some teachers' (particularly Rocio in his study) must negotiate the teaching of English with many social problems of their contexts (e.g. malnutrition, teen pregnancy, and lack of jobs) and the apparent little impact that learning English may have in ameliorating these issues.

2.7 Conclusion

As noted throughout this chapter, English language teaching in Colombia has been an area of great political, social, cultural and economic importance. As a result of the commonly agreed benefits associated with speaking English, since the beginning of the XXI century, four major programmes have been put forward. This chapter reviews some of the most important developments and critiques of such programmes. It is argued that even though there have been some positive areas of impact, there seems to be a great deal of issues that need to still be addressed in order to face the language-related challenges that globalisation poses in more democratic, integral and inclusive terms. I have underscored that one of these issues is the need to work towards making the ideas of social development underlying the programmes go beyond the level of rhetoric. Particularly, taking the case of rural areas, I have argued that a full and sensitive account of rural contexts in language policies (and perhaps in education policies in general) is sorely needed. One way to address this need, as I have indicated, is through carrying out specialised research. The inspiration of this research project comes from my personal interest to respond to this need.

Chapter 3   Connecting ELT with Social Inequality

3.0 Introduction

This study investigates ELT in Colombian rural locales, a context not yet sufficiently accounted for in language policies nor sufficiently explored by scholars (see chapter 2). An initial premise underpinning this research is that the adoption of English in the national curriculum, as a way to promote bilingualism, raises a number of social, cultural, political, and economic questions about the interests and benefits invested in recent language policies. As noted in the previous chapter, the rural context, particularly, appears to be further distanced from both the motivations and goals of governmental attempts to make English available to all citizens. In this scenario, this research aims to analyse and raise awareness of those wider sociocultural and political implications embedded in the ways in which ELT has been promoted in the country considering the particularities of rural areas.

In line with the above general aim, by taking the rural context as reference, this study attempts to endorse an explicit concern for researching ELT in relation to social justice. Different research reports (e.g. Perfetti, 2003; PNUD, 2011; WorldBank, 2007) have suggested that the development (and with it the education system) of rural regions in Colombia has been hindered by issues such as the unjust socio-economic structure of the country, limited opportunities for human development and the subsidiary role these regions have traditionally played. This study regards these issues as matters of social inequality, and from this angle, seeks to investigate the degree to which these same issues may have an impact on the ELT classroom. The ways in which social inequality may influence the ELT practices can be unveiled through, for example, the analysis of how the social context contributes to shaping language teachers' sense of who they are and of what they are supposed to do as professionals. In this fashion, this study takes the identity of teachers as a focus of analysis

through which the interconnection between the larger social context and the classroom can be made possible.

This chapter discusses the main theoretical underpinnings informing the aims of this study. The first part discusses how a critical perspective on the pedagogy of ELT appears to offer appropriate theoretical ground to understand the socio-political and cultural dimensions embedded in second language education (SLE). Following this discussion, the second part goes on to discuss in detail some of the theoretical developments of the notion of social justice and reviews the modes in which this notion has been researched in the field of SLE. Finally, the third part moves on to discuss the literature on teacher identity and explains the theoretical perspective that best suits the aims of this research.

3.1 ELT and social context

Traditionally, language teaching and learning are presented as instrumental and positivistic oriented activities, as critiqued by Pennycook (1990, 2001). In this view, language is seen as an objective system of communication that teachers should pass on to students, who in turn are supposed to passively receive the knowledge being offered to them (see Canagarajah, 1999). This traditional perspective on language pedagogy fails to take account of the social reality of learners and teachers; that is, their problems, motivations, aspirations and needs. The failure of traditional approaches to language pedagogy to cater for the social context stresses the importance of alternative critical approaches that engage with socially responsive practices. In this section, I discuss some of these critical theoretical developments in ELT of relevance to this study. As these developments are highly inspired by a critical pedagogy tradition, the discussion first centres on defining some of the general principles of this tradition.

3.1.1 Critical pedagogy

Although critical pedagogy has 'many faces and histories' (Biesta, 1998), it has broadly developed as an approach to education that pursues ideals of social transformation and human

development by promoting critical reflection, problem solving and individual agency (McLaren, 2013). Theorists of critical pedagogy agree on considering education as a highly political activity through which power can be either exerted, perpetuated or challenged (Corson, 1993; Freire, 2000; McLaren, 1995). In consonance with this view, Crookes (2013, p. 1) explains that critical pedagogy

> is a perspective on teaching, learning and curriculum that doesn't take for granted the status quo, but subjects it to critique, creates alternative forms of practice, and does so on the basis of radical theories of language, the individual and society that take seriously our hopes of improvement in the directions of goals such as liberty, equality and justice for all.

As Crookes' definition above indicates, the challenge or the resistance to unfair power relations is what more prominently concerns a perspective on education that can be called "critical".

In the development of this perspective on education, it is commonly agreed that although Paolo Freire did not explicitly claim to be part of any critical tradition, his work on challenging and unveiling the politically, economically and socially unjust education system in Brazil (see e.g. Freire & Freire, 1998; Freire & Ramos, 1972) has constituted a major cornerstone. Freire is of the view that education could be used either to liberate or to dominate individuals. In what he calls the 'banking concept of education', he compares education for domination to the ways in which banking works. In such a model, the teacher acts as the depositor of knowledge and students as the depositories and passive unquestioning receivers of that knowledge. This traditional and transmission-oriented model of education, Freire argues, 'domesticates' students into an uncritical acceptance of a reality that is presented to them as static and objective. As a result, this model perpetuates students' inability to take action in shaping a reality that can, in fact, be made better (Freire, 2000). In other words, this traditional model of education serves to make individuals fit the world as it is, and prevent them from critically engaging in it. Freire contests the banking concept of education and advocates, as an alternative, a 'liberating' type of education he refers to as 'problem-posing'. Central in this view is the concept of 'praxis', which he uses to refer to the *action* and *reflection* upon the world in order to transform it (Freire, 2000, p.79). Freire emphasises the

idea that education can generate social change by taking the historicity of individuals as powerful frameworks through which they can understand their place in society and, in turn, challenge the status quo, act and undertake actions for change. Thus, key elements of a problem posing education are critical thinking, dialogue and agency. Stemming to a great extent from Freire's work, critical pedagogy has been positioned as a perspective on education that elevates personal and social empowerment over technical and instrumental training (McLaren, 1995, 2013).

A discussion that further differentiates critical pedagogy from mainstream pedagogies is offered by Canagarajah (1999). In setting the theoretical ground to explore the manner in which teachers and students respond to dominant discourses and practices of ELT in Sri Lankan classrooms, he analyses ways in which learning and knowledge are seen from each approach. In mainstream pedagogy, Canagarajah explains, learning is considered as a detached cognitive activity where learners are supposed to simply acquire knowledge that is offered to them as pre-established, universal and neutral, and where teaching mainly consists of "passing on correct facts, truths and skills to students" (p.17). In contrast to the neutral and technically oriented view of education in mainstream pedagogy, and consonant with Freire's legacy, Canagarajah maintains that through the lens of critical pedagogy, education is considered as an instrument of power, which is necessarily located within a sociocultural and political environment. Learning is viewed as a socio-historical process that leads to the negotiation and construction of knowledge that is always ideologically loaded. Education understood this way favours locally grounded pedagogical practices that account for individuals' sociocultural conditions. By the same token, it also questions taken-for-granted ideas about the universality of knowledge implied by mainstream pedagogies. Canagarajah uses this view on education to illustrate how local sociocultural values lead English language teachers and learners to employ different strategies to resist and negotiate mainstream ideologies underlying ELT. I shall return to this aspect in the section 3.1.4.

On the basis of the previous discussion and following Giroux (1985), critical pedagogy offers a 'language of critique' to conventional, instrumentally-led systems of education that can perpetuate social inequality. It does this by underscoring the importance of contextual conditions, individual interests, cultural norms and power relations in setting out the aims of

education. At the same time, this language of critique comes with a 'language of hope' that fuels the idea that social transformation is possible. Both types of language support each other and encourage critical pedagogues to contribute to the fulfilment of the promise of a critical approach, explained in the words of Hawkins and Norton (2009) as "the shaping of a social world in which all people, regardless of language, ethnicity, colour, or class, have equal voices, access and possibilities" (p. 37).

On the other hand, criticism of critical pedagogy includes the idea that in pursuing liberation, critical pedagogy puts teachers in a hard position where playing the role of intellectuals appears to be the only acceptable position to have. In this regard, it has been argued that critical pedagogy falls into a 'regime of truth' of what teachers should do and, in doing so, teachers are awarded with 'extraordinary abilities' to ideally reach social transformation (Gore, 1992, 1993 as cited by Johnston, 1999). In this context, Johnston (1999) highlights, critical pedagogy seems to not leave room for a critical reflection on its own tenets. From a more radical point of view, Ellsworth (1989) maintains that the principles of critical pedagogy are too abstract, utopian and even contradictory. She argues that the language of critical pedagogy is placed in a philosophical stance that is distanced from the reality of what happens in the classroom and, thus, does not really empower either teachers or learners. Personally, I think that these critiques are valuable points of reference to counterbalance the ideal goal of social transformation and what can realistically be possible to achieve. This criticism, however, is part of the healthy scholarly debate that should exist among different perspectives on education. Critical pedagogy has its limitations but more important than that, as noted above, this perspective on education opens up possibilities to think that through education it is possible to contribute to tackling social problems. In fact, this understanding of education has spawned important theoretical contributions that emphasise the view of second language education being highly engaged with the social context, a view this research aligns with. I refer to some of these below.

3.1.2 Critical ELT

The discussion of general principles of the nature of critical pedagogy leads us to think of the implications this perspective on teaching, learning and curriculum has on Second Language Education (SLE) in general, and more particularly important for this research on ELT. From a critical perspective, it is possible to analyse how broader economic, cultural, and political issues in society are reproduced, integrated, maintained or resisted in the ELT classroom. In this fashion, ELT research informed by critical pedagogy interrogates, for instance, dominant discourses on the seemingly primary need to learn English in an era of globalisation, the relationship between local educational needs and global economic demands, and with it, the spread and relevance of mainstream methodologies, the implementation and goals of educational policies and the ideological implications involved. Similarly, examining ELT practices from a critical angle means acknowledging that language learning entails much more than becoming familiar with a given linguistic system or developing communicative skills. Instead, as Kumaravadivelu (2006a, p. 70) notes, the practice of SLE, through a critical lens, "is about connecting the word with the world. It is about recognizing language as ideology, not just as system." Stemming from a critical perspective on second language, then, both learners' and teachers' social realities are recognised as important factors to be integrated in educational practices. All these ideas underlie the motivations to develop the present study.

For over two decades now, this critical view on language teaching has influenced a number of scholars around the world whose work has contributed, in one way or another, to pursuing the goal of making SLE a more empowering, meaningful, ethical and democratic process. In the following, I discuss some of this work. Specifically, I will refer to the theoretical developments that have attempted to make language education a socially relevant endeavour (Crookes, 2010, 2013; Kumaravadivelu, 1994, 2003, 2012; Pennycook, 1990, 2001). I will also discuss how a critical stance has served to inform the field of language policy and planning (Shohamy, 2006; Tollefson, 1991) and to interrogate the spread and power of English (Canagarajah, 1999, 2005; Phillipson, 1992). I will finish this section by discussing the attempts to bring the local into negotiation with the global when setting out language policies and practices (Canagarajah, 2005; De-Mejía, 2011; González, 2010).

3.1.3 Language education as socially relevant and empowering

Especially from the 1990s, there have been several theoretical proposals to make language education a socially relevant and empowering endeavour. Pennycook's (1990, 2001) call for a critical applied linguistics framework represents one of the earliest attempts to go beyond traditional, "instrumental and positivist orientations towards language and teaching" (Pennycook, 1990, p. 304). Pennycook (2001) proposes seeing language education as a socioculturally and politically engaged practice that is concerned with "questions of gender, class, sexuality, race, ethnicity, culture, identity, politics, ideology, and discourse" (p. 10). In this fashion, central in Pennycook's proposal is the idea that critical applied linguistics should be considered as being engaged not just with the application of theories of linguistics but more importantly with questioning them vis-à-vis broader issues of power and social inequality. Therefore, this view of applied linguistics demands, as he says, a constant 'sceptical' eye on how language theories are used and presented in such a way that the work applied linguists do contributes to the 'alleviation' of some of the social 'pain' we live in (Pennycook, 2001). More recently, this critical line of thought has also led Pennycook to question conventional ideas about language as a unitary system (see Makoni & Pennycook, 2007; Pennycook, 2010).

Pennycook's proposals, however, do not offer the sort of practical approaches to SLE that we can find in the work of other scholars such as Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2003, 2012) and Crookes (2013). Echoing some of Pennycook's early concerns about the positivist orientations of language education, Kumaravadivelu proposes 'transformative' alternatives to existing models of language teaching and teacher education. Based on the argument that a conventional approach to language teaching is inappropriate to take account of the great diversity of sociocultural contexts, educational needs or teaching situations, Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2003) argues that language teaching is in a 'postmethod condition'. With this umbrella term, he emphasises the idea that mainstream language teaching methods are top-down prescriptive models that are intended to work in ideal circumstances and may, therefore, be ineffective or irrelevant in less ideal situations. The postmethod condition, in this fashion,

stresses that teachers, instead of being expected to follow pre-established methods, can be recognised as autonomous professionals who are able to devise and reflect upon their own bottom-up, locally sensitive, innovative and meaningful strategies to support their practices (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, 2012).

In consonance with Kumaravadivelu's views, Crookes (2013) proposes what I see as concrete strategies to make the language classroom a space for critical reflection and social empowerment. He emphasises the idea that critical pedagogy in language teaching is both 'relevant' and 'practical' and delineates a model of 'critical language pedagogy'. This framework, according to him, "emerges from the interaction of theories and practice of language teaching that foster language learning, development and action on the part of students directed towards improving problematic aspects of their lives" (2013, p.8). Concretely, Crookes defines key curricular components to turn the principles of critical pedagogy into practical actions in language teaching. These elements include a critical stance from the teacher, critical needs analysis (learning goals set in terms of learners' social needs, not only in terms of their linguistic needs), negotiated syllabus, dialogue (more active role of students in decision making), critical content in materials (contents related to immediate sociocultural reality) and action orientation (educational practices aimed at social change) (Crookes, 2013a).

Kumaravadivelu's and Crookes's proposals are important in the sense that they outline actions and implications to consider when addressing issues of social inequality in the second language classroom. On the basis of their theorisation, it could be argued that language teaching can be socially relevant and empowering by redefining methodologies of language teaching and processes of teacher education in more pluralistic and locally grounded terms. That is, language teaching should endorse the heterogeneity of educational needs of individuals that, more often than not, are delimited by the broader historical, political, and social conditions. Language teaching should be pluralistic and locally grounded inasmuch as both teachers and learners are enabled to make decisions about how best their educational experiences can be integrated to respond to these conditions and are not limited to just responding to technical training, as found in mainstream pedagogies.

It is worth noting, however, that in these actions, teachers appear to be assigned huge responsibilities they may not be willing to take on, especially in circumstances where they are not being supported to do so. Crookes (2013) depicts teachers "not just as employees" but as educators with a political stance who care about students' social problems and who are willing to do something to try to ameliorate them through, for instance, the material and contents brought to class. Although I share the idea that teachers' actions might have a huge impact on the life of students, I also think that teachers *alone* cannot bear the responsibility of securing social transformation.

This research emphasises the need for a more socially responsive sense of second language pedagogy in Colombia but does not assume that teachers should take all the responsibility. In this context, Kumaravadivelu's and Crookes' proposals offer an interesting point of comparison to analyse actual understandings and practices of ELT in the country. Although current language policies and discourses in Colombia seem to privilege traditional and instrumentally-led educational practices (see chapter 2), critical perspectives like the ones discussed here emphasise the potential agency of teachers to deal with conflicts that are likely to emerge from the divide that seems to exist between current language policy and rural contexts. In this scenario, in line with the aims of this study, it is relevant to explore the ways in which teachers have dealt with those emerging conflicts.

3.1.4 Critical views on language policy and planning

In line with Pennycook's, Kumaravadivelu's and Crookes' preoccupations, a "critical" view in the field of language policy and planning (LPP) also started to emerge from 1990s thanks to the work of scholars such as Street (1993); Shohamy (2006) and Tollefson (1991, 2006). In response to early work in the field (after WWII, the 1950s and 1960s), which seemed to have privileged a rather positivistic perspective on how to research and "control" languages (Ricento, 2000, 2006), Tollefson (1991) developed a 'historical-structural approach' to LPP. This model started as an opposition to what he called the 'neoclassical approach', which is "characterized by the assumption that language policies are usually adopted to solve

problems of communication[12] in multilingual settings and to increase social and economic opportunities for linguistic minorities" (Tollefson, 2006, p. 42). In his view, such assumptions misleadingly suggest that language policies are neutral actions in benefit of all. Far from that, Tollefson argues, more often than not language policies may serve as mechanisms to create and sustain social inequality, usually in favour of political and economic interests of dominant groups (cf. Shohamy, 2006). As Ricento (2006) explains, thanks to the positivistic view of language policy – endorsed by the neoclassical approach – concepts such as *native speaker, mother tongue, linguistic competence* and *diglossia* became mechanisms to divide individuals and give them different statuses. Critical of such mechanisms and informed by principles of critical theory, thus, Tollefson's historical-structural approach emphasises the influence of social and historical factors on language policy and language use. These elements, in this critical view, can serve the field of language policy to reduce forms of social inequality. This is how in attempting to delineate what he calls the field of critical language policy (CLP), Tollefson (2006) proposes four main areas of concern: i) analysis of economic, political, cultural, and discourse factors; ii) advocacy of language rights; iii) maintenance and revitalisation of languages, and iv) development of work aimed at contributing to social justice.

Street's work (e.g. Street, 1993, 2002) in the field of new literacy studies has contributed to the development of the historical-structural views. In particular, the contrast he makes between 'autonomous' and 'ideological' models of literacy studies resemble Tollefson's distinction between neoclassical and historical-structural frameworks of LP. Street is wary of conventional ideas of literacy as an individual and cognitive activity where skills are mastered in separation of (or autonomous from) the social context. Instead, he advocates a view of literacy practices as 'ideological'; a term he uses to emphasise that literacy is a social practice linked not only to culture but also to power structures. With the term ideological, Street (1993, p. 8) also emphasises a tension between "authority and power on the one hand and resistance and creativity [of specific cultural groups] on the other." Such an ideological view invites us to be sceptical of policies that present literacy only as a fixed set of skills to

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[12] In his discussion of how language policy and planning are intricately related to social change, Cooper (1989, pp. 30-31) offers a list of conventional definitions of the field that resemble what Tollefson calls the neoclassical approach.

be acquired, and encourages us to scrutinise all policies from the socially sensitive terms endorsed by the ideological model.

Although the ideas underpinning the historical-structural approach have been quite useful to broaden our understanding of the implications of "efforts to influence language behaviours" – as Cooper (1989, p. 35) defines language policy – such ideas seem to take a rather deterministic angle to analyse policy from a top down dynamics. What is troubling about this is that – just like in the neoclassical approach – the agency of the different actors (creators, interpreters and appropriators), the multiple levels (national, institutional, interpersonal) and the different processes of policies (creation, interpretation, and appropriation) are not accounted for (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007; D. C. Johnson, 2009; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). In other words, the historical-structural perspective does not seem to address language policy as a complex and multi-layered phenomenon.

As Ball, Maguire, and Braun (2012, p. 3) argue, policies are not just implemented, they are 'enacted.' With this term, they emphasise that policy texts are interpreted and translated into practices in creative ways by different policy actors "in relation to history and to context with the resources available." Interestingly, this theoretical view of policies highlights the situatedness and materiality of policy. That is, this view emphasises the ways in which policies may play out given local social context, as well as material factors such as infrastructure, budgets, staff, and the professional values endorsed by teachers and schools. Hence, from the perspective of policy enactment theory education policies are not simply either good, bad, effective or ineffective. There are different circumstances and factors that come into play, one of which is teachers' agency and ingenuity. So even in very rigid policies, there will always be room for reinterpretation and modification.

In accordance with these views and in order to address the pitfalls of both neoclassical and historical-structural perspectives, Ricento and Hornberger (1996) use the term 'language policy onion' as a metaphor to illustrate and explain how policies consist of multiple layers: national, institutional and classroom. Interestingly, contrary to the view of Tollefson, these scholars argue that policies are actually modified as they go down these multiple layers either by effects of various interpretations or by more formal means involving new documentation. Thus, Ricento and Hornberger go on to argue, teachers are placed in the centre of the onion

as it is in their classroom practices where education policies are either affirmed or resisted. From such perspective, it can even be argued that in a sense teachers may act as policy makers in their process of (re)interpretation and translation of policies into practices (Menken & García, 2010). This resonates precisely with the view of policy enactment where teachers can be seen as active actors when they are able to accommodate policies to the circumstances and resources available. Hence, even in situations of highly structured ELT policies, like those implemented in Colombia so far, teachers will still have room to produce social change by following strategies such as the ones Crookes (2013) proposes in his model of critical language pedagogy, discussed above. The idea that language policies are multidimensional, therefore, is of heightened importance in my research as it opens up an alternative more flexible understanding of policy, where everyone is involved –especially teachers and their practices.

3.1.5 Interrogating the politics of English

Stemming from the aims of this research, it is also worth discussing critical accounts of the wider political, economic and cultural implications of the spread of English around the world in an era of globalisation and the effects this spread has had on language policy. This issue has been of interest to SLE researchers who have investigated the 'imperialism' of English (Canagarajah, 1999; Phillipson, 1992). The work of Phillipson (1992), for instance, attempts to examine the history of the expansion of English around the world and explain how English (and no other language) has come to be legitimised as the most valued international language. He suggests that the expansion of English has served to a large extent as a 'neo-colonialist' and 'imperialist' mechanism that favours the political, economic and cultural hegemonic interests from dominant groups of the centre – particularly he refers to the UK and the USA – over those groups in the periphery. This work, however, has been heavily criticized. Canagarajah (1995), for example, discusses lack of substantiated evidence in its claims, several overgeneralisations on the state of affairs of the expansion of English in the 'Third World', and the need to include accounts of lived experiences in classrooms in the diverse reality in the 'periphery'. In addition, Berns et al. (1998) are critical of Phillipson's work for what they describe as an aggressive and patronising rhetorical style he uses to make claims.

Criticism of Phillipson's work has also included the idea that communities of the periphery have not been passive recipients of language policies and hegemonic forces; on the contrary, they have been active agents (Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Kachru & Smith, 2008). Brutt-Griffler (2002) argues that the spread of English around the world precisely reflects the struggle of people in the periphery to fight imperialism. That is to say, by the integration of English for education, trading or international communication[13] (among other factors) in different communities around the world, new varieties of English have emerged (see Kachru & Smith, 2008). These varieties call for a pluralisation of English that does not necessarily respond to the imperialist interests of the "centre".

Despite this criticism, Phillipson's (1992) work has been very important inasmuch as it initiated a line of inquiry other scholars have decided to take further. That is certainly the case of Canagarajah (1999), whose longitudinal critical ethnography in the rural community and ELT classroom in Sri Lanka stresses the 'creative ways' in which students and teachers resist some of the unfavourable ideological agendas of the expansion of English in the periphery. From a rather micro stand (the classroom), Canagarajah concentrates on "the discourses students and teachers develop to variously accommodate, escape, oppose, and/or transform the forces of domination they confront in the classroom" (p.79). To that end, he scrutinises the theory and practice of ELT in classrooms in the periphery. Findings in Canagarajah's study suggest that, in the case of students, resistance takes place not by opposing the learning of the language but by challenging "the curriculum, teaching materials and the discourses embodied in them" (p. 95). Canagarajah reports how students employ several behavioural strategies to resist ideological domination by centre curriculum and teaching materials. For example, they negotiate foreign meanings by mediating those meanings with their cultural background, inviting the teacher to employ other methodologies, favour their learning strategies, and use the L1. In the case of teachers, resistance to Western ELT assumptions and dominant discourses is performed by, amongst other strategies, making a few adjustments to their traditional ways of teaching in the name of novel pedagogies; and

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[13] For examples on this see Kirkpatrick (2010). This handbook reports cases of how English has been given different statuses and values in countries around the world and how this has helped to consolidate other varieties of English.

by underscoring the inappropriateness of novel methods over other pedagogies that have worked well over the years or by claiming not to find much difference from their regular practices.

The resistance Canagarajah talks about has also been confirmed by other researchers. They have shown that teachers resort to solving the clashes that emerge between the principles of mainstream pedagogies such as communicative language teaching (CLT) with their local cultural norms and diverse contextual factors by either ignoring, adapting, or reinterpreting those methodologies in the light of their own values and experiences as reported by Chowdhury and Le Ha (2008) and Littlewood (2007). On the whole, in conjunction with Crookes's, Kumaravadivelu's as well as Ricento and Hornberger's work discussed earlier, all these studies highlight the agency of both teachers and students that are important to be considered when scrutinising teaching practices in the light of language policies.

3.1.6 Negotiating the global and the local

Another issue in which a critical perspective on ELT is pertinent for this study is that of the counterbalance that there needs to be between global dominant discourses in the field and local realities. In tune with his previous work, Canagarajah (2005) questions dominant models and discourses on language teaching and learning practices that in the name of globalisation appear to delegitimise the heterogeneity of locally grounded meanings around ELT. In this fashion, he calls for a 'reexamination' and 'rescue' of the local. He makes the case that the local can be seen as an 'equal partner' in the reconstitution of discourses of language norms, expertise, curriculum, methodology and materials. Thus, he calls for a shift from a 'hierarchical' traditional and dominant approach to a 'levelled' alternative approach to ELT. In this shift, he advocates a recognition of local, 'nativized' varieties of English (as opposed to traditional 'native' varieties), valuing knowledge produced locally (that can come into negotiation with established knowledge), enhancing postmethod practices (and avoiding top-down instrumentally-led methods) and promoting the design of material that is locally relevant. Canagarajah's proposal embeds the idea that pedagogical actions should not be regulated by traditionally valued varieties of English (i.e. American or British) or by specific

teaching strategies. Instead his proposal gives way to a pluralised locally sensitive understanding of ELT.

This shift would imply an important step towards an ethical integration of ELT in countries like Colombia where a hierarchical approach still appears to be the norm. This has been a matter of concern for Colombian scholars who have regretted the fact that local knowledge (e.g. teachers, institutions, initiatives) has played a secondary role in the implementation of a national policy of ELT by giving the leading role to foreign institutions or adopting foreign models unreservedly (González, 2009; Usma Wilches, 2009). They have also denounced the local insensitivity, especially with regard to the goals of this policy, taking account of the lack of appropriate conditions to implement it (Cárdenas, 2006; Guerrero, 2008; Sánchez & Obando, 2008).

However, this ethical integration does not imply a radical rejection of the ideas underlying a hierarchical approach to language teaching. Instead, it implies, in Canagarajah's view, bringing those dominant ideas into negotiation with local values. In this spirit of negotiation, local scholars have highlighted the tensions and opportunities that the promotion of English has generated in Colombia (De-Mejía, 2011; González, 2010). As discussed in chapter 2, the most critical tensions include the reductionist understanding of bilingualism (Spanish-English) promoted in the country, the marketisation of ELT, as well as the uncritical adoption of the CEFR and international professional models for ELT such as ICELT or TKT to language teaching practices (see De-Mejía, 2011; González, 2010). While the debate about these and other tensions ought to continue as a way to 'reclaim the local', Gonzalez and De-Mejía also highlight the opportunities the ELT policies in Colombia bring along. In this fashion, in relation to possibilities, González (2010) refers to the inclusion of a Colombian English variety in immersion programmes (for further on this see section 2.4), the construction of local knowledge in the field and its dissemination through publications in English, the possibility of a collaborative construction of ELT agendas between policy makers and scholars. In the same vein, De-Mejía (2011) also highlights the chance to enhance awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity. In any case, thanks to critical approaches to dominant global homogenising discourses that come with the spread of English world-wide,

as Canagarajah (2005) says, it is possible to position the local as an equal partner and as a result, strive for a democratisation of practices.

All in all, on the basis of all the critical work discussed in this section, taking a critical pedagogy stance to interrogate issues of power and justice in relation to ELT practices and discourses in Colombia means, as Pennycook's work highlights, analysing those practices and discourses in connection to social issues. In doing so, Kumaravadivelu's and Tollefson's work reminds us that language pedagogy, language teacher education and language policy can be seen as scenarios where social transformation can be triggered. Although these goals may appear to be idealistic, Crookes insists that they are possible to achieve by taking small steps. In the specific case of Colombian rural areas, for example, an initial important step to take and goal to achieve is to integrate ELT into relevant and pertinent educational projects. For this to happen, following Canagarajah, it is important to enhance the role of the local knowledge and realities and bring it into negotiation with the global. All these ideas permeate the present endeavour of researching rural English teachers' experiences through a critical lens.

3.1.7 Summary of part 1

In this first part, I have discussed the importance of adopting a critical stance in researching ELT as an activity that is engaged with a social reality. Particularly I have discussed some key developments in the fields of language education and language policy that illustrate the ways in which a critical approach may inform the aims of this research. Having illustrated some of the ways in which ELT can be associated with broader issues in society, in the second part of this chapter, I shall discuss the notion of social justice in detail. In the third section, I shall move on to review the literature on teacher identity and show how I am operationalising the concept for my work.

3.2 Social justice

The previous discussion has shed light on critical theoretical developments that allow us to see the potential of SLE as being a highly socially engaged activity. Following this view, in this second part of the chapter, I go on to discuss how matters of social inequality have been and could further be researched in relation to the ELT classroom. I start with a discussion of general ideas about the multifaceted notion of social justice. I then refer to theories that have the potential to open up alternative perspectives on the ways in which social justice can be researched in the field. Finally, on the basis of these theories, I point to the importance of taking a step further in studying the relation between language education and social reality by explicitly considering the socioeconomic and cultural structures as well as human development as relevant categories to do so.

3.2.1 Theories of social justice

The notion of social justice has been widely explored and theorised. Initial reflections upon its meaning and scope come from the contributions of philosophers such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Based on the reflections of these thinkers – who discussed the idea of justice around questions such as what is it to be just? Who is justice for? How can justice be done? – different approaches and taxonomies for understanding justice have emerged. Some of them closely relate the notion of justice to the accomplishment of pleasure and satisfaction of needs (Mill, Bentham, & Ryan, 1987; Mill & Goromby, 1971); others to systems of production that prevent exploitation (see Marx & Fowkes, 1990), or to the responsibility social institutions have to distribute goods in such a way that it favours the least advantaged groups in society (Rawls, 1971). Similarly, other scholars define justice in terms of opportunities to develop one's 'capabilities' (Nussbaum, 2006, 2011; Sen, 2009), or in terms of distribution of economic resources and the recognition of cultural difference (Fraser, 1997, 2008b).

This diversity in the conceptualisation of social justice has also involved multiple disciplines and issues. The scope of social justice is a matter of concern in disciplines such as philosophy,

sociology, economics, politics, and as I emphasise in this study, applied linguistics and bilingualism. In its theorisation, social justice has been associated with a wide range of factors. It is frequently addressed in relation to the political organisation and social order of a given society, the distribution of wealth, opportunities for human development, recognition of minority groups, equity, diversity as well as access to and purposes of education, amongst other factors.

As I have noted, this study investigates the relationship between ELT and issues of social (in)equality caused by the socioeconomic structure of Colombia, the cultural subsidiary role of rural areas, and the lack of opportunities for human development. Therefore, I will particularly focus the discussion of the concept of social justice on two theories that build their claims on these categories.

3.2.2 Social justice as redistribution and recognition

The first theory is a 'two-dimensional'[14] approach to social justice that is concerned with both socioeconomic structures and cultural hierarchies (Fraser, 1996, 1997, 2000, 2008a; Fraser & Honneth, 2003). Fraser uses the notion of parity of participation as the guiding principle for her theory. Following this notion, justice is understood as a social state of affairs where people – regardless of their skin colour, gender, sexual orientation, cultural background, place of origin, or economic situation – are respected and provided with the conditions to participate as peers in having access to material resources (e.g. well-paid jobs, education, healthcare, infrastructure). From this point of view, "[o]vercoming injustice means dismantling institutionalised obstacles that prevent some people from participating on a par with others as full partners in social interaction" (Fraser, 2009, p. 16).

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[14] As I discuss in this section, Fraser started to develop her theory of social justice with a focus on socioeconomic and cultural dimensions of social affairs, hence the adjective two-dimensional. However, later on, she added a political dimension to her approach, including the concept of political participation in order to account for issues of social justice that go beyond the boundaries of nation states (Fraser, 2005). In this study, nonetheless, I am considering her early theoretical proposal as the issues this thesis is concerned with relate more directly to her original two dimensions.

In this approach to justice, Fraser explicates, there are two broad dimensions in which parity of participation can be impeded: economic structures and cultural statuses. She coins the terms socioeconomic 'redistribution' and cultural 'recognition' to refer to the issues of social (in)equality that arise in each of these dimensions respectively. In the realm of redistribution, Fraser refers to a traditional socioeconomic understanding of social justice that deals with a fair distribution of "divisible goods, usually economic in nature" (2009, p.3). In this realm, Fraser further asserts that social injustices can take the form of, for instance, 'exploitation' (having the fruits of one's labour appropriated for the benefit of others), 'economic marginalisation' (being confined to undesirable or poorly paid work or being denied access to income-generating labour altogether) and 'deprivation' (being denied an adequate material standard of living (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 13).

In the realm of recognition, Fraser refers to claims for social justice that are rooted in cultural norms. Injustices of cultural recognition are caused by lesser respect, esteem and prestige assigned to particular social groups. Examples of this include 'cultural domination' (being subjected to patterns of interpretation and communication that are associated with another culture and are alien and/or hostile to one's own), 'non recognition' (being rendered invisible via the authoritative representational, communicative, and interpretative practices of one's own culture) and 'disrespect' (being routinely maligned or disparaged in stereotypic public cultural representations and/or in everyday life interactions) (Fraser & Honneth, 2003).

Redistribution and recognition are concepts that have been traditionally presented as mutually exclusive. The former accentuates an egalitarianism in society based on distribution of economic goods. The latter encompasses ideal reciprocal relations among citizens, who are seen as equals. Fraser, however, contends that these two principles can work complementarily. In fact, she argues that only by considering these two dimensions is it possible to deal with current social struggles that involve both material elements and status hierarchies (Fraser, 1996, 1997).

Fraser also maintains that both 'redistribution' and 'recognition' are the generic terms that represent the remedies for each case of social injustice. That is, socioeconomic injustices (exploitation, economic marginalisation, deprivation), or what she calls maldistribution, require a *redistribution* or a restructuring of resources. Likewise, cultural injustices (cultural

domination, non-recognition, disrespect) or what she calls 'misrecognition' can be alleviated by cultural or symbolic changes, in other words, by means of cultural *recognition*. This involves a higher appreciation of identities that, for different reasons, have been neglected or disrespected.

The two paradigms hold different perceptions of those collectivities subjected to injustices. In the view of redistribution, injustices affect groups of people that are defined economically by a given relation with the market or means of production (e.g. working class, immigrants that hold a status of subclass, women whose work is not paid or as is the case this research discusses, rural workers subjected to precarious economic activities). In the realm of recognition, injustices affect groups of people that hold lower levels of esteem and respect in relation to other groups in society. For example, minority groups that are conferred lower status (gays, lesbians, and racial groups) who are usually considered different and are marginalised. Furthermore, the two paradigms also hold different ideas on group differences. In redistribution, these differences are injustices that are the product of unfair political economy. It seeks to abolish these class differences, not to recognise them. As far as recognition is concerned, differences are seen as cultural variations that have been given value hierarchies. Hence, differences are to be valued not abolished. Despite all these different implications of the two terms, Fraser manages to reconcile the two philosophical trends to think of social justice into one single and sound theory.

As I further discuss in section 3.2.4, the application of this theory to the field of rural education is useful to scrutinise the nature of resource distribution to rural schools, and to examine the extent to which rural communities take part in decision making regarding the use/investment of these resources. At the same time, it is possible to interrogate the connections between education processes and access to economic activities of rural dwellers. In direct connection with the realm of recognition, this theory can also be used to analyse the asymmetrical social statuses that have been awarded to rural and urban groups in Colombia (see chapter 5).

3.2.3 Social justice as human development

Aside from Fraser's notions of recognition and redistribution, a humanistic view on social justice (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 2001, 2009), the second theory, appears to be a useful framework to further scrutinise the relationship between second language education on the one hand and human development opportunities on the other. Scholars such as Amartya Sen (2009) and Martha Nussbaum (2011) propose a theory of social justice that enhances the capabilities and freedoms people have to live the lives they are really able to lead. In this idea of justice there is a central interplay between freedom, human development, capabilities and opportunities. A general argument is that social justice is achieved through human development. In viewing development from a humanistic perspective, Sen offers a more comprehensive account of progress that goes beyond the growth of gross national product, the rise in personal incomes, industrialisation, technological advance, or social modernisation (Sen, 2001). Instead, Sen argues that these conventional ways of looking at development are only part, albeit important, of the means for human development. That is, an increase in the growth of national product or industrialisation, for example, are good indicators of development only when those factors are translated into more opportunities or freedoms for people to shape their lives in the way they freely choose to.

Following this argument, a precondition for social justice is the freedom for people to have the option to develop their capabilities (e.g. education, health care, political participation). Thus, from a humanistic perspective, social justice takes place when people, as agents of their own lives, have the opportunity to pursue not only the fulfilment of their needs but also their objectives in terms of all the 'doings' and 'beings' individuals value (Sen, 2009). Social justice, in this sense, underscores the importance of having opportunities to access, for instance, adequate standards of education, health and material living in an environment of high appreciation of difference where individuals are able to make decisions on issues governing their own lives (Nussbaum, 2011). From this perspective, striving for social justice involves attempts to remove different types of 'unfreedoms' such as poverty, tyranny, poor economic opportunities and social deprivation (Sen, 2001).

Although Sen explicitly states that the focus of his humanistic approach is mainly information-oriented rather than offering a set of rules, Martha Nussbaum expands the

capabilities approach to social justice and offers a perspective that aims at framing a proposal for how society should deal with issues of social justice. On the same grounds Sen underpins his proposal, Nussbaum states that in knowing what people are actually able to be and to do (their capabilities) and by offering them real possibilities to develop them (their functionings) people will be able to have dignified lives that are worth living (Nussbaum, 2011, p.6). Thus, in an attempt to offer a straightforward proposal for social justice, Nussbaum establishes a set of ten basic broad capabilities any 'decent government' should guarantee its citizens to have (see Nussbaum, 2011).

It is also worth acknowledging the theoretical tension between the capabilities approach and Fraser's theory of social justice. Fraser is of the view that any theoretical approximation to the notion of social justice that focuses either on cultural or socioeconomic issues risks being incomplete (Fraser, 1997; Fraser & Honneth, 2003). The capabilities approach is a theory that seems to be largely concerned with socioeconomic matters. However, for the purposes of this study, the fact that these socioeconomic issues are dealt with from the point of view of human development and not just on distribution of goods provides a different vantage point that Fraser's account lacks. It is for this reason that I have decided to use these theories complementarily.

3.2.4 Social justice and ELT

In my view, the complementarity of these approaches can actually offer a strong theoretical basis to open up a line of inquiry in SLE concerned with a comprehensive account of the interconnection between social affairs and the teaching and learning of second languages. Taking the case of Colombia, for example, Fraser's theory is useful to examine how economic marginalisation and deprivation evident in the socioeconomic constraints of rural areas, underequipped schools, lack of resources, lack of profitable economic activities and even poorly remunerated teachers[15] (see Matijasevic, 2014; Perfetti, 2003; PNUD, 2011) are social injustices that do not escape the ELT classroom. Similarly, regarding the sociocultural dimension, Fraser's work serves as a point of reference to analyse the "lesser esteem and

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[15] These aspects have been described in more detail in chapter 2.

prestige [awarded, for instance, to rural communities] compared to other groups in society" (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 14). In the same vein, Fraser's proposal offers theoretical grounds to analyse the misrecognition of rural classrooms and English language teachers in the implementation of national language policies as further instances of social injustice.

Other concrete examples of how Fraser's theory is applicable to the field of second language education, and applied sociolinguistics, are found in the work undertaken by Zotzmann and Hernández-Zamora (2013) and Piller (2016). Zotzmann and Hernández-Zamora (2013) describe how the so-called 'cultural turn' in the 1980s constituted an 'unhelpful divide' between discourses and practices of cultural recognition and socioeconomic redistribution in the field. These scholars argue that in the field of language education, there has been a lot of emphasis given to intercultural communication (recognition) and little has been done to act critically towards unfair social structures built on neoliberal principles (redistribution). According to them, this divide proves unhelpful since the mere cultural recognition of the *other* does not contribute to reaching an understanding of "why inequality persists and how it is reproduced" (2013, p. 362). These scholars call for a greater engagement of the field of second language education with issues of unfair socioeconomic structures in society. Fraser's theory seems to offer appropriate theoretical ground to do so. In fact, informed by Fraser´s theory, Piller (2016) develops a very sound book-length analysis of "the social consequences of linguistic diversity" (p. 3). That is, she analyses how language intersects with social justice by exploring the struggles of members of linguistic minorities for fair work and education opportunities as well as for health and legal services and civic participation in different contexts. By presenting different case studies both from western and nonwestern countries, she demonstrates how linguistic diversity is far from being neutral; it is usually associated with linguistic stratification and subordination. In other words, the ways in which linguistic diversity is being dealt with in contemporary neoliberal societies tends to represent serious economic, cultural and political disadvantages for minority groups.

On the other hand, drawing on the humanistic approach to social justice, as is the interest of this study, it is possible to scrutinise the relevance and pertinence of both language practices and policies in relation to people's diverse realities, values and aspirations. In this fashion, Sen's (2009) ideas of justice are useful to examine how the goals of those practices and

policies may represent or not real opportunities for human development for learners, teachers and community in general.

The theories of social justice outlined above may also represent the chance to take a step further in the ways in which concerns for social inequality have been integrated in the fields of second language teaching, bilingualism, and multilingualism. Research work in these fields appear to have taken a rather disciplinary focus. That is, researchers in these fields have discussed problems of inequality mainly from the perspective that there are marked differences and unbalanced opportunities as well as statuses between the languages spoken within a nation or region (see e.g. Harbert, McConnell-Ginet, Miller, & Whitman, 2009; Hawkins, 2011; Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson, Mohanty, & Pan, 2009). In this fashion, different sorts of issues have been explored. These include: the specialised teacher training needed to teach languages to minority groups (Hawkins, 2011), linguistic discrimination (Mohanty, 2009); tensions between linguistic diversity and the dominant status of English (Phillipson, 2009), the mismatches between neoliberal and social justice ideologies in teacher education (Clarke & Morgan, 2011) as well as the ways in which poverty affects language survival and the role of language in determining the economic status of speakers (Harbert et al., 2009). These attempts to deal with inequality have contributed to raising awareness of different types of conflicts that emerge when languages come in contact, and to pointing out needs in teacher education programmes to sort out those conflicts. These attempts, however, can further benefit from considering issues of distribution of socioeconomic resources, local cultural particularities and opportunities for human development as relevant categories to study social justice in relation to SLE. In this view, the connection between social justice and SLE come to be concerned not just with the relationships among languages but also with the wider social implications of language learning and teaching.

These categories can even serve to complement the theoretical proposals of scholars such as Pennycook (1991, 2001), Canagarajah (1999, 2001), Crookes (2013) and Kumaravadivelu (2003, 2012), discussed earlier. The work of these scholars stresses the importance of integrating social context into the language classroom in an attempt to make language education an empowering activity. Following Zotzmann and Hernández-Zamora (2013), it is evident that the proposals of these scholars appear to contribute greatly to the promotion of

social transformation in terms of cultural recognition – by addressing issues such as cultural domination, hierarchies and non-recognition. However, less explicit connections can be found regarding the socio-economic norms of social groups or values in terms of human development. Although these factors might have been implicit in Pennycook's call to address social problems in SLE, in Canagarajah's reclamation of the local and perhaps in Crookes's and Kumaravadivelu's critical views on language pedagogy, well defined parameters to do so seem to be missing. In this context, Fraser's, Sen's and Nussbaum's frameworks offer clear categories to take a step further in researching the linkages between language education and the broader social reality.

This study attempts to take this step. Although this exploration could take many forms and perspectives (e.g. students, teachers, the community, policy makers), in this case, the focus to critically scrutinise practices and discourses in SLE in relation to larger social issues is on teachers and their identities. This is the topic of discussion in the third and last part of this chapter.

3.3 Teacher identities

So far, I have discussed the importance of adopting a critical stance when attempting to research ELT in relation to social inequality. In the same vein, I have discussed how two particular theories of social justice appear to provide a platform to further inform research concerns for social inequality in the field of language education. Now, I turn to discuss the concept of teacher identity. This concept is particularly relevant in this study since through the study of teachers' identities – their understandings of their profession, their social role, as well as of the sociocultural and political context, and how in light of such understandings they act – it can be possible to make more visible the connections between ELT and social issues in this research. In what follows, first, I review some of the current tendencies in researching language teacher identities. In relation to this discussion, I then outline the theoretical perspective on identity informing this study and define the notion of teacher identity, as adopted in this thesis. After that, I explain how alternative terminology to address the notion of identity is useful to add analytical precision to this concept in this study.

Considering the aims of this thesis, I then discuss the relationship between teacher identity and positioning. I end the chapter with some conclusions about all the theoretical work discussed.

3.3.1 Teacher identity research

The study of language teacher identity (LTI) should be understood in light of over two decades of research (e.g. P. A. Duff & Uchida, 1997; Morgan, 2004; Morgan & Clarke, 2011; Pavlenko, 2003; Tsui, 2007; Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005) and important recent developments that have come in the form of special editions of prestigious journals on the topic (De Costa & Norton, 2017; Varghese, Motha, Trent, Park, & Reeves, 2016) or very related areas such as teacher cognition (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015) as well as in edited volumes produced by both leading scholars in the field (see Barkhuizen, 2017b) and self-declared 'non-experts' (see Cheung, Said, & Park, 2014). The momentum that the field has achieved has been the result of the recognition of the fact that what happens in the classroom is, to a large extent, a reflection of the teachers' own understandings of their profession in relation to the larger social, cultural and political context (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015; Miller, 2009; Varghese et al., 2005).

As a result of this work, it is now commonly accepted that the role of the teacher is not limited to that of a technician who must follow a given set of pre-established methodological principles to achieve certain learning goals. Instead, scholars interested in the study of teacher identity highlight that teachers' ideas of who they are and of what teaching should be directly impact daily practices in the classroom (Barkhuizen, 2016; Day, Kington, Stobart, & Sammons, 2006; Varghese et al., 2016). This is how the growing body of research on teacher identity has been concerned with its intricate relationship with a variety of factors, such as teachers' cognition (what teachers think, know, believe, and do) (Borg, 2009; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015), experiences (both learning and teaching), and practices (Flores & Day, 2006; Olsen, 2016; Sayer, 2012; Scholes Gillings de González, 2011), emotions (Song, 2016; D. Wolff & De Costa, 2017), as well as discourses and positioning (Kayi-Aydar, 2015; Morgan, 2004; Pavlenko, 2003). In these cases, it has frequently been necessary to also relate identity

formation to contextual conditions as well as to social, cultural, and political factors mediating education.

In the context of a large body of literature on LTI, and in an attempt to systematize recent theoretical innovations, De Costa and Norton (2017) identify three tendencies they call: i) the ecological turn, ii) teacher socialization and investment, and iii) teacher affect. I will draw on this systematization in order to map out current trends in the field. The ecological turn includes the work of scholars such as Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015) and Burns, Freeman, and Edwards (2015), who, referring particularly to the field of teacher cognition, propose to extend the boundaries from which teachers' inner lives have been researched. In particularly relevant is the work of Kubanyiova and Feryock as they make a compelling case for a shift from a mainstream cognitivist top-down approach to the study of teachers' mental lives (Borg, 2006) to a bottom-up, open flexible and alternative social approach. In doing so, they propose an emergent 'sense-making-in-action' perspective of teacher cognition that supports connections with contexts, practices and learning processes. They propose a perspective of cognition they term as "ecologies of language teachers' inner lives" (which caters for what teachers do, why they do it and the impact it has on their students' learning). At the same time, they borrow from psychology and philosophy the term intentionality as a more open concept allowing exploration of connections between "mental processes and related purposeful actions" (p. 436). Furthermore, it is interesting to note that they describe how teachers' inner lives are also in the making as ideas take discursive shape in given circumstances and interaction with given audiences.

In other words, the ecological perspective on teachers' mental lives could contribute significantly to a comprehensive, grass-root, open and interpretative approach to LTI, which opens the possibilities of new perspectives and the inclusion of multiple factors that influence how teachers come to understand themselves. In fact, Kubanyiova and Feryock's proposal offers valuable theoretical ground to further support a variety of work on LTI that stems from the premise that identities are not psychological static constructs but dynamic, in conflict, socially constructed and thus tied to contextual conditions, and social interaction (e.g. P. A. Duff & Uchida, 1997; Norton, 2013; Tsui, 2007; Varghese et al., 2005). Some of this work will be discussed in the reminder of this chapter.

Relatedly, drawing on sociocultural theories (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), which also offer critiques to cognitivist views of learning and teaching, the second strand of research on LTI (teacher socialization and investment) has tended to explore how teachers' identities are (re)shaped over time in relation to people and contexts. An example of this can be found in Tsui's (2007) longitudinal narrative inquiry on identity formation of a teacher in China, during the boom of communicative language teaching (CLT). Informed by Wenger's (1998) notion of communities of practice, Tsui shows how identity formation proves to be highly mediated by social and institutional structures the teacher did not necessarily feel comfortable with. Minfang, the participant in her study, developed professionally as a teacher who strongly believed in eclecticism rather than in mainstream CLT, being eagerly promoted in his work setting. Thus, his teaching practices, on many occasions, resembled his personal beliefs rather than the institutional discourses. However, as a member of the academic community of the institution, he could not always escape from the policies and had to adopt CLT practices, which in turn implied a negotiation of meanings in his self-image as a teacher.

Another example of this can be found in Kanno and Stuart (2011), who carried out longitudinal case studies of teacher identity formation of two graduate students in an MATESOL programme as they developed their first year of ESL teaching in a North American University. Illuminating their findings with the notion of situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991), Kanno and Stuart observed that "identity and practice are mutually constitutive: Practice shapes identity, whereas identity, in turn, affects practice" (p. 245). That is, through teaching experience, the two teachers could gradually establish their sense of professional identity, which at the same time represented significant changes in their practice. In a similar vein, and extending the concept of language learning investment (Norton, 1995), there are some studies exploring the notion of teacher investment (Reeves, 2009; Waller, Wethers, & De Costa, 2017). Reeves carried out a case study of how Neal, a first-year teacher at a US American school, constructed his identity in relation to his English language learners (ELLs). Her findings suggest that the way Neal positioned his students (as not different from any other mainstream student, competent in English) was an investment in his own professional identity, as his positioning of students was intended to construct and reaffirm his own preferred identity as a 'natural', 'irreverent' and 'effective' teacher. In relation to this, Waller et al. (2017) present the auto-reflective and critical accounts of what

language teachers' investments in their praxis (balance between theory and practice) should look like.

Interestingly and well-deservedly, the third theoretical innovation refers to a growing interest in exploring LTI in relation to teachers' emotions (Barcelos, 2017; Loh & Liew, 2016; Song, 2016; D. Wolff & De Costa, 2017). This body of work attempts to do justice to the intertwined relationship between how teachers feel, what they believe and the images they construct of themselves, because as Barcelos (2017, p. 147) states, "the more central a belief, and more connected to [teachers'] emotions, the more influential it is to their identities." The studies of the emotional realities of language teaching have focused on the conflicts and contradictions teachers may have to face with regards to workloads, external pressures (Loh & Liew, 2016), and the uncomfortable situations that may emerge when teaching children who have had the chance to learn English in an English speaking country (Song, 2016). Similarly, other studies focus on the ways in which some emotional challenges might be assimilated as opportunities to construct positive self-images as professionals (D. Wolff & De Costa, 2017).

Loh and Liew's study of 26 English and literature secondary school teachers in Singapore suggests that teachers' practices are mediated by heavy emotional burdens: their passion for their work not being reciprocated by students, stress caused by marking and the external pressures upon them imposed from high-stakes testing, as well as the need to adapt their teaching to the cultural diversity of their students. Song's study of the emotional reaction of a group of English language teachers in Korea vis-à-vis the level of English of young students who have had the chance to study English abroad shows how teachers react differently to situations in which their students may come to have a higher level of proficiency than themselves. Findings show that teachers use 'cover stories' – shared publicly – as experts and policy enforcers who see the skills students acquired abroad as not enough to succeed in all areas of the curriculum. However, at the same time their 'secret stories' in the data show that due to their anxiety and lack of confidence in their English proficiency and the cultural belief that teachers should know all, these teachers sometimes do tend to feel challenged and inferior. As reported, these emotional conflicts led teachers to experience some transformation in their identity: they challenged the cultural belief of teachers as all-knowing,

and they decided to be more open and empathetic with students' strengths and needs. On a more positive note, Wolff and De costa's study shows how emotions influence the identity development of a novice Bangladeshi teacher enrolled on an MA TESOL programme in the US. The study demonstrates that Puja, the teacher concerned, could successfully channel several emotional conflicts derived from: i) inadequate teaching conditions and resources in her home country, ii) not feeling comfortable with her not native-like pronunciation, iii) experiencing a drop of her teaching status in the US, and iv) facing a more democratic style of teaching than she was used to. She addressed the first two challenges by accommodating to the circumstances and using those challenges as factors that fueled her desire to become an effective teacher and go beyond her comfort zone. She solved the other two challenges by accepting and embracing both the new teacher status assigned and the different pedagogic styles.

This section has offered an outlook of current tendencies in the study of LTI. All the work on LTI discussed underscores the idea that a comprehensive study of who teachers are requires attention to a greater myriad of factors than initially considered. Some of these factors include teachers' emotions, their experiences, their forms of participation in specific communities of practice, teachers' own convictions and investments, and external pressures. The consideration of this wider range of factors, at the same time, highlights the situatedness and instability of teacher identity, as the sense of who teachers are is likely to change across time and space. In other words, as shown, there is an intricate relationship between the environment and ways in which teachers may come to understand themselves and their practices (Varghese et al., 2016). In the next section I discuss how these tendencies bring to the fore the importance of a sociocultural view of identity, and how this view informs this PhD research.

3.3.2 A sociocultural view of teacher identity

The recent theoretical innovations discussed above converge in drawing on a sociocultural view on identity construction (teacher socialization and investment, as well as teacher affect) or on an extension of it (the ecological turn). These innovations detach from individualistic

psychological approaches to understand the meaning making process of who one is and underscore the importance of considering such process as a dynamic situated practice that develops in relation to specific social contexts in negotiation and interaction with others. This is also a perspective on teacher identity adopted in my research. More concretely, by a sociocultural view on teacher identity in this research I mean that the sense of who teachers are is the result of the interwoven connection between situated localised, cultural, and political structures and teachers' (re)configuration of meanings around how and why they should develop their practice. Considering the previous discussion, it can be said that such connection is, therefore, highly influenced by the culture and politics of work-settings, daily interactions, emotions as well as past, present and expected future experiences. It follows that teachers' identifications are crafted by how external factors come into negotiation with personal values and in turn establish their positionality in the larger educational landscape (I will discuss in detail the relevance of positionality in my research in section 3.3.5). In other words, as Edwards and Burns (2016, p. 736) highlight, from a sociocultural point of view,

> self is a social construct that involves the individual negotiating his or her sense of identity within his or her environment (social, institutional, and political) through interaction between perceptions, actions, and the environment. The ecological concept of affordances is also relevant: opportunities that the environment presents, which may or may not be acted on. Perception of these affordances is guided by activity.

It is worth noting the idea of 'contextual' affordances pointed out by Edwards and Burns. Not only are identities configured in relation to resolving conflicts and tensions, they are also constructed in relation to the contextual opportunities teachers may find, create or ignore as they develop their practice (see e.g. D. Wolff & De Costa, 2017 discussed earlier).

In addition to the studies reviewed above, it is worth highlighting what perhaps is one of the earliest studies of language teacher identity informed by this view (P. A. Duff & Uchida, 1997). In their ethnographic account of the factors that influence the identities formation of a group of four teachers in a language school in Japan, Duff and Uchida found that the school culture, the classroom culture, the curriculum and the textbook were key factors governing

the construction of meanings around themselves as teachers and their profession. Duff and Uchida observe that the contents of the syllabi, the teaching materials provided, as well as institutional expectations towards the teachers, engaged them in a continuous (re)negotiation of their roles and images as teachers. Furthermore, with regards to the role of experiences in the configuration of teacher identities, the same study indicates that the diverse past learning, professional and intercultural involvements of teachers have an impact on present understandings of who they are and of their practices. The study suggests that teachers' histories as learners, and as teachers in different contexts shape their beliefs about teaching and in turn their decisions and actions performed in the classroom.

These findings are consonant with general studies on teacher identity (not just focused on language teachers). For example, working with rural teachers of different subjects the work undertaken by Flores and Day (2006) illustrates the changing nature of teachers' identification in different contexts at different points in time. Flores and Day observed the work of a group of fourteen recently graduated teachers for a period of two years for the purpose of exploring processes of identity formation and transformation. As part of the findings, the study emphasises the interplay between personal experiences and the contextual influences of the workplace in the formation of teacher identity. The study shows how along their first two years of professional work, teachers' ideas about what being a teacher involves changed as they were required to work in different places, and as they integrated to a particular community and a school setting with a given institutional culture. In general, their study suggests that teachers' values and beliefs about being an effective teacher are continuously (re)shaped by situated experiences. Another example can be found in Olsen's (2016) longitudinal study of identity formation and negotiation. He worked for a period of two years with a high-school teacher, Liz, during the last year of her training programme and the first year of her teaching career. During this time, Olsen reports on how Liz's initial ideas of what effective teaching is changed as she started to find out that her profession was a lot more complex than she had imagined. Particularly, Liz's identity as a teacher proved conflicting as she had to reconcile both competing teaching pedagogies (student centeredness and teacher centeredness) as well as her ideas about the teacher she wanted to be and the teacher her students needed her to be.

On the whole, it can be said that the challenges of the sociocultural turn (K. E. Johnson, 2006) on the study of teacher identity have represented remarkable developments. This is the case not only for the growing amount of research in the field informed by sociocultural principles, but also for the possibility this framework opens up for developing more interdisciplinary work. By considering a wider number of factors influencing the shaping of identities, simultaneously the door is also opened for the inclusion of a more varied range of outlooks and contributions from other disciplines. This is precisely the invitation of De Costa and Norton (2017). With a focus on language teaching and teachers, De costa and Norton rightly seek to extend an earlier proposal of the Douglas Fir Group (cf. DFG, 2016) for a transdisciplinary framework of SLA that accounts for "the influence of macro (societal), meso (school), and micro (classroom) pressures on language learning and teaching" (De Costa & Norton, 2017, p. 6). In their special edition on language teacher identity, they insist on the importance of the idea that the study of teacher identity can benefit greatly from a wider transdisciplinary approach. My argument is thus that the adoption of a sociocultural perspective facilitates such transdisciplinarity. As I have been discussing in this chapter, in fact, this idea is taken up in my research as I explore language teacher identity from a social justice perspective, backed up by principles of critical pedagogy, applied linguistics, as well as theories derived from political philosophy and economics.

After having spelled out what is meant by a sociocultural view of teacher identity and the possibilities this view offers, one question that has not yet been addressed is: what exactly do we mean by language teacher identities? This is the main concern of the next section.

3.3.3 Defining teacher identity

In this section I draw from several definitions to specify what is meant in this study by teacher identity as a sociocultural construct. For example, some of these definitions include the idea that identity is determined by the ways in which a "person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (Norton, 2000, p. 5). Related definitions address identity as a dynamic process of "making sense and (re)interpretation of one's own values and experiences" (Flores & Day, 2006, p. 220); or as being recognised as certain "kind of

person" in a given context at a given moment (Gee, 2000, p. 99) or as ways of participation in communities of practice (Wenger, 1998).

The above definitions go beyond the idea that identity is pre-established and static (i.e. not a psychological or a biological characteristic). Instead, and consistent with the discussion in the previous section, to different degrees these conceptions describe identities as arising from sociocultural factors. That is, in the case of teachers, the configuration of identities is the result of the influence of contextual factors and the negotiation that comes along with those factors. This influence, as Norton (2000) suggests, is constructed across time and space and is conflicting and changing. At the same time, as Flores and Day (2006) argue, the context leads us to negotiate our own values and experiences. Gee (2000) stresses the importance of interaction with others in developing a sense of who one is, as this sense making process is necessarily mediated by how one is (or not) recognised in a social context. Wenger (1998) insists on this social dimension as, in his view, a sense of identity is developed according to how one affiliates to different communities of practice and takes part in them.

In resonance with these sociocultural views on identity, Olsen (2016, p. 48) offers a compelling definition of teacher identity. For him, teacher identity is

> a term to describe both the *active process* of using personal and professional, past and present influences in order to enact one's teaching and teacher learning, and the *resulting product*: that dynamic assemblage of influences-and-effects (and I connect the words "influences" and "effects" with hyphens to emphasise their interconnectedness) that is always guiding a teacher's perspectives and practices.

Just like Norton, Olsen emphasises the idea that teacher identities are shaped by prior, current and – as Norton would also highlight – upcoming personal experiences as well as experiences as learners and teachers that have taken (or are to take) place in different contexts. Therefore, interpretations of the world, including what teaching is about, derive directly from the influences and effects of such experiences.

As an illustrative metaphor, Olsen compares teacher identity with a pair of unique glasses, "constructed out of the materials of our own personal histories" (p. 44), through which the world of teaching and all its factors are interpreted. As a result of such interpretations, he

argues, teachers make decisions that shape their practices and construct ideas of the extent to which these practices are successful. These glasses also influence the diverse terms in which teachers may develop relationships with the teaching contexts (e.g. colleagues, administrators, policies, and the community). It follows that as more experiences are lived, the interpretive frame of the glasses is adjusted, allowing us to see different shades in the interpretations we can make at different points in time.

Relatedly, the following working definition of LTI that has recently emerged can be used to draw special attention to the sociocultural nature of this notion:

> Language teacher identities (LTIs) are cognitive, social, emotional, ideological and historical – they are both inside the teacher and outside in the social, material and technological world. LTIs are being and doing, feeling and imagining and storying. They are struggle and harmony: they are contested and resisted, by self and others, and they are also accepted, acknowledged and valued, by self and others. They are core and peripheral, personal and professional, they are dynamic, multiple and hybrid, and they are foregrounded and backgrounded. And LTIs are short-term and overtime – discursively in social interaction with teacher educators, learners, teachers, administrators, and the wider community, and in material interaction with spaces, places and objects in the classroom, institutions and online (Barkhuizen, 2017a, p. 4).

First of all, this definition underscores the idea that teacher' identities should be seen as a complex and multiple phenomenon, hence the use of the plural. In agreement with Norton (2000) and Olsen (2016), these identities are dynamic and may be in struggle as they are developed at different points in time, under different social circumstances, in interaction with different sorts of people in specific locations. It follows, thus, that LTIs are not just a cognitive process but also the result of socialization and interaction with others who may accept, resist or assign such identities. In tune with the discussion in the preceding sections, this definition considers the affective dimension, historicity and future imaginings of teachers as key factors shaping images of themselves. Likewise, in this definition there is recognition of teachers' engagements with pedagogic materials as well as physical and online spaces as important players in their self-understandings as teachers. At the same time, in this definition, Barkhuizen stresses the idea that LTIs are both enacted and constructed discursively; that is,

ideas of who teachers are shape their actions and the things they say. This point is complemented with the argument that the things teachers say and do also shape their ideas of who they are (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Morgan, 2004).

To sum up, in light of the above definitions, this study follows a sociocultural understanding of LTIs by considering identities as situated and thus highly influenced by contextual factors such as education policies, cultural values, socioeconomic circumstances, social struggles of their students and communities they may be part of. In this view, the sense of who teachers are is developed in negotiation with those factors across time and space as evident in their *discursive recreation of both their histories* and *future imaginings (*as they narrate their experiences, see chapter 4). As this understanding of who teachers are is dependent on the (non)recognition they could obtain from others in social interaction, images teachers construct of themselves are likely to be shifting and in conflict.

The discussion of teacher identity so far allows us to acknowledge the great multiplicity of factors the notion of identity has been associated with. This multiplicity bears a research challenge, at least for this thesis: if the notion of identity is so broad, even from the specific contours of a sociocultural perspective, how can we operationalise this notion into an effective analytical framework? In the next section, I spell out how I intent to address this challenge.

3.3.4 Framing the notion of identity

In their theorisation of language teacher identity, Varghese et al. (2005) explain that this concept is usually addressed as being multiple, shifting, and in conflict. Similarly, in a review of the definitions of teacher identity in the field of TESOL, Miller (2009) concludes that identity is usually regarded as being "relational, negotiated, constructed, enacted, transforming and transitional" (p.174). These multiple traits assigned to the notion of identity seem to respond mainly to poststructural tendencies that emphasise a changing and unstable idea of this concept (Miller, 2009). At the same time, however, these multiple connotations have loaded the scope of "identity" with such a high level of ambiguity that the term risks losing its value as a useful category of analysis (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). In order to

address this problem, my study makes use of alternative terminology proposed by Brubaker and Cooper (2000) to add analytical precision to the concept as applied in this thesis.

Brubaker and Cooper (2000) categorise the notion of identity as treated in the social sciences in two types, namely 'hard' or 'strong' and 'soft' or 'weak'. The first sense preserves the common traditional and essentialist meaning of the term. It highlights the idea of "sameness over time across persons" (p. 10). In the second sense, the authors state, the notion of sameness has been rejected and thereby the conventional meaning of identity has been 'softened' and blurred to the point of being unstable, in flux, contingent, and fragmented. Sceptical of the multiple ambiguous connotations of identity in the soft sense, Brubaker and Cooper offer three clusters of terms as alternatives to add analytical precision to the multiplicity of 'soft' meanings associated with this concept. They are: 1) identification and categorisation, 2) self-understanding and social location and 3) commonality, connectedness and groupness.

The first cluster emphasises the processual, situational and contextual nature of identity. That is, identification can be performed by oneself and others, in different contexts, at different points in time, in terms of a relational web of kinship (e.g. teacher-student) or in the form of membership in groups sharing some categorical attributes (e.g. race, language). In the second cluster, 'self-understanding' is defined as "one's sense of who one is, of one's social location, and how (given the first two), one is prepared to act" (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 17). Self-understanding and social location seen in relation to each other, on the one hand, embrace the idea that understandings of self are culturally specific; and on the other hand, this cluster presupposes an effect of these located understandings on one's actions. The third cluster refers to the degrees by which one can feel identified with collective identities in the context of race, religion, ethnicity, language and so on. Thus, one can feel identified with groups in terms of common attributes (commonality), relational ties (connectedness) and a sense of belonging to a given group (groupness).

This analytical redefinition of identity fits well the sociocultural understanding of identity adopted in my study as well as with the aims of my research. The analytical framework offered by Brubaker and Cooper allows to focus specifically on the sorts of rural teachers' identifications of themselves as well as identifications made by others in relation to their

practice at different points in time in different work-settings. Likewise, this framework facilitates the analysis of how teachers may develop images of themselves as professionals in relation to the views of what it means to work in rural locations; which at the same time allows to examine how such understandings may have shaped their practices. By the same token, Brubaker and Cooper's framework facilitates the exploration of ways in which teachers may have come to take part as members of rural communities or communities of teachers and how they have felt about it.

For these reasons, although this framework is not as popular in the field of applied linguistics as others (e.g. Gee's (2000) and Zimmerman's (1998) discourse-oriented frameworks and Wenger's (1998) communities of practice), Brubaker and Cooper's alternative categories are in tune with the general aim of analysing the influences and effects of rural sociocultural contexts upon meanings teachers may make of themselves. Gee´s model seems to be too concerned with the sources of power that make one be recognized as one kind of person and does not seem to fully account for the multiple relations that can be originated from how one may feel, think and see oneself in relation to social interactions and the contexts. Zimmerman's model is too focused on the moment by moment changing and fluid nature of identity construction, which is not a main interest in this research. Equally, Wenger's model appears to be insufficient to account for all the sorts of connections and key factors this study is considering because it approaches identity development mainly in terms of ways of participation. Having said that, as I discuss below, discursive understandings of identity construction are not completely absent in this research.

3.3.5 Teacher identity and positioning

In relation to the sociocultural approach to LTI, this study also considers the discursive nature of identity construction by analysing how in narrating their experiences and perceptions, teachers tend to position themselves towards different factors such as ELT policies, their own practices, their students, and their rural sociocultural contexts. This consideration allows us to view teacher identity in terms of positioning towards sociocultural and political conditions. This is possible because both teachers' experiences and practices are always embedded in

particular cultural, political norms that inevitably lead them to take given positions as a result of a negotiation with different sorts of power relations (Varghese et al., 2005).

Drawing on critical pedagogy, earlier on in this chapter I noted that education is not a neutral activity. Likewise, it can be said that teachers are not neutral players in the classroom. Their positionality in relation to the learners and to the broader context is crucial in determining what they do (Varghese et al., 2005, p. 22). In this fashion, following positioning theory (Davies & Harré, 1990; Harré, Moghaddam, Cairnie, Rothbart, & Sabat, 2009), the relationship between identity and positionality rely on what teachers "may do and may not do": their thinking, feeling, acting and perceiving against standards of correctness. Therefore, positioning is governed by moral beliefs about one's own assigned, ascribed, claimed, or assumed 'rights' and 'duties' that influence what we say and do (Harré et al., 2009, p. 9). Since those beliefs and, thus, positions arise in discourse, these are shifting, dynamic and situationally-bound. In spite of this, "the duties [and rights] they invoke must have some trans-situational standing" (p. 11). That is, the moral dimension of positioning shapes but also endures presentations of self in particular instances of communication.

Common examples of the relationship between positioning and LTI include exploring the conflicting relationships and inequalities emerging from the different statuses awarded to native and non-native speaker teachers (Pavlenko, 2003, p. e.g.). In her discursive analysis of linguistic autobiographies of 'native' and 'non-native' teachers of English, Pavlenko shows how a reconfiguration of teachers' linguistic competence (their rights) leads them to position themselves differently as professionals. Working with two cohorts of teachers enrolled in a second language acquisition class, she shows that teachers' training and knowledge of contemporary theories of bilingualism and SLA (specifically the notion of multicompetence) empower them to claim membership of imagined professional communities they initially did not identify with. Thus, teachers passed from being positioned as native or non-native to being multicompetent, and multilingual speakers.

Similarly, other studies focus on the relationship between positioning towards ELLs (Reeves, 2009; Yoon, 2008) and towards teacher mentors (Kayi-Aydar, 2015) and how their decisions informing pedagogical practices seem to derive directly from such positioning. Yoon's (2008) case study of three regular high school teachers in the United States clearly shows

how teachers' different positionings (as teachers of all students, as teachers for regular education students or as teachers for a single subject) had a direct impact on the pedagogical approaches adopted in classrooms that include ELLs. At the same time, the study shows that the ways teachers positioned themselves had a direct impact on the ways their ELLs came to be positioned as well: as powerful and strong students who actively participate in the classroom or as powerless students who tend to be ignored and invisible. Relatedly, as reviewed above, Reeves' (2009) study shows how teachers' positionality of their students can actually be interpreted as an attempt to consolidate teachers' desired identities. In a similar vein, Kayi-Aydar (2015) examines how three preservice teachers construct their identities in the shape of multiple and sometimes conflicting positioning in relation to their ELLs and their mentors, and how from their positioning they performed their agency (viewed as a capacity to make choices that is achieved in relation to the contextual conditions). Drawing on interview data and journal entries, she shows that the preservice teachers' various positionings of themselves were not consistent over time and that their agency to take action in the classroom stemmed a great deal from the way they positioned especially vis-à-vis their mentors. The findings show that these preservice teachers "constructed identity positions for themselves [as organized, structured and effective teachers] that contrasted the identity positions they ascribed their mentor teachers" (p. 101), which led them to do what, in their view, their mentors should have done (i.e., tailor their teaching in relation to their English learners' needs and feelings). These studies are clear examples of how identity positions are constructed in relation to others and how actions one takes may be directly connected to such positions.

Research on LTIs from the angle of positioning towards different contextual and situated factors mediating language teaching is still limited. As the studies reviewed in this section suggest, the relations between language teachers' positioning and learners, teacher mentors and other teachers have already been explored in some depth. However, teachers' positioning of themselves towards contextual socioeconomic challenges and policy demands seem to be an underexplored area. This study attempts to contribute to filling this gap by focusing on the specific case of English language teachers in Colombian rural schools.

3.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has laid out the main theoretical tenets informing this study. I have argued that in line with the research aims, principles of critical pedagogy and theories of social justice appear to offer a strong framework to analyse issues of power and inequality in society in relation to how ELT is set out in Colombia. Particularly, I have argued that by adopting a critical approach to education, it is possible to scrutinise the interests and benefits of ELT practices and discourses from a socially responsive point of view. By the same token, I have also made the point that theories of social justice seem to offer a platform to further explore how these practices and discourses relate to social inequality in terms of cultural recognition and economic distribution (Fraser, 1997), as well as in terms of opportunities for human development (Sen, 2009). On this basis, I have also discussed how a view on teacher identity as socioculturally constructed can serve as a 'concrete' strategy to identify the ways in which broader issues in society are experienced and assimilated by rural language teachers and the impact of those issues on their professional practice. In the next chapter, I shall discuss the methodological underpinnings of this research.

Chapter 4   Research Approach and Methodology

4.0 Introduction

Having set out the theoretical ground of this thesis, this chapter deals with the ontological, epistemological and methodological principles underlying this study. In doing so, I discuss the relevance of narrative inquiry as the main qualitative approach to research that appears to offer an appropriate framework not only to a) guide the procedures of data collection and analysis, the role of participants, and my role as a researcher but also to b) back up some general beliefs about knowledge construction this study follows. In agreement with these beliefs, I will also discuss the usefulness of observation as an 'ethnographic tool' (Green & Bloome, 2004) to deepen into the interpretations of the phenomenon of interest. To develop these ideas, I start with a discussion on theoretical understandings of narrative research, where I shall refer to the ways in which this approach converges with my own views of knowledge construction informing this study. I then discuss some of the general attributes of narrative research. Following the theoretical discussion, I move on to describe practical considerations and procedures. I will refer to the profile of participants, the recruitment process, strategies for data collection and analysis, ethical issues and specific research procedures and challenges.

4.1 A narrative interpretative approach to research

Narrative inquiry can currently be understood in both a narrow and a broad sense (Spector-Mersel, 2010). The narrow sense embraces a conventional view of narrativity as a research methodology that is useful to portray or represent social reality. It follows that narrations serve as the instruments to 'reveal' a reality about a social phenomenon that becomes tangible by means of stories. On the other hand, the broader sense of narrative inquiry has developed from the contributions of scholars such as Somers (1994), Spector-Mersel (2010), Soler

(2013), and De Fina and Georgakopoulou (2012). These scholars share the view that narrative research encompasses much more than a research methodology and propose seeing it as a "concept of social epistemology and social ontology" (Somers, 1994, p. 606). That is, narrations are not limited to providing a 'mirror' to reality but, perhaps more significantly, they contribute to the construction of that social reality (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012; Soler, 2013) by triggering the generation of meanings individuals may otherwise not have even been conscious about (Bell, 2002). From this point of view, narrativity is a natural human activity through which we make sense of the social world and in turn of how "we think, feel, and conduct ourselves in it" (Spector-Mersel, 2010 p. 209, see also Somers, 1994). On the basis of these arguments, Spector-Mersel makes the case that narrative research "combines both a philosophical stance towards the nature of social reality and our relationship with it, and the mode in which it should be studied" (2010, p. 206). It can thus be conceived as an interpretative qualitative research paradigm in its own right.

This study is rooted in the broader conception of narrative research. It draws on the idea that in having rural teachers narrate their experiences, they are given the opportunity to become aware of meanings they have built about their practice and themselves and to construct new ones. From this point of view, in contrast to the positivistic understandings of the world where truth is expected to be apprehended, studied and measured, this study shares the assumption that notions of reality are the product of multiple social constructions (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). In short, this study is underpinned by the assumption that the meanings the participants of this research make about themselves and their profession are the product of lived experiences and interactions with other members of society, including myself as the researcher.

In the same vein, this study follows an interpretative approach to studying social phenomena. According to Lincoln et al. (2011), in interpretative research, knowledge is reached by means of a process of interaction between the inquirer and the inquired. Knowledge is not taken as universally valid but as a changing body of values (Scott & Usher, 2011) and as such the relationship between the researcher and participants is crucial in co-constructing understandings about the phenomenon of interest. On this basis, the participants of this

research and I as the researcher can be considered to be co-authors of the "stories" that emerge from the interaction during the research process. For example, my co-authorship takes the shape of the questions I ask in the interviews, the guidelines I designed for teachers to write their teaching biographies, my impressions registered in field observations and, of course, in all the interpretations made regarding the data (more detailed discussion of these processes is provided below). Therefore, bearing in mind the interpretative approach underpinning this study, it is important to acknowledge that although the focus is on the teachers' meanings around who they are and their practices, my own interpretation of the world would also mediate the interaction with the participants by triggering the generation of narratives and by making sense of them. In this context, this study is not aimed at making specific claims about truths. Rather, as Scott and Usher (2011, p. 29) describe the objective of interpretative research, this study intends to provide "interpretations of human actions and social practices within the context of meaningful, culturally specific arrangements." Although such interpretations are not definitive or generalisable, they are intended to offer in-depth alternative understandings of the phenomenon under investigation.

4.1.1 Attributes of narrative research

As the previous discussion implies, there is still lively debate on what doing narrative research entails. As stated above, currently there are narrow and broad standpoints from which it can be viewed. Today, it can even be said that there is no single way of carrying out narrative inquiry, and it can thus be considered as a 'developing field' (Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chik, 2013) or a "field in the making" (Chase, 2011). In fact, as Andrews, Squire, and Tamboukou (2013) explain, narrative research is not as structured and delimited as other qualitative frameworks. There are no specific sets of procedures, materials or levels for collecting narratives or analysing them. This is how narrative research has also witnessed research developments based not only on traditional 'big' biographic life stories but also on "small stories" produced in everyday, mundane circumstances, as has been proposed by, for instance, the work of Bamberg (2005) and Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008).

In this fashion, the present study benefits from a versatile research approach. However, in order to better understand its relevance in relation to the aims of this research, it is necessary to refer to some of the general characteristics of this approach. First, it is commonly agreed that narrative research is a useful research perspective to examine experiences holistically (Bell, 2002) from the point of view of those who have lived them (Barkhuizen et al., 2013; K. Johnson & Golombek, 2002). How people make sense of their experiences in relation to a given social phenomenon is usually a focus of narrative researchers. In the particular case of this study, I am interested in examining pedagogic experiences from teachers' own perspectives.

Second, these experiences are fully examined by analysing how they have developed over time (Clandinin & Huber, 2010; K. Johnson & Golombek, 2002). Chronology in narrative research has always played a major role in structuring the analysis of the experiences being researched. In this regard, Clandinin and Huber (2010) state that doing narrative research involves examining closely the 'temporality' not only of experiences but also of places where they have taken place. This leads me to the third general characteristic. Narrative inquiry examines the experiences in light of the physical and social context under which they have occurred (Clandinin & Huber, 2010). In this regard, this study is concerned with describing the experiences of rural teachers of English in depth by exploring how they have developed over time and by examining the extent to which the rural social context has shaped those experiences.

Another common attribute of narrative inquiry also relevant in this study is its concern with identity formation (see Barkhuizen et al., 2013; Soler, 2013; Somers, 1994). In fact, Soler (2010) explains that the relationship between "narratives and identities is so strong that identities can be seen as narratives people construct about themselves to tell themselves and other people who they are" (P. 64). This view converges with Somers's (1994) proposal of seeing narrativity as a theorisation of identity. In this context, it is no surprise, as Barkhuizen et al. (2013) explain, that identity is the most frequently mentioned theme of narrative studies in teaching and learning. In this study, the notion of identity also plays an important role. Drawing on the redefinition of the notion of identity offered by Brubaker and Cooper (2000),

the concepts of self-understandings and identifications (see section 3.3.2) are seen as useful categories to analyse the ways teachers narrate their experiences.

All these attributes make narrative inquiry a powerful approach to accomplishing the aims of this study, as has been stressed throughout this thesis. At this point it is necessary to define how the concept of narrative is understood in this study.

4.1.2 Narratives

Riessman (2008) explains that in narrative research, the concept of narrative may take different sorts of referents. She explains that this concept may refer to stories collected from research participants or to interpretive accounts researchers make of data collected, or even to the sorts of new constructions readers create after engaging with the participant's and investigator's narratives (p. 6). This study is mainly concerned with narratives as stories (written, oral, and observed) provided by participants and constructed in interaction with me, the researcher, through the interview exchanges as well as observations. These stories, as Riessman also illustrates, may take the form of either extended (e.g. full teaching biographies) or brief texts (e.g. extracts from interviews). At the same time, these stories are "situated in time and space" and "encapsulate a point the narrator wants to get across" Barkhuizen et al. (2013, p. 22).

The first part of this chapter has presented narrative inquiry as an appropriate research framework to support my own research assumptions about knowledge construction in social sciences. I have also pointed out some general relevant attributes of this research approach considering the interests of this study. The following sections are concerned with methodological considerations.

4.2 Methodological considerations

After having outlined the main theoretical principles underpinning the decision of following a narrative approach to research, I now go on to discuss the more practical research concerns

of the study. I shall refer to the profile of the participants and to the manner they were recruited, ethical issues considered as well as strategies for data collection and analysis.

4.2.1 Participants

This study involved the participation of ten Colombian English language teachers. They were selected following a purposeful recruitment process (Creswell, 2006; Merriam, 2009). That is, the sample of participants were selected because they represented 'rich cases' on the grounds of specific pre-established criteria (Merriam, 2009). For the purposes of this study, these rich cases were determined by typical samples of teachers who matched the following criteria:

1. They were experienced English language teachers.
2. They had worked in a rural state-funded high school for a year at least before they participated in the study.
3. They came from a variety of rural contexts.
4. They agreed to participate on a voluntary basis.

In this section, I discuss the rationale behind these criteria. First of all, an important condition to participate in the project was that teachers had a minimum of three years of experience. As noted, the study is concerned with exploring how teachers have developed their perceptions about their professional practice in light of the policies and the sociocultural landscape of the country. Thus, three years of teaching English seemed to represent a time frame that was long enough for teachers to have constructed meanings about their practice that are well-informed by their different lived experiences in the profession. Furthermore, experienced teachers of English were more likely to be familiar with both the opportunities and the challenges of language policies that have been implemented in the country. All these were factors that played an important role in the ways teachers narrated their experiences and thus represented good reasons for establishing this criterion.

Second, it was of interest to recruit teachers who worked or had worked in state high schools for a year at least. Primary rural schools were not initially considered since very few of these schools counted on qualified teachers of English as part of the staff, which I thought would

have made it very difficult to locate them. However, one of the participants (Dora) had this role and was considered in the study (see profile of participants below). Moreover, language policy in Colombia has an important goal that is measured at the end of high school, which was an important reason to select this cycle of education as the main focus. In the same vein, a minimum of one year of experience in a rural setting was required in order to ensure some level of teachers' familiarity with the rural context they are working in. This last condition was also a point I was flexible about, when I found a teacher who was eager to participate in the study (Jairo) despite being working in a rural school for less than a year.

Third, I was interested in exploring cases from a variety of rural regions. As noted in chapter 2, according to PNUD (2011), 72.5% of the Colombian municipalities can be considered to be rural to different extents. These municipalities at the same time may differ from each other on grounds of their population density, distance from large urban centres, main economic activities and cultural values, among other factors. In this context, although the study did not intend to give account of all the rural locales, it sought to see how ELT was experienced in some of these different regions. In doing so, the study attempted to shed light on the contingencies associated with the teaching of English in these contexts, which may, in different ways, inform other rural realities the present study does not include. In any case, factors such as time, access to research sites and distance from each other were factors I considered in selecting the cases I examined. As table 4.1 below shows, participants in this study came from 7 different municipalities located in 4 different regions (*departamentos*) of the country.

Fifth, teachers were invited to participate on a free and voluntary basis. I contacted about twenty different teachers, out of whom, ten showed more interest and willingness to take part in the study. An important condition of participation was signing a consent form (see section 4.4), after they were informed of the nature of the research project and what their participation would consist of. I decided to include all the teachers who showed interest in participating in the study and who were willing to be interviewed and visited. I thought that 10 teachers was a number that I could handle.

Table 4.1 presents general information of the participants. As I note in section 4.2.4, real names of teachers and municipalities are not revealed for ethical purposes. Instead, pseudonyms are employed. The table describes the regions where teachers work, the number of years of experience, their academic profile, whether they come from rural or urban backgrounds, where it is that their experience has mostly developed as well as their work status. This information gives a general outline of who the participants are, this information is complemented by an individual brief account of each them in section 4.2.3.

Teacher' pseudonym	Region of work-setting	Municipality (pseudonym)	Years of experience	Academic profile	Origin	Context of work experience	Work status
Clara	Cundina-marca	Rosales	16	B.Ed. Spanish & English Started MA in 2016	Urban	Mostly rural	Permanent
Eva	Casanare	Almendros	6	B.Ed. Spanish & English	Urban	Mostly rural	Provisional
Arturo	Casanare	Palmas	5	B.Ed. Spanish & English	Arturo	Mostly rural	Provisional
Hilda	Nariño	Pinares	10	B.Ed. Spanish & English	Urban	Mostly rural	Permanent
Ana	Nariño	Pinares	24	B. Ed. in English & French. Recently completed her MA	Urban	Extensive experience in both urban and rural	Permanent
Jairo	Nariño	Pinares	9	B.Ed. Spanish & English	Urban	Mostly urban	Permanent
Camilo	Nariño	Olivos	15	B.Ed. Spanish & English	Urban	Both urban and rural	Provisional
Lily	Nariño	Olivos	20	B. Ed. in English & French.	Rural	Extensive experience in both urban and rural	Permanent
Dora	Nariño	Robles	19	B. Ed. in English & French. Recently completed her MA	Urban	Extensive experience in both urban and rural	Permanent
Maria	Boyacá	Margaritas	20	B.Ed. Spanish & English. A diploma in Ethics and Pedagogy	Rural	Mostly rural	Permanent

Table 4.1: *Outline of participants*

In order to clarify what I mean by work status it is important to add a brief note on the existing teacher regimes in the country. There are two different sets of regulations for teachers who are part of the public education system in Colombia. The first one is for teachers or education administrators who were appointed in their positions between 1979 and 2001. This group of teachers is regulated by the Decree 2277 of 1979 (MEN, 1979). This Decree classifies teachers in a 14-level scale of salary system (1 being the lowest and 14 being the highest). Teachers may be promoted in the scale on the basis of their years of service or studies they undertake, and all of them are granted a permanent contract.

The second set of regulations is for teachers and education administrators who started to work as public servants through a selection process after the year 2002. This group of teachers and administrators is regulated by the Decree 1278 of 2002 (MEN, 2002a). This Decree establishes that teachers may enter the promotion scale process only after they have passed their trial period. In this second regime, permanent contracts are limited and are assigned through a selection process that is opened every 3-5 years depending on the budget available. Thus, the other teachers are hired on a provisional basis, which implies they can be removed from their work posts at any time. All the participants of this study are regulated by the second regime and as the table shows, three of them have provisional contracts.

4.2.2 Recruitment

Initially I planned to recruit four to six teachers who matched the pre-established criteria described above, however, as I was collecting the data, I came across a higher number of teachers with interesting backgrounds that were willing to share their experiences and I decided to include them. Some of the strategies I used to recruit them were social media and the collaboration of colleagues. Anticipating eventual difficulties in locating these teachers, I started to identify potential informants early by opening a group on Facebook for Colombian rural teachers of English. Although the group was successful in terms of attracting the attention of teachers (currently it has over 50 members), none of the teachers who joined the group ended up accepting the invitation to participate. Fortunately, the second strategy to

recruit teachers (the collaboration of colleagues) proved to work much better. Seven of the participants were recruited this way, two participants were recruited in site while I was visiting another participant, and the tenth participant was contacted through calling the school and inviting the teacher directly.

4.2.3 Participants' brief individual characterisation

As already noted, in total 10 teachers participated in this study. The following is a characterisation of each of these teachers. Each description focuses on some of the most salient factors they referred to in relation to their profession and their current jobs.

Clara has worked in her current school for 9 years, which is the time she has been a permanent teacher. Her school is just 30 minutes from Bogotá, Colombia's capital. She started her professional experience in urban private schools but later moved to work in several rural schools in Cundinamarca. She shows herself as a teacher who is comfortable and satisfied with her accomplishments but also as a teacher who wants to improve and from this intention the idea of doing an MA emerged. She also shows herself as a sensitive teacher towards the needs of students and seems to be very interested in building rapport with them. From time to time in her lessons, she provides students with "free-time", something that, as she says, has generated a space for her to get to know students well.

Eva always wanted to be a teacher despite the fact that her family would have liked her to choose a better-paid profession. She is a provisional teacher and thinks that a job in a rural area has given her some stability. She wants to do an MA but sees it as something she cannot afford to do at the moment. Her school is located one hour away from the municipality's urban centre where she lives. So, she has to start to make her way to the school every morning at about 5:00 am. Although she seems to associate her experience working in a rural location with a narrow worldview, she expresses she is satisfied with her work and accomplishments there. She is the only teacher of English at her current school.

Although **Arturo**'s original plan was to be an interpreter, he decided to become a teacher of English because it was more affordable and because language teaching seemed to

approximate his original interest. He admits he chose to do a teaching career without being fully aware of what it involved. As time passed by and as he had to develop his teaching practicum he started to feel comfortable in teaching and decided to stay. He accepted to work in a rural area as a way to secure some income to provide for his partner and new-born baby. He positions himself as a teacher who has tried to motivate his students to learn English in different ways. Just like Eva, he is the only teacher of English in the School.

 Hilda says she got into teaching because when she was at school her teacher of English was a good role model for her. She has worked 9 out of her 10 years of professional experience in rural locations and says it is proof of her fondness towards the rural sector. Hilda shows herself as a creative teacher who is willing to design her own teaching material. In her current school, she also teaches English to adults. Many of her adult students are the parents of the same kids she has in the morning. This is part of a literacy programme in the region to help parents complete their high school.

Ana came to work in a remote rural school after 15 years of work in an urban private school, which has allowed her to appreciate the contrast of realities of these contexts. While in the private school she dealt mostly with wealthy families, in the rural school she came across the internal armed conflict with guerrilla groups face to face (see introductory story in chapter 5). Currently she works as a mentor for other teachers who work in the same rural region she used to teach. She says that a reason for taking up her current role was grounded in the idea of having a wider impact with her work.

 Jairo's teaching experience has developed mainly in public schools but in urban locations. By the time the study took place, he had recently been appointed as a permanent teacher in his current school and, in fact, that was the main reason for him to come to work there. One of the things he appreciates the most about teaching, as he says, is the fact that through it he can leave imprints on students. Jairo describes himself as a people person and, thus, shows high interest in developing rapport with students. The most positive aspect of working in a rural location, according to him, is that teachers are highly appreciated in the community.

Camilo has not succeeded in becoming a permanent teacher despite several attempts to do so. Recently he suffered the consequences of being provisional as his place was taken by a newly appointed permanent teacher. He then found a job in another rural school of an indigenous community but this time as a Spanish teacher. He says he feels his identity as an English teacher has also been affected by the instability of being provisional as he now has to work teaching Spanish, something he had not done for a long time.

Lily is the English teacher at the same indigenous school Camilo moved to. In fact, Lily belongs to this indigenous community. She has worked in different regions of Colombia including Bogotá. As her husband is a police officer, she has been traveling with him to different locations. She has been working in her current school for 1 year. She said she feels highly identified with the indigenous community as she was born there and that has helped her to devise some strategies to present English to her students (see 6.3.3 for further on this point).

Dora has always worked in primary schools, both in the private and state sectors. She has to teach all subjects but has made agreements with other teachers so that she can focus mainly on teaching English. From an early age, she discovered she wanted to learn languages. And like Arturo, she says that her initial professional ambition was to be a simultaneous interpreter but found language teaching a more practical and affordable career to get into. She says children are her second passion and that is how she ended up teaching in primary schools.

Maria finally got a permanent contract in 2010, after 15 years of work. Before that time, as a provisional teacher she worked in a good number of other rural schools all over the region of Boyacá. She has got a rural background. She says she decided to become a teacher as it represented a good option to have a better quality of life for her and her family. She is a mother of three girls, who were born as she was studying to become a teacher. She says she is comfortable working in her current school. However, she seems not to be very confident of her level of English and admits she is rather pessimistic when it comes to talking about it.

4.2.4 Ethical considerations

To successfully carry out this study, it was necessary to consider several ethical issues regarding the well-being of participants, and the confidentiality or anonymity of their identities. These aspects, at the same time, had an impact on the transparency and reliability of the project. First, although initial contacts with potential participants began early, official recruitment started only after ethical approval from King's College London ethics committee was granted. Second, participants were fully informed of the research purposes, procedures and of the roles expected of them. To that end, I obtained teachers' written informed consent (see appendix A), after they had read an information sheet with all the details of both the project and of their participation (see appendix B). This document clearly explained the nature of this investigation; it also ensured participants that their identities would remain confidential and that the information they provided would be used for research purposes only. In addition, the informed consent made clear that as participants, teachers could withdraw from the study at any point before and during data collection, and that they could even withdraw their data at any point before summer 2016 when I expected to have a first full draft of the research report. Third, communication with participants were maintained throughout the development of the study. Participants had the chance to ask any sort of question about the study, before, during and after data collection. In the same vein, they were informed that if interested, they could receive a full report of the study after it was finished.

4.3 Data Collection

As is the case in any narrative research (Spector-Mersel, 2010), the data of this study was mainly stories. These stories came from the participants' written teaching biographies and audio recorded in-depth interviews. As a complement to these oral and written accounts, further data was obtained through observations of each teacher's classroom and work-setting. In this section, I discuss the nature and use of these methods of data collection.

4.3.1 Teaching biographies

Teaching biographies were understood in this thesis as written narratives through which the participant teachers described their teaching histories. These teaching biographies were intended to get to know the participants better by collecting information about how they forged their path towards becoming language teachers in rural areas. At the same time, these written accounts aimed to provide initial information about the views teachers had on the role of their professional practice, challenges and opportunities in relation to the social context in which they were located. To accomplish these objectives teachers were prompted to follow a similar structure in their narratives. First, participants were asked to start their biographies with a description of the factors that influenced their decision on becoming teachers of English and the stages they had followed to do so. Then, teachers were asked to describe how they came to work in a rural context. Here, teachers were prompted to provide some information about the factors that led them to accept a job in a rural region, and about how their ideas about teaching English in this context might have changed over time. Finally, teachers were asked to narrate some of, what in their view, were the most critical moments they had lived in rural contexts. To guide the writing process, teachers were provided with a set of guidelines they could consider when writing their teaching biographies (see appendix C).

 Barkhuizen et al. (2013) describe teacher narratives as serving different purposes, namely professional development, as part of a course assignment or for independent research. In this study, teachers wrote their teaching biographies because I, as an independent researcher, asked them to do so. Professional development might come as part of the outcomes of this study but it was not a research focus.

4.3.2 Observation as an ethnographic tool

This narrative research has an ethnographic flavour added through the use of observation as a tool which permits to have a feel of the participants' working environments. In their review of the use of ethnography in and of education, Green and Bloome (2004) explain that there

are various ways in which an ethnographic approach has been taken up in traditional social sciences, including education. These scholars specifically make the distinction between i) doing ethnography, ii) adopting and ethnographic perspective, and iii) using ethnographic tools. In the first case, ethnography takes its conventional meaning associated with a broad, in-depth, long term study of a social or cultural group. The second case involves a narrower focus on particular aspects of everyday life and cultural practices of a social group, illuminated by theories of culture and by inquiry practices of anthropology or sociology. The third case refers to the use of methods or techniques in the fieldwork, which may or may not be guided by cultural theories or questions about social life or group members (Green & Bloome, 2004, p. 183).

On the basis of these distinctions and bearing in mind that field observations have been limited to a maximum of two days per school-site (see section 4.4), the options of following a full ethnographic study or even adopting an ethnographic perspective were inappropriate for my PhD research. Instead, observation in this study was employed as an ethnographic tool aimed at strengthening the interpretations that could be made of the phenomena of interest – i.e., ELT in rural Colombia from teachers' written and oral accounts only. Observation as an ethnographic tool served to get a feel of what teaching and learning English in Colombian rural schools was like (Spradley, 2016). This enabled me to add my own impressions to the data gathered in interviews and teaching biographies, thus strengthening my understanding of the teachers' lived experiences. In other words, bearing in mind the overall narrative approach of this study, observations enriched the body of narratives obtained from the participants by adding my own narrative description of relevant events, spaces, objects, activities, and actors I could come across during my school visits.

In this context, observation was viewed here as a useful research process through which it is possible to "gather 'live' data from naturally occurring social situations" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 396). Thus, in this research, the use of this technique aimed to describe the sorts of interactions that may usually take place between teachers and students. This included teaching strategies, learning attitudes, and the possible connections that there may be between the lesson contents and the students' life outside the classroom. Through observation it was also possible to deepen into the ways in which language policy influences

what teachers propose in class by informing the questions I could ask in the second round of interviews with each teacher (see next section). On the whole, in addition to life inside the classroom, observation facilitated a broad appreciation of the schools' atmospheres in relation to ELT (e.g., learning resources available, signs in English on bulletin boards, etc.). The appreciation of all these aspects may have otherwise been taken for granted, unnoticed or simply ignored (Cohen et al., 2007).

According to Scott and Usher (2011), observation processes in educational research may take different forms depending on two main aspects: the degree to which the researcher takes part in the events being observed and on how structured the observations are carried out. In the first case, researchers may conduct participant observation (i.e., researcher has active participation in the events) or non-participant observation (i.e., the researcher remains passive and unobtrusive). In the second case, observations can be either structured, semi-structured or un-structured. A structured observation has pre-established categories of well-defined information it is focused on. A semi-structured observation is guided by issues of interest to the study but its structure is less predetermined. An open observation takes place when there is no clarity on the type of information that is relevant, so the observation itself may even be seen as a strategy to narrow the focus of interest (Cohen et al., 2007).

With regards to the degree of involvement of the researcher, nevertheless, the clear-cut distinction between participant and non-participant observer does not do justice to the different types of involvement a researcher may have in the field. As Atkinson and Hammersley (1994) have argued "in a sense *all* social research is a form of participant observation, because we cannot study the social world without being part of it" (p. 249, original emphasis). Thus, a typology of the role of the researchers offered by Gold (1958) seems to be more appropriate. According to Gold, researchers may play the role of complete observer, observer as participant, participant as observer or complete participant. As can be seen in the description of each of these roles in table 4.2, there are different degrees of participation in observation. These are determined by: whether the researcher is known to be a researcher, the sort of activities the researcher decides to take part in (or not) in social interaction, and whether there is an insider or outsider orientation.

Role	Description
Complete participant	Researcher takes an insider role and the true identity and purpose in field research are not known to those whom he observes.
Participant as observer	Researcher takes an insider role but his research purposes may be known by the informants. Both fieldworker and informant are aware that theirs is a field relationship.
Observer as participant	Researcher has minimal involvement in the setting being studied. Researcher is in the setting to formally carry out observations. It usually involves one-visit interviews.
Complete Observer	Researcher does not have any social interaction with informants. Informants are not aware they are being observed.

Table 4.2: *Gold's (1958) Roles of Participant Observation*

In the particular case of this research, I approached the field taking the role mainly of observer as participant, who was there to conduct semi-structured observations. As pointed out above, the main objective of observations, in this research, was to have access to teaching and learning events in their natural environment occurring in their natural flow. Then, my role was expected to require minimal involvement. However, this was not always possible as my visit to schools as a Ph.D. researcher was interpreted as an opportunity teachers and students had to take advantage of. Thus, I was asked to interact with students during lessons and exchange information with them about the experience of living and studying in the UK. This at times made me feel that I was taking the role of participant as observer from time to time.

Observations were semi-structured since, based on my research questions, I guided the observation by focusing particularly on a flexible set of aspects that included teaching methodologies, learners' behaviours, contents, materials, and key events that took place during the lessons. These aspects represented relevant categories for the study since through teaching methodologies, contents and materials, both teachers' ideas about their profession and ways in which these were (not) aligned with language policy could be made evident. Furthermore, students' behaviours and reactions towards the class were also accounted for in

the observations as they could take an important role in analysing the rationale behind the ways teachers decided to develop their lessons. Key events, understood as moments in which actions in the classroom seem to be influenced by the particularities of the social context, were of special relevance to analyse how teachers triggered, resisted, ignored or simply dealt with them. This set of categories guided the note taking process in the field.

Having in mind that "observations are not data unless they are recorded in some fashion" (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011, p. 158), writing field notes was the method used to systematize and record my observations. I used two forms of taking and managing notes: jot or condensed notes and extended notes (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011; Spradley, 2016). Jot notes were taken on the spot during my school visits. These notes included whole sentences, phrases, key words from participants and verbatim comments that were intended to be used to facilitate the recall of events. In fact, these jot notes were later used as the primary resources to construct *extended* more complete descriptions. As DeWalt and DeWalt (2011, p. 165) explain, these extended notes are usually "descriptive, detailed and chronologically organized." In my case, these notes were taken as soon as possible after the observation at a quieter time, which usually was the evening of each observation day at a hotel room. In translating jot notes into chronologically organised, extended and detailed accounts, I came up with a total of 32 entries of field observations. To facilitate the writing of these accounts and in order to add systematicity to the process, I designed a format to organise each of the entries (see Appendix D for an example of field observation). Such format provides information of the corresponding number of each observation followed by an assigned title synthetizing its content. Likewise, the format includes the exact location where the observed events took place, the name of the teacher(s) to whom the observation was related, and a very brief description of the context of the observation. As a reminder of what the foci of the observation were, the format also included the research questions guiding the study. Finally, the format includes two columns: one for actually writing the descriptive notes and the other for my complementary interpretative remarks, thoughts and impressions related to the observed events. The latter were taken during the analysis of the field notes as I (re)read them (see Appendix E for summary of all field observations).

In addition to the teaching biographies, observations were also used to yield important points to be considered in the in-depth interviews, the third method of data collection this study used. In this regard, Breen, Hird, Milton, Oliver, and Thwaite (2001) state that observations represent actual instances of practice to reflect upon in interviews and, in this fashion, substantiate or enrich accounts of teaching practice provided in interview data.

4.3.3 In-depth interviews

The main purpose of using interviews in this research was to reach deep accounts of teachers' understandings, opinions and insights regarding the endeavour of teaching English in rural settings. In line with the research questions, the interviews focused on the ways in which teachers might have followed, assimilated, integrated, or modified their practices in response to both language policies and rural sociocultural particularities. At the same time, through the oral narratives emerging from the interviews I obtained information regarding the meanings teachers construct about who they are and how they feel they are supposed to act as professionals in light of the policies and the social context.

I considered interviews because as Scott and Usher (2011) explain, this method of data collection is useful to have access to past events, to events I, as the researcher, have not been present at. Furthermore, as is the interest of this research, in the interaction with participant teachers, through my questioning it is possible to trigger their beliefs systems and, thus, open spaces for the construction of understandings of their professional life in relation to its social context.

Among the different types of interviews (e.g. structured, semi-structured, life histories, focus groups), I decided to use in-depth interviews for their versatility, flexibility and focus on thick descriptive accounts (Yeo et al., 2013). Following Yeo et al. (2013), in-depth interviewing involves a flexible process in which researchers can gather the participants' insights, reasons, feelings, opinions, and beliefs about the focus of this study by means of a naturalistic conversation that was audio-recorded. Thus, unlike structured interviews, in-depth interviews allowed me to reach full accounts of participants' understandings of the phenomenon of interest. I could do so by formulating follow up probes to the answers being

provided and in this way reach a saturation of meanings (Yeo et al., 2013). This type of interview also allowed me to use open ended prompts as a way to give interviewees the freedom to shape their own narrations and to include in them aspects I had not initially considered, as is expected in narrative studies (Riessman, 2008).

Although the nature of in-depth interviews allows not to limit the breadth and depth of the participants' narratives (Dörnyei, 2007), my interviews had a specific focus on the themes I wanted the participants to talk about. The interviews concentrated on critical moments in which teachers have experienced conflicts and tensions between what they are asked to do and what they deemed pertinent to do considering the social context of their work-settings. By the same token, interviews prompted teachers to talk about the extent to which teaching and learning English integrates with the values, needs, opportunities and larger social issues of the communities they work with. At a more personal level, the interviews also prompted teachers to give an account of their own understandings and meaning they had built around their professional action of teaching English.

There were two periods in which I interviewed the participants, before and after all the observations were conducted. Each round of interviews, however, had a different focus. The first, for instance, developed around four main themes. First, as a follow up to some of the information they shared in their teaching biographies, it inquired into the teachers' work histories, future plans and feelings towards the profession. Second, the interview developed around teachers' own descriptions of their teaching experience in rural areas. Here teachers were prompted to talk about, for example, the particularities of the rural context, and factors they thought might have facilitated or challenged their professional practice. Following this, the third main theme was examples about their experience. Here, teachers were prompted to narrate concrete lived situations where they had had a successful lesson, where they had taken part in professional development opportunities and incidents that had led them to implement changes in their teaching, among other aspects. The last general theme of this first interview consisted of a description of the students and the rural community they have contact with; followed by comments on the role English plays in their lives (see appendix F for schedule interview 1).

The second interview, on the other hand, focused on further probing points teachers have made in the previous interview, and aspects drawn from the observations I deemed worth asking them about in order to check or enrich my initial interpretations. Thus, the general themes I proposed teachers to talk about depended on the data collected up to that point. Nevertheless, the need to have a second interview relied on more explicitly (if they had not done so) asking teachers to talk about both the extent to which language policy had impacted on their professional practice and how their teaching practices might have been related to matters of social inequality evident in their rural context. Specific ways to address these three main themes, or other emerging themes, were devised considering the nature of the data collected up to the end of the observation stage with each participant. In any case, I had sketched some general questions (see appendix G) that were reassessed in light of the information provided by each participant up to that point.

4.4 Data collection procedures

The collection of data involved different related activities that may start to take place from early on in any research project and that may still play an important role in late stages of data analysis (Creswell, 2007). Table 4.3 below illustrates the procedures and approximate periods of time this study followed to collect data. As follows, I describe these activities in detail.

Activity	Time frame Year 2015
Selection of participants and gaining access	March-July
Obtaining written narratives	April- August
First round of interviews	June-September
Conduct observations	September-November
Second round of Interviews	October- December

Table 4.3: *Data collection schedule*

1. **Selecting participants and gaining access.** This activity represented one of the biggest challenges of the data collection stages. I needed to gain the permission and trust of teachers I had not yet met. The information sheet and consent form played an important role here, since through these documents, teachers had the chance to know what their participation would consist of and that no harm would come to them as a result of their involvement in the project. The strongest argument I had to attract their attention lied on the rationale of the whole study. Teachers felt motivated to take part in the study by seeing it as an opportunity to have both their work and voices be acknowledged in public and academic discourses.

2. **Obtaining written narratives.** After having selected the participants and having established some level of rapport with them, I asked them to write their teaching histories. As noted, I had designed some prompts to help them focus their narration. However, not all participants had the chance to write their narratives. One teacher was reluctant to do so and the other teachers were recruited in the field and had no time to write their narrations prior to being interviewed. I tried to collect these narratives before I started the classroom observations in order to have some time to read the narratives carefully before I visited their schools. Teachers were given all the time they requested to develop these narratives. It ranged from 2 weeks to one month.

3. **Interview participants.** These were the moments I met each participant in private. As noted above, each participant was interviewed twice, once before observations started and the other one after these were finished. The length of the first interview ranged from 60 to 120 minutes. The second was considerably shorter: from 25 to 45 minutes. Both interviews developed as conversations around the themes I had pre-defined or any other relevant emergent theme throughout the data collection process.

4. **Conduct in-site observations.** Once I visited each participant in his/her school, I observed as many lessons as each teacher agreed to for a period of one to two days, which was the estimated time I was visiting each research site. I managed to observe at last three lessons per teacher, except for Camilo, Ana and Lily. Camilo was not

observed in class because he now teaches Spanish, Ana's current role is that of a mentor and is not responsible for teaching as such and Lily was recruited in-site and was not prepared to be observed. Teachers were informed about the objectives of the observations beforehand. The observations also aimed at becoming familiar with the school environment, which meant that in the company of the teacher, I went around the school and observed their facilities, resources, bulletin boards, and paid close attention to anything that could be related to teaching or learning English.

Both the teaching biographies and the interviews were conducted in Spanish. This gave participants the freedom to describe their experiences more in depth. However, as I explain in section 4.5.2, this decision entailed additional challenges I had to deal with.

4.5 Data analysis

From a broad perspective, data analysis in narrative inquiry can be done following any type of qualitative approach (Barkhuizen et al., 2013). In spite of this, there are some more specific proposals as to how different types of narrative data can be analysed. A case in point is Riessman (2008) who has sketched four approaches to analysing data in narrative inquiry, namely thematic, structural, dialogic/performance and visual analyses. She argues that data analysis in narrative inquiry may either focus on what the collected stories tell (thematic analysis) or on how they are told (structural analysis) or on talk as narratives that speakers produce in interaction with each other (dialogic/performance analysis) or as texts represented in images (visual analysis). Riessman also explains that these approaches are not-mutually exclusive and that decisions on the best approach, or combination of approaches, will depend on the research objectives, interests and epistemological underpinnings.

In resonance to Riesman's point on the complementarity of analytical frameworks, Pavlenko (2007) argues that in order to carry out a thorough analysis of narrative data, it is necessary to focus not only on the content of stories but also on their context and form. She is critical of studies that merely rely on thematic procedures to analyse contents, since these studies may "risk offering conclusions that are too obvious and trite" (Pavlenko, 2007, p. 168). Thus, she calls for more comprehensive analytical procedures that take into account the macro and

micro contextual circumstances of the telling. That is, the historic, political, economic and cultural factors (macro context) as well as the context of the interview or manuscript and "the influence of language choice, audience, setting, modality, narrative functions, interactional concerns, and power relations on ways in which speakers and writers verbalise their experiences" (p. 175) (micro context). With regards to the form of narratives, and in agreement with recent trends in analysing narratives that emphasise the importance of language and discourse in social interaction as ways to constitute reality (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012), Pavlenko recommends the scrutiny of ways in which linguistic resources are used to structure stories. In doing so, it is possible to identify the creative ways in which individuals may present themselves.

Drawing on Riessman's typology and on Pavlenko's observations, this study followed a combination of analytical tools. As discussed above, this study aimed to make a deep characterisation of how rural English teachers make sense of their professional experiences. Thus, as Pavlenko suggests, it was necessary to take into consideration the content, form and context. To do so, first, the contents of the teachers' written and oral accounts were scrutinised following thematic procedures. Informed by the theoretical underpinnings of this study and in direct connection with the research questions, I established thematic categories to analyse the different types of data and theorise across the cases each participant represented. For example, concepts such as socioeconomic structure, cultural recognition and human development worked as broad categories to account for how issues of social justice are embedded in the data gathered (see chapter 5). Similarly, the three clusters of concepts defined by Brubaker and Cooper (2000) (i.e., identification and categorisation; self-understanding and social location; commonality, connectedness and groupness) served as analytical themes to theorise teachers' identity construction (see chapter 7). After that, in light of the initial patterns found in the written and oral accounts, observational data was used to contrast, enrich and if possible strengthen initial interpretations. In consonance with the methodological and epistemological assumptions underlying this study, this approach to data allowed me to prioritise teachers' own insights over my impressions gathered in the field observations.

Second, for analysing the form, I made use of positioning theory as an analytical framework to grasp the ways in which teachers presented themselves as 'observably and subjectively coherent' professionals in the storylines they produced both in written and oral forms (Davies & Harré, 1990; Harré et al., 2009). According to positioning theorists, in the course of social interaction – and thus in the ways we construct and exchange stories – one takes different positions (i.e., beliefs and practices involving rights and duties) which shape the way one presents oneself as a certain kind of person in social interaction. These positions may be identifiable by means of words chosen, metaphors used, images invoked, as well as storylines and concepts available in the discursive practices in which one is participating (Davies & Harré, 1990; Harré et al., 2009), (see further discussion in section 3.3.5). In this context, the use of this analytical tool added to the scrutiny of teachers' identities the idea that there is a moral dimension underlying the manner in which they present themselves in the discursive reconstruction of their own experiences. It was of especial interest in this study to analyse the positionality of teachers towards ideologies of education in general and ELT in particular that have currency in Colombia. To this end, the linguistic resources used in the stories came as important elements to be included in the analysis.

In analysing the content and the form, the contextual circumstances were considered as well. This study emphasises the need to explore ELT through the lens of social justice. Therefore, issues of social inequality such as poverty, marginalisation, cultural hierarchies (see chapter 2) that affect rural contexts particularly were at stake throughout the analysis. In the same vein, current language policies were considered in an attempt to identify the degree to which teachers' positionality may ascribe or resist assigned duties and rights. The analysis was also done in light of the fact that teachers' narratives were produced with one specific audience in mind: myself as a researcher who was interested in listening to what they had to say about their professional experiences. Given the socio-constructionist and interpretivist stance underpinning this study, it is worth noting that had their intended audience been different, their accounts would have been likely to be constructed differently too.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that as usually happens throughout the whole cycle of qualitative research, the data analysis process in this project was iterative, emergent and

interpretive (Dörnyei, 2007). It was iterative because the whole process required several instances of re-reading and reinterpretation. By the same token, data analysis was emergent in the sense that preliminary findings were flexible and open to adjustment and refinement. Finally, the whole process was interpretive because the findings were mediated by my own reflexive involvement.

4.5.1 Rigor, trustworthiness and generalisability

Barkhuizen et al. (2013) highlight three important aspects to consider when dealing with findings in narrative research: rigor, trustworthiness and generalisability. These authors define rigor as "the degree to which an analysis is systematic with regard to both the coverage of the data and the application of analytical procedures" (p. 189). Thus, in order to ensure rigor in the analysis, it is expected that the totality of data is (re)examined following a given set of specific procedures. Rigor in this research is evident in actions such as the full transcriptions of interviews, and field observations as well as in the systematic procedures followed in the analysis. Let me elaborate on the last point. Following the research questions, I decided to carry out the discussion of findings in three different chapters: one dealing with a general description of what it is like to teach English in rural Colombia, another on teachers' ELT practices and the third one focusing on the construction of identity and positionality of the teachers. With this in mind, I read all the interview data and started to organise preliminary observations by means of a matrix and colour coding techniques. The matrix consisted of three columns where I started to locate both pre-established and emerging themes (column 1), extracts from the data illustrating each theme (column 2) and my initial comments and interpretations (column 3), (see appendix H for example of matrix). As I was (re)reading the data, I also highlighted in different colors (blue, light brown and yellow) extracts that corresponded to the general topics I was interested in for each of the three chapters. Hence, the matrix allowed me to "integrate" the different accounts into a system of common themes. At that point, I was open to include all emerging themes as long as there was some level of connection with the research questions. Thus, for example, for the general description of the first data chapter I ended up having 13 different themes.

Stemming from my initial interpretations, the next step was to develop a summary of ideas I could develop further in the chapter (see appendix I for example). With that summary in hand, I then started to develop my interpretations at length. As a result, I ended up regrouping the initial themes into three more general categories, accompanied by subcategories. At the same time, armed with the theoretical tools underpinning this study, I went one step further to make sense of these categories. Thus, I reinterpreted the preliminary observations and enriched them with theory. Some of the preliminary themes were dropped and, reincorporated as necessary (see appendix J for example of trajectory and evolution of themes). Of course, the process was a lot messier than it now may sound. This is however an overall picture of the evolution of the themes throughout the rigorous process of analysis undertaken.

With regards to trustworthiness or the extent to which the stories "represent" realities, Barkhuizen et al. (2013) warn us that it would be a mistake to assume that stories are 'transparent windows' to these realities under analysis. Therefore, it is advisable to avoid presenting findings as factual representations. In this context, stories in this research have been treated as social constructions emerging from participants' lived experiences, which were recreated discursively as they were (re)told. In this view, findings in this study can be considered to be connected to the psychological reality of the tellers, which have taken shape through participant's own interpretation of life experiences put now in oral and written text.

As far as generalisability is concerned, Barkhuizen et al. (2013) explain that the applicability and contributions to theory of a narrative research, like in most qualitative research, are limited to particular cases. However, depending on the nature of the studies, there might be different degrees of generalisation. The generalisability of this research is enhanced by the fact that participants represent different rural contexts (7 schools, 7 different municipalities, 4 different departments) and that the analysis benefits from a careful scrutiny of the socioeconomic and cultural Colombian rural context.

4.5.2 Translation and transcription

Following Riessman (2008), translation and transcription are interpretative actions, and can thus be considered as part of the process of analysis. This is how in studies such as this thesis, where data is collected in one language but the report is written in another, decisions on the language used for analysis or on the ways to handle and present spoken data take on major importance. In the case of translation, these decisions have to account for the issue of losing meaning in attempting to put in one language ideas that were expressed in another. This is particularly the case of many colloquial expressions, which are usually culturally loaded and cannot be neatly translated in other languages. In order to tackle this issue, as Pavlenko (2007) recommends, I carried out the analysis in the language in which the data was produced (Spanish), and translated only the fragments that were used in the thesis. Likewise, the original transcripts in Spanish of those fragments were included as appendices (in the form of end notes) so that readers familiar with this language could have access to what participants actually said (Pavlenko, 2007). Moreover, in a few cases of what I considered key concepts and ideas, translations were provided right away in the text.

As far as transcription is concerned, as Duff and Roberts (1997) explain, complex decision making and negotiation has to be made between three main elements: accuracy, readability and fair representation of participants. According to Duff and Roberts (1997, p. 68), "all transcription is representation, and there is no natural or objective way in which talk can be written." This implies that although there is no single way to present the data, this process will always come to bear in the image of participants constructed in the research report. Therefore, tensions arise between whether to focus on making the data readable (usually by adding punctuation marks, and omitting paralinguistic features as well as repetitions, false starts and so on) or making it accurate (by transcribing talk as it is, without punctuation marks and including all the paralinguistic details as well as corrections, pauses, hesitaions etc). In light of the aims of this study, I tried to conciliate this tension by making the transcriptions readable and by including some details of the spoken interaction such as pauses, self-corrections, repetitions, and codeswitches. These elements were considered important for the analysis as they also expressed meanings regarding how teachers' construct their views. More

specific details such as paralinguistic features were not considered because doing so would have implied a different type of analysis from the one I have already sketched out.

4.6 Presentation of data and transcription conventions

From the following chapter on, this thesis deals with the findings of the study, and so the voices of the participant teachers will start to play a prominent role in the discussions and debates to be developed. Thus, it is important to add a few words explaining how data is presented. The voices of teachers will take different shapes. On occasions, teachers' views will be presented as extended narrations, which have been edited due to the word-limit in this thesis; such editing involved not including my participation in the conversations held in the interviews. Other times, I use short extracts from the transcriptions detailing the whole interaction between the participants and the researcher. On a few other occasions, a few lines are quoted directly from what participants have shared in their narrations. As already noted, the extracts from interviews are presented in English, and the original texts in Spanish will be included as endnotes in the appendices (see appendices K, L and M).

As described above, this study has used teaching biographies (TB), one round of interviews before my visits to the schools (INT1), and a second round of interviews at the end of my visits (INT2), plus field observations (FO) as sources of data. When including excerpts from interviews or teaching biographies, I will indicate the sources by using the full pseudonym of the participants followed by colons and the acronyms I just referenced. For example, (Ana:INT1) means that the quote used has been taken from the first interview conducted with Ana. In the case of excerpts from field observations, I will indicate the number after the acronym and the date where the observation was conducted. For example, (FO1: Clara, 21-09-2015) means that the fragment has been taken from the first field observation, that this observation relates to Clara and that the events narrated took place on September 21, 2015.

At the same time, it is important to highlight that the following are the conventions used in the transcriptions, which have been adapted from De Fina and Georgakopoulou (2012):

Convention	Meaning
( )	speech that can't be deciphered
(text)	analyst's guess at speech that's hard to decipher
.	Falling intonation followed by noticeable pause (as at end of declarative sentence)
?	Rising intonation followed by noticeable pause (as at end of interrogative sentence)
-	Self-interruption
=	Latched utterances by the same speaker or by different speakers
———	Emphatic stress
CAPS	Very emphatic stress
::	Vowel or consonant lengthening
//	Overlap between utterances
@	Laughter
(1.)	Approximate length of a pause in seconds
Italics	Participants' original switches to English

Table 4.4: *Conventions used in transcriptions*

4.7 Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed both philosophical and methodological assumptions underlying this study. Narrative inquiry has been presented as the research approach that best accounted for the constructionist and interpretivist views I, as the researcher, favour. In line with this research approach, I have explained how observation as an ethnographic tool could work complementarily with the general narrative methods of the study, namely in-depth interviews and teaching biographies. In the same vein, I have outlined the procedures I followed for recruitment, data collection, and data analysis as well as the conventions for data

presentation. I now turn to the first data chapter where I analyse ELT issues in rural areas from the angle of social justice.

Chapter 5   ELT in Rural Colombia: An Analysis through the Lens of Social Justice

5.0   Introduction

Having outlined the theoretical and methodological constructs in the preceding chapters, I will now explore how teachers have made sense of the experience of working in rural environments. Drawing on teachers' constructions of their experiences shared by means of written biographies and interviews as well as on my own in-site observations, it is possible to offer an in-depth description of what teaching English is like in rural Colombia. The focus of the following chapters falls on the perceptions that teachers have around their professional role and identity taking into account both current language policy and issues of social inequality.

In this chapter, I will consider the state of affairs of ELT in relation to sociocultural rural contexts where, as discussed in chapters 1 and 2, issues of social inequality of the country seem to be more notorious (compared to urban contexts). Thus, informed by principles of critical pedagogy and theories of social justice, the discussion deals with teachers', students' and communities' motivations, aspirations, needs and problems, as evidenced in the data collected. In doing so, the analysis touches on ways in which cultural and socioeconomic arrangements have had an impact on the extent to which English may be integrated in the life of rural communities, and on how these same factors have an effect on the aspirations and future possibilities of both teachers and students. Although there will be some general reference to teachers' practices and their identities in this chapter, these issues will be fully discussed in chapters 6 and 7 respectively.

There is an emphasis in this chapter on examining how the teachers' accounts of their experiences relate to issues of social justice in rural Colombia in a time where the implementation of ELT policies has been accompanied by discourses on their positive social

impact (see section 2.5.5). Therefore, as the analysis develops, strong connections between the data and the theories underlying the study are built. At the same time, following Pavlenko's (2007) recommendations on analysing narrative data, the discussions below include descriptions of the broader social context. These are used to delve deeper into the scrutiny of ELT programmes from the angle of social justice and, thus, enrich the emerging observations.

In order to illustrate some of the different challenges that rural teachers have to face, the chapter starts by sharing an extended story where Ana talks about what it has meant for her to be a rural teacher. This particular story, which she shared in her first interview, has been chosen not only for its rich and lively description of lived events, but also because it serves as a good point of reference to develop the present analysis. It is important to clarify that her story is rather extreme and is not aimed to condense the experiences of all the other rural teachers. As we will see in the subsequent discussion, however, Ana's story contains themes which were also frequently touched upon by other participants and, thus, serves a good point of reference throughout the chapter to develop discussions on issues such as perceptions around the idea of working in a rural location, views of English, and the main challenges for ELT. I will be returning to Ana's story in the subsequent chapters as well.

In her participation in this study, as evident in her story, Ana shows herself as a teacher with a great sensitivity to rural realities and to the needs of students, which have led her to develop a critical understanding of what the role of a rural teacher should be. Although she is a teacher of English, currently she works in a programme of the MEN, which consists of mentoring primary school teachers in maths and Spanish language arts. She has got 24 years of experience: 15 years in an urban, private school located in one of the main cities of the country, and about 6 years in a rural public school (where the events she narrates took place), plus 4 years working as a teacher mentor in the same rural location.

The story started to unfold as Ana was asked to describe her professional history and how she came to work in a rural school. There are approximately 52 turns summarised from the first part of the interview, which developed approximately along 24 minutes (from 4'44'' to 28'58'' in the recorded exchange). The title of the story is actually a rhetorical question she

uses in the middle of her narration to add emphasis to the challenges she had to face when she became a rural teacher.

It is also worth clarifying that, as a Colombian citizen myself, I had initially avoided touching on issues that had usually been used to construe a negative stereotypical image of Colombia. Thus, I deliberately avoided references to the armed conflict of the country or to illicit crops; nonetheless, I was open to include those topics in the discussion as they emerged. As can be seen in Ana's story, these issues did come up in the process of data collection. Ana's account shows, however, a few of the many other faces of rural education in the country; not all the other teacher participants have had to witness the consequences of the armed conflict so closely, for this reason, as we will see, no special emphasis is made on these extreme situations. Perhaps this is one clear example of how my own bias played a role this research (see discussion of this in section 4.1). In any case, this story will be used to build up the analysis of ELT in relation to social issues rural teachers have to deal with.

5.1 How can I come here and teach English? (Ana's Narrative)

I was sent to a rural zone. That rural zone is a village that is hmm:: like almost two hours
2   from Ipiales. Ipiales is a border city with Ecuador, and:: hmm:: that zone where I went to work is a zone of conflict, it is a zone of guerrilla, it is a zone difficult to access. There is
4   a dirt road, It:: is a bit difficult to get there. When it is the first time, one is struck because one thinks that one is going to arrive at a normal town, but that is not the case. It is
6   remote::and it was hard indeed. The first time that I arrived, I was shocked because I had to interact with (1.) the guerrilla. I mean, in the same place where teachers had lunch, the
8   guerrillas also had lunch, so it was very (1.) very difficult. I mean, to me that situation was quite shocking, that in the town things worked that way, especially considering the fact
10   that I had not looked at one of those people like that, so squarely in the face. And they came armed, they came and put their machine guns next to the table and sat down next to
12   us. So that context was so difficult, so hard, eh:: it shocked me.

[…] what was shocking as well in the first weeks in that school was to have found so
14   sensitive kids because apparently before I arrived, they did not have an English teacher, eh:: I mean, qualified in English. Any other teacher taught them English and it was a
16   column of decontextualised words on the board for students to look up in the dictionary and translate. So, it was just isolated vocabulary and well, when I arrived, they were quite
18   struck because we started to work, I mean (1.) as one does as a teacher of English, to work a contextualised English:: I was especially concerned about the *personal information*, so
20   that they were able to give their information in English, which is the minimum. And:: well, they became good friends of mine (1.) and then one day one boy approached me and

22 said to me "teacher, I want to talk to you." And so he did, he talked to me, he got it off his chest and told me about situations, I mean, he told me that recently his mother had been
24 killed in front of him, that they took her at night, at about 8 pm (1.) the guerrilla arrived, dragged her by her hair in front of him, they took her to the square and shot her in front
26 of him.

So, those are VERY difficult contexts, so I wondered "How can I come here and teach
28 English if this situation is so, so difficult, so hard? The kids have their minds somewhere else. The kids had radios brought to them and [...] listened to a radio station of the
30 guerrilla, where people addressed each other as comrades and all that, and where they talked a lot about the philosophy of Che Guevara. And they watched videos of bombings,
32 they watched videos of attacks, I mean, it was very violent, the mentality of the students. It is not that they were violent, the context was, and I wondered "so, what about English?
34 And what about any other subject?

And some kids asked me "teacher, how much do you earn? So, I said "I earn what a teacher
36 earns." At that time, I was in category 2A, I am in the new salary scale. Then he said "hmm:: teacher, going to work to El Chongo at the weekend, you get paid almost a million
38 pesos. Then I asked them "and what is El Chongo? so, they told me "El Chongo is where you go and:: and get paid for cutting poppy buds and extract the white milk and put it into
40 small jars and, you get paid at the weekend on the basis of how much you collect." So they arrived with a lot of cuts on their fingers and their hands super swollen.

42 And:: it was <u>hard</u>, that context was very, very hard, well as I said, if it had been a (1.) normal rural context, maybe one could have contextualised English out there in the
44 countryside, go out and see the flowers, see the mountains and make descriptions in English or something, but it was difficult as the fields could have been mined @@ it was
46 hard.

Anyways, I had to continue with my task. As a teacher, one is a friend, especially as a
48 woman and as a mother I felt –I had that feeling of wanting to protect the students a little but one knows that in the professional field, one can reach only a certain point and one
50 cannot do more than one can do to solve their situation.

I used songs, romantic ballads in English, I proposed them to:: learn vocabulary through
52 songs and they liked it very much, so much that:: eh on weekends in one of the houses, they took speakers out and played for example the song by Celine Dion, of Titanic? And
54 the kids got together on the corner and sang in <u>English</u>. So, I said "well, that way at least their soul is calmed." And they make an effort to:: to learn to pronounce a new language,
56 and for them it was new indeed, although they were in eleventh grade, it was new because, as I said, the previous teachers of English were not qualified in English as such, they were
58 assigned eh that:: task and they just focused on isolated and decontextualised vocabulary. There never was an exchange of information, I mean, eh:: eh:: the language,
60 communication, being able to communicate.

Then, that was the experience with the kids when I went there for the first time in 2005.
62 That was the first experience. In 2006, things started to calm down a little as far as the public security is concerned, although then the confrontations started, the experiences of
64 having the government sending the army, because there was no:: police station. Then one

day, hmm:: at about the end of 2006, helicopters arrived, army tanks arrived, a whole army
66 arrived to take possession of the village. They took possession, the guerrilla went out the
town and then another context came, the context of confrontations. We were in class and
68 suddenly "frun" (sound of a bullet) a bullet hole on the board (2.) it was like that.

Behind the classroom there was a huge, huge cornfield and the guerrillas went that way to
70 confront the cops, or the soldiers located themselves on the roof of the school and from
there, they started to respond and left us caught in the midst of the cross-fire (ahay) @@@
72 and in that situation I was teaching English @@, it is a difficult situation.

As we already knew at least the *commands* in English, the kids went *down* abajo, to the
74 floor al piso, *on the floor,* we already knew more or less what I said to them in English. I
said "*on the floor, on the floor"* and they already knew it, and sometimes we had to stay
76 down for up to one or two hours talking about or singing the songs they already knew,
there we were humming in English, but on the floor. […]

78 Then, those are things that:: eh no matter how much you want to teach something, no
matter how much you want your kids to learn something in a good way, the context is
80 difficult, the context affects them. […]

The kids are still affected by that context, the kids, the kids still eh:: -one as a teacher is
82 sensitive to what they feel, so how could I demand anything from them, if I was aware of
such a difficult situation. However, we were making some progress. I had materials from
84 hmm:: some books. I liked very much to use videos, <u>movies</u> so that they started to become
familiar with the language. We were making some progress by teaching them some verbal
86 conjugations, which for me are important for the kids to know how to use. Verbs are the
basis to be able to communicate. As I told the kids "you can go to a hotel and say *sleep*
88 and that's all:: at least you are going to be understood. If you go to a restaurant and you
say *eat*, at least you are understood." So, we emphasised on special lists of verbs, I kept
90 on insisting on *personal information* so that they could at least say their personal data
because kids like learning what is theirs not what is alien. So, at least, I told them, try to
92 learn to say *my name is*, *my name is* Ana, I live in such place, my address is such, I like
doing this, I like doing that, I am in such school, and I would like to be a physician, a
94 doctor, well, whatever but that as a starting point. And:: I tell you teacher [referring to
me], it was a bit difficult to use the *personal information* in both having them say who
96 they were, introduce themselves, and in having them ask other people. And that was in
<u>eleventh grade</u>, imagine teacher, they should have learnt those things years ago […]

98 But, well, now those things are not happening anymore thank God, those things do not
happen, it is controlled. [In] 2009, 2010 (1.) there was calm and then there was like more
100 encouragement and more willingness from the kids to work (2.). Because of that such a
hard context, I tried to lower their tension with games and they were happy. Happy with
102 the games, happy with the songs, happy with:: eh:: poetry too, they liked it very much.
Although they sometimes mechanised them and did not know what these meant, they
104 learnt them as a way to practice the pronunciation. But, "that is better than nothing," I
thought. And as I said, some did learn, some did learn, and I think that is precisely the
106 question, the question is that one gets interested in that human being, right? In the human
being that one has here because if that had not been the case, I could have just done the

108   same. I mean, if I had not been sensitive with the kids, I would have just put a few things
       on the board for them to translate as they were used to.   The class of English was just the
110   dictionary from the Chicago University and a list of words on the board.

       When I arrived, it was not all about the dictionary anymore, it was an important
112   requirement to use a dictionary but in a different way. And something that they liked was
       that we did a lot of crosswords, we did a lot of word searches and:: we marked the route
114   of the school, <u>everything</u>, the teachers' lounge, the toilets, the library, we labelled
       everything in English, and that was something that they also liked, uhu.

116   And as it was not very dangerous anymore, I took them out to the town in small groups to
       take a tour. I said to them "we are going to take a tour in English (1.) teaching the places,"
118   the church, the park, although it was not beautiful, there was a park where the kids played
       basketball and football, the police station, the commissariat, the parish, the office. Eh there
120   was another school too, and we walked around but I was talking to them in English and
       the people in the town crowded and said "what is it that the teacher is doing? What is she
122   saying? What is she doing?" and I asked the kids and:: and they replied, so, that was a
       novelty. (Ana:INT1)[i]

In Colombia, the goals and drives for teaching English have been thought of mainly in reference to ideal contexts where students are expected to be able to reach certain levels of proficiency in English at different stages of their schooling, as critiqued in chapter 2. On the grounds of more and better (economic and academic) opportunities for all, or contributing to president Santos's idea of making Colombia the most educated country of Latin America, English is presented as an attractive, promising and, thus, necessary language to learn. However, when we hear stories like Ana's, it is inevitable to start wondering about the extent to which English might have come to play a part in the life of people who do not live in those ideal conditions necessary to both attain the goals and benefit from learning this language.

Ana, a teacher who happened to take a job in a rural location – which led her to experience the longstanding internal armed conflict of the country face to face – wonders "how can I come here and teach English?" (lines 29-30). This is particularly an important question because as she says, due to different social issues of the context, students tend to "have their minds somewhere else" (line 31). Even though, as Ana remarks, these situations of high violence described "are not happening anymore" (line 106) or at least it is not a pervasive phenomenon anymore, this study shows that other rural school teachers still wonder about the same question. This is because in addition to the armed conflict, the rural context has also

endured, as I shall discuss, unfair socioeconomic arrangements that have reduced the options for economic prosperity in the sector.

In narrating how she has dealt with all sorts of conflicts arising from the hostile environment of her school, Ana constructs different ideas of how she perceives ELT. Her story builds upon ideas on the importance of English, who a good teacher is, ways in which English teaching can be made more meaningful for students, the impact of the context on how teachers come to understand their practice, who students are, the connections of English with students' lives as well as challenges and objectives of ELT in rural locations. These themes are prominent in the data and will be used here as a point of reference to interrogate the social impact of ELT initiatives in the country. Such interrogation takes importance since in the frame of the long-term peace talks with guerrilla groups, president Santos has justified the need to implement ELT programmes as a way to contribute to peace building, social development and justice (see section 2.3.5). It has been argued that since the ELT initiatives are on a national scale, English and the opportunities this language is thought to represent (e.g. better jobs, intercultural exchange, more opportunities to study abroad), are made accessible to all citizens (MEN, 2014b; Presidencia-de-la-Republica, 2014). An important development in this regard that has taken place after my field work is the redefinition of learning descriptors in the form of rights for all students in secondary school (MEN, 2016a). In discussing these issues in chapter 2, I claimed that the rhetoric on the social impact of the ELT programmes promoted in the country still need to be translated into actions. One way to facilitate such process is to analyse in depth how issues of social (in)equality connect with or differ from the opportunities English is supposed to offer, and the strategies undertaken in the country to introduce it. To develop such in-depth analysis this study has taken the concept of social justice as a theoretical basis from which to examine the specific context of rural education. In particular, from the theoretical accounts of social justice offered by Fraser (1997, 2007, 2008a; Fraser & Honneth, 2003) as well as Sen (2009) and Nussbaum (2011), the analysis is carried out on the basis of the concepts of cultural recognition, socioeconomic redistribution, and human development.

In the following sections, thus, I shall discuss issues yielded in the data in light of such theoretical concepts. I will first refer to how preconceptions teachers have about the idea of

working in rural contexts reflect a wider social misrecognition of rurality by, for example, doubting the capacity of rural students to learn English and imagining the whole experience mainly in negative terms. In this discussion, I will also show how being a rural teacher, at the same time, may represent an almost inherent reason for disdain and disrespect towards them as professionals, whose capacities are also questioned. I will then turn to discuss how teachers have dispelled some of those negative preconceptions and how there is a more positive face of working in rural contexts than they had originally imagined. I will then discuss the effects that socioeconomic issues rural dwellers have to deal with on appreciating the role of English. Finally, I will point at a few issues on human development arising from the impact of socioeconomic arrangements on the possibilities of students and teachers to fulfil their aspirations.

5.2 A misrecognised rural context in the architecture of ELT policy

In this section I will draw on the data to show how in promoting ELT in Colombia, there is at least one level on which rurality appears to have been misrecognised. A general observation is that there seems to be a widespread belief that rural students and teachers are less capable than their urban counterparts in learning and teaching (which includes the capacity to learn and teach English), derived from a socially constructed lower esteem for what is rural. The data shows that misrecognition of the rural sector in relation to ELT is found in association with the negative images that have been constructed around rural life in general and the capacity of rural students and teachers, in particular. Drawing on Ana's story, it is worth noting that the internal armed conflict in Colombia has more evidently been lived in rural areas. It has been the rural dwellers, especially those in highly remote locations, who have had to witness these issues on a daily basis as opposed to other citizens who are used to just watching or reading about these in the media. As seen in Ana's narrative, these issues are so serious that they permeate life in such contexts at all levels. One of these levels is education, and within education ELT. In addition to issues related to the armed conflict, as discussed in chapter 2, the rural sector has also been seriously affected by a development model based on free trade with foreign markets, deregulation of markets, privatisation as well as decentralisation from the State, which appear to have 'condemned' many rural inhabitants

to be unable to undertake profitable economic activities and improve their living standards (PNUD, 2011).

These circumstances have contributed to the construction of negative images and opinions of what life in rural areas is like. These ideas have also made the option of taking up a job as a teacher of English in one of these locations unattractive. This was precisely the perception of the participants who had to combat the negative preconceptions they held on what it was going to be like to come to work in rural regions. For instance, as Eva comments, general beliefs included the idea that schools are ugly and quite far away, with a lack of resources and, as she also said, "isolated in the jungle" (Eva:TB)

> My expectations before, when I finished the university were to work in a town or in a city, I did not see myself in a rural area (2.) because I thought it was fa::r, that maybe there were not many resources, I imagined the school was rather ugly, I did not know, I did not have much knowledge of rural schools […] and when I arrived, I realised that it was a beautiful school, with a beautiful infrastructure, I liked it (Eva:INT1)[ii]

Similar negative ideas were held even by those teachers with rural backgrounds, as was the case of Maria. Once she became a professional, she thought that working in a rural environment was something hard and that she deserved better. She even described the option in pejorative terms against rural inhabitants by saying that she deserved "not to get smeared by countryside people" (*no untarse de gente del campo*).

> I am from the countryside, […] I was raised in the countryside […] however, when I was going to start [to work as a teacher] I thought that going to work in the countryside was very difficult, and that maybe those kids wouldn't learn, I mean one has the idea that working in a rural location is not for oneself. One wants like staying in the city, not to get smeared by countryside people, although one was raised in the countryside and knew how the countryside was like, but as one was already professional, one thinks differently […] I always speak of the teachers, spectacular, the teachers, a very kind principal and of course the students too. The students, very kind, many enthusiastic about learning, about moving forward […] (Maria: INT1)[iii]

As illustrated in the following quote, these negative ideas also include doubting the capacity of students to learn English as some teachers supposed that it would be very hard to motivate students or that they would most probably not learn easily. Dora and Clara, more specifically

referred to things like pronunciation, as issues that would demand a lot of effort from students.

> I had the idea that they were not going to be able to do the pronunciation. But I was wrong, with practice, for example, they like very much to sing in English, so I am constantly looking for songs that they like, it has indeed changed a lot, my way of thinking has changed because they are able to do that (Dora:INT1)[iv].

These three examples, nonetheless, also illustrate how teachers' own experiences have proved their negative preconceptions wrong. This is a point I shall return to later. For the time being, it is important to highlight that the opinions some teachers held were highly negative, before actually experiencing what working in a rural location was like. Most of them tended to associate the rural context with isolation, ugliness, ignorance, and incapacity. Therefore, as Eva and Maria state, they expected to find a job in urban locations. These negative opinions seem to be a reflection of frequent allusions to rurality in terms of backwardness and difficulty, as found in periodic news reports (e.g. "Así es Colombia Rural," 2012), economic rural censuses (DANE, 2015b) or everyday conversations. At the same time, these opinions translate into lower esteem for what is rural. As discussed in chapter 2, these negative images of rurality have been fuelled by the urban-oriented development model operating in the country for over half a century now (PNUD, 2011), under the illusion that progress and better quality of life are more likely to take place through industrialisation and urbanism, as critiqued by post-development theorists such as Arturo Escobar (e.g. Escobar, 2005; Escobar, 2007).

Some of the teachers' *a priori* concerns are indeed confirmed in Ana's story, especially around issues of conflict, difficult access, and the challenge of familiarising students with English. Nevertheless, as the same previous quotes confirm, what is rural is routinely disparaged, sometimes without a full appreciation of other dimensions. For instance, those preliminary negative ideas of teachers have either changed or been outweighed by other aspects they have come to realise throughout their experiences. Looking back at the previous three excerpts we can see that Eva found that the school had a good infrastructure and was not as "ugly" as she feared. Maria found that in most of these rural schools, she usually came

across very supportive colleagues and administrators as well as "kind and enthusiastic students." Similarly, Dora has realised she "was wrong" to think that students could not get English pronunciation right. She has found that she could actually take students to use English in their everyday life as they could use English in everyday interactions (e.g. for greeting, thanking and singing). All these reconsiderations of their initial preconceptions indicate that teachers have also gone through a process of dispelling some of the negative constructions of rural life, specifically that of less intelligent or capable students. As Jairo notes,

> […] the things that, say, make different the city from the countryside [are] not in the sense that people from the countryside have less capacity than those in the city, I see here that the kids have much, much capacity. What happens is that maybe the technologies, the ways of accessing information are minimal but students have much capacity here (Jairo:INT1)[v].

Jairo has noticed that the difference between rural and urban students is not the capacities of students but rather their access to information. This capacity of students to actually be able to learn is also emphasised by Ana (lines 89-92) when she describes how despite the difficulties, they "were making some progress" and of how some kids "did learn" (lines 113-114) English by using poetry and other strategies in her classroom. However, going beyond the use of traditional grammar-translation methodology is pointed out as a sign of recognizing the capacity of students, and that recognition, as Ana argues, is a responsibility of the teacher who should be interested in students as "human beings" with a full potential. On this basis, teachers can try to do their work as well as possible or as she seems to put it, as professionally as possible, being sensitive to the students' realities but without underestimating them. In chapter 7, we will see how these ideas serve as important elements to build a counter narrative to mainstream understandings of professionalism in the ELT field (see sections 7.1 & 7.2).

In a critical examination of imaginaries that tend to emphasise different sort of linguistic and cognitive skills between men and women, the linguist and feminist Deborah Cameron uses the term "zombie ideas" to refer precisely to how these imaginaries are the product of hard-to-kill misleading socially constructed beliefs circulating in both the media and research reports (Cameron, 2016). As happens with zombies, Cameron argues, these ideas do not seem

to die and on the contrary are likely to infect more and more victims. As the present analysis shows so far, we can also apply the concept of zombie ideas to refer to the widespread negative beliefs about rural life in Colombia. The evidence from this study suggests that teachers were infected by these beliefs and have only found an antidote to it in their own professional experiences in rural schools.

Ironically, as teachers become part of the rural communities by working with them, they also become subject to a lower appreciation and respect at the professional level. That was precisely the experience Ana had when she was transferred to an urban school after five years of having worked in a rural location. As we can see in the excerpt below, Ana experienced disrespect from the principal and bullying from her colleagues. The principal in the new school, for example, was reluctant to accept Ana in the school due to her rural background. Ana felt the new principal did not trust her and as a result denied her the chance to participate in a teacher development programme she had successfully signed up to before coming to the new school. Her new colleagues also made her life uneasy as they kept on bullying her with comments about her previous rural experience. They made comments like "where are your boots," "where is your gun?" and, as she later on mentions in the interview, they even felt the right to comment on how she should dress to come to the urban school. In these circumstances, Ana declares, she did not understand why her rural background could be a reason for being discriminated against if, in her view, rural students are just like urban students and teachers who work in circumstances like the ones she describes in the opening story should indeed be even more appreciated.

Ana: In 2011 I was classified in B2 and they were choosing teachers to travel to San Andrés for the immersion programme, and I was in their list […] and the school principal did not trust me because I had just arrived at the school. She said "so, you come from a rural school, no! She said. "You come from a rural school, how come?" so she appointed another teacher from the school.

Ferney: In what you said, there was something that struck me and it is that in the school the fact that you came from a rural school gave you a sort of a not very positive image at school? How was that?

Ana: Yes:: […] when I was transferred from [name of school], I arrived at a school in Ipiales […] and I arrived and greeted everyone and all that […] I introduced myself and when she [the principal] looked at my administrative act, and read it, she looked

at me and said "You come from a rural school, how come!" she said […] "you come from a rural area?" she said. "We have to accept what the Secretariat of Education sends us" That was my welcome […] and my colleagues at work went like "Ana, where did you leave your boots? Where is your gun? […] and I wondered "why did they have to discriminate against me and tell me things just because I come from [name of village] if there are students over there, and they are human beings too? And perhaps a teacher who goes there has more merit than others here [in the city] (Ana: INT1)[vi].

Fraser (1997) explains that social injustice in the realm of cultural recognition takes the form of disrespect to given groups in society. Judging from the ideas teachers had about rurality and Ana's experience in the new urban school, it can be said that there is a tendency to see rural students and even teachers as less capable or less worthy of esteem and, thus, of opportunities. In the specific case of this PhD research, students might be seen as less worthy of having qualified teachers of English, and rural teachers less worthy of being appreciated and valued by other colleagues in non-rural locations, and, as discussed in chapter 2, both teachers and students less worthy of benefiting from strategies being implemented to support ELT processes (i.e. professional development, access to available resources, being a focus institution for the development of new strategies for ELT). These cases illustrate the variety of forms of misrecognition, which may be institutionalised formally by means of for example 'government policies' or informally by, for instance, 'sedimented social practices of civil society' (Fraser, 2000, p. 114).

As shown, however, this lesser esteem and disrespect are the product of a misrecognition of the rural sector that many times prevents the appreciation of the full potential of rural communities. As Jairo points out above, he has come to recognise that rural students are as capable as any other student in urban locations. In Ana's case, she turned out to have one of the highest scores of the region in the periodic evaluation conducted by the MEN to teachers who wanted to be promoted. Not only was Ana promoted in the salary scale but also offered a position to join a national programme as a mentor for other teachers. These events highlight how misleading general biases towards rurality can be.

This section has dealt with how cultural misrecognition has come to play in the perceptions of teachers. Before moving on to analyse how socioeconomic issues have also influenced these perceptions (section 5.3) and their ideas regarding human development (section 5.4),

the following section illustrates how teachers' rather negative preconceptions were reshaped as they developed their practice in rural schools.

5.2.1 Feelings of professional well-being and stability: the other face of rurality

In order to combat the usually negative images of rurality, from the point of view of this research, I also find pertinent to talk about the possibilities available in the rural context. Apart from the proven capability of its people, the rural sector also seems to offer a rather comfortable environment for teachers to work. Oftentimes teachers referred to feelings of professional well-being emerging from their experiences in rural work environments. In connection with this, in Maria's quote above, she states that she has "felt much more comfortable working in the rural sector, especially for the human qualities of its people" (Maria:TB). Similarly, Jairo explains he feels good working in a rural area now, even though, at the beginning, he was reluctant to come for what he had heard specifically about the armed conflict in the area where he was appointed to work (the same school Ana had worked at). He has come to value the fact that teachers are well appreciated, respected, and their work cherished by parents and the community in these regions, much more than it would be in an urban context.

> When I arrived, I am going to be honest, with some fear (2.) because, say, all those things that one has heard and:: because of the social problem that is afflicting Colombia. Then, one comes like predisposed wishing nothing to happen in that sense […] but once one is here, one gets to know the people, I mean, one realises that what is nice in a rural area is that a teacher is highly esteemed. I mean, one is given confidence, one is given love that maybe in a city is forgotten. One is welcome, there still exists that respect to the teacher, giving him the real value that one has, that maybe is forgotten in the city, which is that of forming people. And parents are very thankful in that sense. So, that is a point in which one (1.) gets full of energy and say, here it is possible to do many things, right? (Jairo: INT1)[vii].

These feelings seemed to have emerged also as a result of the personality of their students. Teachers in this study (especially Maria, Jairo, Ana, Dora) frequently portrayed their students as being quite respectful, friendly, responsible, eager to learn and well-behaved;

characteristics that have made them feel at ease. Maria and Ana in particular highlight that in these communities, students are likely to develop long lasting feelings of gratitude towards teachers. Dora insists that she is quite happy at her school, despite the lack of appropriate teaching materials and resources (issues discussed in the next chapter). She says that the fact that her children have come to like English is a good reason to try to be creative (see section 6.3 for examples of teachers' creativity).

Another factor of comfort for rural teachers has been what can be considered a fairer amount of work. Most of the participant-teachers had prior experience in private urban schools and report that one of the things they value most about working in a rural school is the fact that the work load is not as heavy as it was in their previous institutions (Ana, Eva, Dora, Arturo). Ana, for instance, had worked in Armenia (a main city in Colombia) for 15 years in a private school until her work load was doubled for the same salary. Dora also describes as "too hard" the work load in a private institution she used to work at; she was the only teacher of English in a primary level where there were almost 600 students.

Contrary to what other studies have shown (e.g. Perfetti, 2003), class sizes in this study emerged as another factor which has contributed to developing feelings of professional well-being. During my observations, I could notice that teachers did not really have to deal with large classes. I visited classes that ranged from 9 (one group in Eva's school) to a maximum of 30 students (one group in Maria's school). This is something that teachers like Eva have come to appreciate too as her teaching sometimes is "almost personalised" (Eva:INT2). On average, groups of students tended to be 20-25 students, compared to an average of 32 students in state urban schools (MEN, 2002b). Intriguingly, the fact that there are fewer students is in part explained by the same beliefs of difficulty and backwardness attached to images of rural life held by families who prefer to take their children to the school in urban centres, as was reported by one of the principals of the schools observed.

Another positive face of rurality for teachers has been that they have found stability. In fact, working in a rural location has been the result of the participants' desire of joining the public sector, an objective of many school teachers in Colombia for the stability it represents. It was easier to accomplish this objective taking posts where other people might not want to come, as reported by Eva, Dora, Arturo, and Camilo. For example, in Eva's case, having taken up

a job in a rural location has been quite positive because she has been able to be stable despite her status as provisional. She has been working at the same school for six years. Had she decided to take some of the offers she had received of working in towns, this might have meant not having a stable job now. As she declares, "it is an advantage in my life to have an almost stable job for some time" (Eva: TB) since there is less competition for a post in a rural school. Similarly, in Arturo's case, working in a rural school meant having a rather stable job he needed in order to be able to provide for his family as he had recently become a father and had not had much work experience to compete for other jobs.

As seen, then, the value offered to teachers and their work, fairer amount of work load (compared to private schools), personality of students, reasonable class sizes as well as the idea of a stable job are factors that make the idea of working in a rural area – for qualified teachers of English in this case – not as undesirable as originally thought. There is a need however to appreciate the possibilities the rural sector may offer and broaden the understanding of it beyond the lines of difficulty, backwardness and social struggle and a misguided belief that its people are less capable. These are problems of misrecognition, as Fraser (2000) explains and as we will see in the remainder of this chapter, are imbricated with economic inequality as well.

5.3 The impact of unfair socioeconomic structures on ELT

Following Zotzmann and Hernández-Zamora (2013), in order to question inequality in the field of ELT, it is not enough to scrutinise cultural dimensions. It is necessary to also analyse economic arrangements in society or what Fraser (1997) calls redistribution. In fact, this study shows that some of the most salient challenging factors to negotiate when teaching English in rural schools are related to social injustices such as economic marginalisation and poverty. As discussed in chapter 2, research reports point out that over two thirds of rural inhabitants in Colombia are poor, and over one third are extremely poor (Perry, 2010; PNUD, 2011). As also discussed in chapter 2, there is a series of factors that have prevented rural dwellers from overcoming this problem. First of all, there is limited access to productive lands and financing opportunities to develop efficient and productive systems. There is also

lack of opportunities for rural dwellers to develop their capacities and be able to use their resources more effectively (Perry, 2010). These factors do not leave small farmers in a good position to compete with foreign markets in the economic openness model operating in the country (PNUD, 2011). Furthermore, there has been an absence of governmental initiatives to converge rural and urban economies and support small farmers rather than big rural entrepreneurs. On top of that, there are no clear mechanisms for political representation of the voices of rural people (PNUD, 2011).

In this context, the economic limitations translate directly into an uncertainty to make sense of English as a vehicle for social development, opportunity and progress for Colombian rural citizens, as is stated in the ELT policy. One way in which this is evident is the low probability to have access to higher education. Earning a professional degree is the foremost immediate connection students can make between learning English and better work and study opportunities. It is also a precondition to compete for these opportunities either within Colombia or abroad. Despite these facts, the present study confirms that factors such as the scarce availability of higher education programmes in rural regions, low income, and poor performance of rural students in national examinations (Matijasevic, 2014) continue to be major obstacles for rural students to access higher education. Participants especially referred to economic difficulties. As discussed in chapter 2, the income of rural workers is very low, insufficient to pay for fees and living expenses of their children, who usually have to settle in one of the main cities where the offer of higher education is concentrated. In addition, as Matijasevic (2014) also shows, mainly because of precarious schooling conditions, 82% of rural schools obtain medium or low scores in national examinations – compared to a 48% in urban schools – which reduces the possibilities for rural students to compete for places in state funded universities, where these scores are taken as an important requirement for securing a place. Consequently, teachers report that only a small percentage of students can successfully continue their education. The other students tend either to move to a city and find a (usually) low skill job or stay in the region doing the same activities as their parents (i.e. agriculture), under the same unfavourable conditions. All this in turn implies that rural students tend to see the 'promise of English' as something rather unreachable. What is more, as Piller (2016, pp. 171-172) argues in her analysis of linguistic diversity from the perspective of social justice, with the blind promotion of English "as a cure-all, the global community is

placing a double burden on its weakest members: they have to acquire productive skills and they have to learn English." As appears to be the case of rural communities in Colombia, they have to deal with this 'double burden' without a clear idea or motivation of how English is going to actually represent some form of development for them.

Another factor that causes the reduced number of rural students in higher education is that it is not a goal for many families. In the view of Clara, that is certainly the case in the community where she works. She explains that,

> Very few students go to the university also because they [parents] feel very proud when their child finishes high school. For them it is a pride to say that their child holds a high school degree and that's it […] very few families are interested in their children continuing to study (Clara:INT1)[viii]

Clara explains that parents, in many cases, did not have the chance to finish high school themselves and so for them it might be sufficiently gratifying to see their children going beyond that point. In short, then, higher education appears to be something unaffordable and unreachable, and, at times, something beyond the expectations of families.

Interestingly, it appears to be somewhat easier for indigenous students to have access to higher education. Thanks to various policies and agreements in place in different universities of the country, indigenous students may take special places offered to them, or be required to fulfil fewer requirements or be beneficiaries of fee reductions (UNESCO, 2004). This flexibility and support offered to indigenous communities, according to Lily, have been used by her to promote learning English as a means to become professionals and even travel abroad; as she says

> I make them understand that English is a language that has to be learned because when you go to the University, those who go to the university, "there, all subjects are in English" I tell them. I also tell them that English is a language that "you do not know the opportunities that may come to you." For they are indigenous, they are prioritised, they are given scholarships. Then I say to them "English now is fundamental for all, for all, so how good if you learn it and are able to hold a conversation with another person, win a scholarship, be taken to the United States, and at least be able to ask for the toilet or look for a hotel or a meal or where to sleep" I tell them (Lily: INT1)[ix]

Unlike the other teachers, Lily has been able to use the opportunities students have to go to the university and travel abroad – as other students in her school have done – as a drive for them to learn English. She seems to also use exaggeration as a strategy to awaken students' interest in the language by suggesting that English is a medium of instruction at the university. Of course, that is not the case; in most undergraduate programmes, English is just another academic subject. The special opportunities available for indigenous students, nonetheless, do not completely solve the issue of poor income in rural families who would still need to count on additional resources to support their children. That is why, despite the preferential conditions for indigenous students to access higher education, their participation is still very low. Previous research reports have shown that on average for every 1000 indigenous youngsters in Colombia, only 77 are able to enrol in university degrees (see Caicedo Ortiz & Castillo Guzmán, 2008). What is also interesting from Lily's account, as I shall further demonstrate in the next chapter, is that despite the challenging economic circumstances and the uncertainty of benefiting from learning English, teachers believe this language is indeed worth learning.

Unfortunately, the impact of the unfair socioeconomic affairs for rural students is not only evident in the difficulty of families to support their children to access higher education; the participants of this study have also witnessed that:

i.   students see in school also a place where they can obtain some free food (as mentioned by Lily, Eva, Dora),

ii.   it is quite difficult for parents to attend school meetings because they cannot afford to "lose" a day of work (as observed by all)

iii.   children usually have to work (as observed by all)

iv.   on occasions, students have to take care of themselves for several days as parents undertake temporary jobs that demand being away (as explained by Dora, Clara, Ana),

v.   students are likely to drop out as parents do not have a stable job and must move away frequently (as has happened in Clara's school)

vi.   parents borrow money from the bank to invest in growing a given product, then lose everything because they must sell their products very cheaply (as stated by Lily)

On this basis and stemming from Fraser's account of social justice, it can be said that rural families are likely to be subjected to 'economic marginalisation' and 'deprivation.' Rural workers are usually subjected to undertaking hard and poorly remunerated jobs, and small farmers do not have the necessary guarantees to make their agricultural activities profitable. Therefore, thinking of the future possibilities that further education or that English may open is likely not to be in the list of primary concerns for them. This fact may also explain the pride a parent may feel solely by having their children earn a high school degree. As discussed in the next chapter, then, making English fit in the list of needs or desires of these families becomes a real challenge for teachers. For now, I move on to show some ways in which teachers deal with these socioeconomic issues.

5.3.1 Teachers' positioning towards socioeconomic issues influencing ELT

As teachers become knowledgeable of the sorts of economic problems students have to deal with, they feel their work is affected too. That is certainly the view of Lily, who feels she has to devote some of the time in her lessons to offer some advice to students. Sometimes, this has involved positioning herself as a model of success students may follow. At the same time, as can be seen in the excerpt below, as a teacher she also feels she should make their life more agreeable and try to offer some form of relief by making students laugh and have fun in class.

> Here in one day under the sun and the rain working with the shovel they earn COP 14.000, COP 14.000. So, I tell them "look, I earn COP 70.000 and I only work until 1:00 pm. So, study, study, try to succeed in life. If your parents do not support you, I don't know, work and study, but try to move forward, try to –fight" I tell them "to be someone in life." Some say yes, yes, yes teacher, yes […] I try to tell them to try to have a good breakfast in the morning, anything, potatoes or corn, anything, I tell them […] and I also try to make the lessons more motivating too. I make them laugh, I tell them a joke […] (Lily:INT1)[x]

By saying "in one day under the sun and the rain working with the shovel" Lily highlights the hard work some rural dwellers usually have to undertake in order to earn some money, which in fact is very little. COP 14000 (approx. US$4.20 or £3, January 15th 2016) is far from being a fair reward for the hard work. As a member of the indigenous community who has been able to study and become a professional, she uses her daily salary (approx. US$21.30 or £14.90) as a way to demonstrate how much things may change if they listen to her and try "to fight to be someone in life." Interestingly, in the episode of Ana's story where a student asks for her salary, it is evident, it does not sound as attractive to some students as it is to work at "El Chongo," where on one weekend they could make good amounts of money, apparently much more than what a teacher may earn (see Ana's narrative above lines 39-42). This also raises questions about how well teachers are being remunerated, but that is another discussion. Similarly, in the context where Arturo works, an immediate solution to low income is to join an oil company, located nearby.

> […] petroleum companies arrived. There is an oil well there and people work in the companies and then that's why the students do not see schooling as something important, as the means to improve their social situation because they -in fact, a watchman that works in the company even earns up to three times what we, teachers, earn. So, they with a high school degree, and as they are from the region, can join and work in the company and do well. Now the trend is to work in the company in whatever comes up. And what comes up is usually low skill jobs […] (Arturo:INT1)[xi]

The economic panorama in this region is quite different from others. The fact that there is an oil company operating in the area means that there are more opportunities to obtain well-paid, albeit low skilled, jobs. In the view of Arturo, this situation is unfortunate as students' ambitions are likely to be reduced to joining the company. Holding a high school diploma is enough for finding a job and earning a lot more than himself. Therefore, higher education or the world English represents once again appears not to be very useful to address their immediate needs, which are mostly economic in nature. Hence, contrary to Lily's case, the fact that Ana and Arturo are school teachers, in the eyes of students, does not necessarily represent attractive role models to follow.

In Eva's case, as she explains, teachers are called on to try to do something for those students who have dropped out due to economic limitations. She explains that it is her responsibility and part of her job to pay a visit to those students who have dropped out and find out why. When it is for economic reasons, fundraisers are organised at the school in order to try to provide what the children need to help them come back.

> These contexts oblige us to pay attention to the children because we have few students and many of them do not like studying or do not have the resources to study and decide to stay at home. Thus, as a teacher, I am obliged, and it is part of our work, to go to these children's homes and ask what the problem is and why they do not want to come back to school. […] Many of them haven't got enough money. So, we as teachers, raise money and buy school supplies and shoes and everything they need […]. (Eva:INT2)[xii]

Thus, the work as a teacher of English in the rural sector entails much more than training students to reach a given proficiency level. It involves being sensitive to students' problems and attempting to – using Pennycook's (2001) term – alleviate their "social pains." Following Harré et al. (2009) and Davies and Harré (1990), in their teaching practice teachers are thus led to position themselves as professionals with the moral duty to serve as role models, providers of advice on future possibilities, sources of fun in their lessons, and even money raisers. These positions resonate with a further discussion in chapter 7 on how teachers tend to understand themselves as missionaries with the pastoral mission to cultivate aspirations in their students. Although these activities are not included in the contents teachers are to cover in their lessons, the socioeconomic challenges of the context have led teachers to make them part of what their practice is about. Ironically, as I discuss in the next and final section, teachers themselves see their aspirations and future possibilities affected by issues of the same socioeconomic nature.

5.4 On aspirations and unfreedoms: Implications for human development

From the angle of human development, there are also a few implications that arise from the present analysis of ELT in relation to social justice. Sen (2009) and Nussbaum (2011) argue

that human development is the most important dimension from which to understand social equality. Human development is, in their view, determined by the level of freedom people have not only to fulfil their needs but also to pursue their objectives in terms of all the 'doings' and 'beings' they value. Basic conditions for this to happen include the possibility (freedom) to have access to adequate standards of education and material living.

As discussed in chapter 3, human development is a very broad category. For the purposes of this study, nevertheless, the category is mainly restricted to the 'capabilities' (what people are actually able to be and to do) and to the 'functionings' (real possibilities to develop capabilities) that more directly connect with second language education. Therefore, under the assumption that English is a 'doing' that rural communities may come to value, it could be said that human development is being promoted as long as the functionings for learning and taking advantage of this language are secured and as long as 'unfreedoms' such as poverty and poor economic opportunities (preventing the development of this capability) are removed or combated (Sen, 2009). As shown above, however, the functioning of learning for rural students appears to be far from being secured. This is because it would require a whole restructuring not only of the ELT programmes but also of current cultural and socioeconomic arrangements. In this context, as shall be fully discussed in the next chapter, teachers have come to interpret the objectives of their teaching in socioculturally sensitive terms, which consider attempts to make room for English in rural communities. This interpretation, it shall be shown, implies at times a significant shift from and loosening of policy goals which, at the same time, are a way of addressing the effects of economic unfreedom affecting rural communities.

Interestingly, from the perspective of teachers, it was also possible to identify instances where socioeconomic unfreedoms interfered in the fulfilment of their aspirations (capabilities). The teachers participating in this study showed themselves as professionals with ambitions and goals in mind. Unsurprisingly for a teacher of English in a Spanish speaking country, all of them describe as an objective or even as a "dream" (Camilo:INT2) the possibility of travelling abroad and visiting an English-speaking country in order to improve their proficiency. Unfortunately, mostly due to economic restrictions, none of them had had the chance to accomplish that objective by the time this study was conducted. In the specific case

of Eva, as can be seen below, her frustration for not having been able to accomplish her objective has been translated into a lack of confidence to teach English to students (in a private urban school) who have had the opportunity she has not had. In this context, she explains that coming to work in a rural school implied less likelihood of her proficiency being judged by students.

> In my experience as a teacher, I have also had to face situations in which the students that have been able to travel abroad are defiant. In Villavicencio for example it happened that students who have been abroad paid a lot of attention to my pronunciation and that made the class tense, as they had been abroad and not me. Working in a rural area also means not to face that type of students (Eva:INT1)[xiii]

It is of course, not the ideal solution to a professional challenge a teacher of English may face. Nor is it appropriate to see the rural school as a good place to be as a strategy to avoid judgment from students on the knowledge or skills of a teacher. Eva has not had the economic freedom to, as she says, "fly," or as Sen (2009) would say, to do and to be the things she would value, and has ended up feeling "trapped."

> I have wanted to travel and improve the language and be able to look for other job opportunities because working as a teacher to teenagers is tiring and one does not see neither other panoramas nor life styles. I feel trapped with my life and the fact that I do not have enough money to fly, but I am alone and I have wanted to do things but I see no way out. (Eva:TB)[xiv]

Eva's case shows how, at a different level, teachers of English, who might serve as good models of success for students (e.g. Lily's case discussed previously, and other cases shown in chapter 7), are also prone to be professionally and personally constrained by similar unfair socioeconomic arrangements. An important part of their professional development, as appreciated by participants, is to be able to travel and experience the language and culture face to face. Not being able to afford this goal after having worked for several years raises serious questions on the sorts of economic compensation teachers obtain. Coming to work at a rural school should not be seen as a strategy to make the load of frustrated goals be more

bearable. This is another dimension of the aspects to look at if the rhetoric on promoting ELT in the country as a way to promote social development and justice is to be translated into actions.

5.5 Summary and concluding remarks

This chapter has analysed what it means to teach English in Colombian rural contexts considering issues of social inequality affecting rural communities. This analysis takes place at a crucial moment in the history of the country where the most important political agenda in the last 6 years has been the negotiation of a peace agreement with Colombian guerrilla after over half a century of civil war. In this political context, learning English (enforced through language policy) has been put forward as an important strategy contributing to social equality, social development and peace building. From the angle of rural contexts, where acute issues of social justice are more prominent (see chapter 2), it has been the aim of this chapter to point out 'concrete' issues of social inequality that need to be addressed if there is a serious intention of making English learning an instrument to pursue social development. At the same time, from the perspective of teachers, this chapter has started to show how these same social issues have had an effect on the configuration of teachers' practices and their sense of who they are as professionals.

 Drawing on the theoretical notions of 'cultural recognition', 'socioeconomic redistribution' (Fraser, 1997) and human development (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 2001, 2009) as theoretical bases, the analysis shows that the main issues to address are: i) a lower appreciation of what is rural, which involves disparaging images of rural life and capacities of rural students and teachers; ii) deprivation and economic marginalisation of rural communities; and iii) a lack of real opportunities for both students and teachers to fulfil their aspirations. With regards to the first two issues, it is worth recalling that Nancy Fraser (1997, 2009) grounds her account of social justice on the notion of parity of participation of people who, regardless of factors such as skin colour, cultural backgrounds, place of origin or economic situation are respected and provided with the conditions that enable them to participate as peers in having access to material resources. Thus, bearing in mind the discussion developed in this chapter, it can be

said that rural teachers and students have been misrecognised. This is evident in the fact that both rural students and teachers are likely to have to combat a lower appreciation of who they are and what they are able to do. As noted, doubting their capacity to learn/teach English can be seen as (just) one instance in which such lower appreciation comes about. It was shown that although teachers were initially 'infected' by negative ideas of rurality – derived from an urban-centred development of the country – they have been able to overcome these biases through their first-hand experience at schools. Teachers' dispelling of their negative preconceptions is put forward as a relevant more positive counter story of what teaching in a rural context is like, which is in tune with a personal research commitment to portray rurality beyond ideas of backwardness and difficulty. However, the lower appreciation of what is rural still needs to be addressed by a symbolic cultural recognition of rural inhabitants as peers with the same potentials of people from metropolitan areas. This is not guaranteed just by setting the same education goals for everyone, or by formulating learning descriptors in the form of rights. It starts by recognising that what is rural is not subsidiary to what is urban, and thus, that the capacities of rural inhabitants are in no way inferior.

This change, as Fraser would also argue, necessarily implies transformative socioeconomic measures (redistribution). In other words, referring now to the second issue, it is also necessary to make deep socioeconomic structural changes. A precondition for integrating English into the life of rural families is to guarantee profitable economic activities to provide adequate living standards and opportunities for their children to continue their education. Only then, the promise of English (better future, more opportunities, and thus, social development) will start to make more sense for more rural (and perhaps also urban) citizens.

In the same vein, with respect to the third issue, the lack of ample opportunities to access higher education and the absence of guarantees for rural families to be able to reach economic prosperity and have good standards of material living emerge in this study as some of the main factors conflicting with the progress and well-being associated with English in language policies. These same factors, from the point of view of human development, prevent both students and teachers from fulfilling their aspirations. In this regard, an interesting tension has emerged. In response mainly to the economic marginalisation and deprivation of rural families, following positioning theory (Harré et al., 2009), teachers tend to position

themselves as professionals with the duty to try to do what is in their reach to help students see that, as Ana said "education is a life saver" (Ana:INT1) and that they need to 'invest' (Norton, 1995) in their education. In doing so, teachers appear to expand their professional practice far beyond being language instructors to act as counsellors, role-models, fun providers, and even money raisers. In chapter 7, this discussion is taken further to show how, evoking religious beliefs, teachers take on the responsibility of cultivating aspirations on their students. However, behind these actions, teachers hide the fact that their personal and professional ambitions are also affected by the same economic unfreedoms and cultural hierarchies that impede the accomplishment of their professional goals as well as appreciation on the part of others as capable professionals.

In this broad analysis of what it means to teach English in rural Colombia from the angle of social justice, ways in which issues of social inequality affect both teachers' practices and their sense of who they are as professional have already started to be touched upon. In the following chapters, these effects are fully examined.

Chapter 6   ELT Practices in Light of Policy Interpretations and Translations

6.0 Introduction

The previous chapter analysed how ELT plays out in rural areas in relation to issues of social justice. The discussion showed how different socioeconomic and cultural arrangements in the country have come to impact on how English is understood and integrated in rural education. For instance, the analysis showed that the capacities of rural students and teachers are frequently awarded lower esteem and appreciation on the part of both governmental institutions (e.g. MEN) and the civil society (e.g. teachers themselves, school principals). The analysis also highlighted that limited chances for economic prosperity in the rural areas, the pervasive poverty of rural communities, and sometimes conflictive environments have led teachers of English to expand their professional role far beyond teaching the language. It involves being sensitive to social conflicts affecting students and, thus, attempting to ameliorate, to some degree, those negative effects on students.

Building on these issues, this chapter examines how these same social conflicts seem to also lead teachers to understand that one of their main goals as professionals is to try to make English fit into students' lives as something valuable and possible to learn. This, I shall argue, is a reinterpretation of the ELT policy objectives which diverges from reaching fixed levels of proficiency as described in the language policy operating in the country. Building from this argument, the chapter also examines the teaching practices tailored by these teachers in an attempt to navigate through the challenges the rural context presents to them, on the one hand, and the demands of existing ELT policy, on the other.

 As in the previous chapter, discussions presented here are built on an interplay between data and theory. In particular, the theory of policy enactment (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012) is used to illuminate the analysis in relation to the purposes of this study as this theory takes

"context seriously" (p. 41). That is, it invites us to examine how education policies are made sense of in light of school contexts, external pressures, values of teachers and schools, as well as infrastructure and resources available. These factors are important as they filter teachers' interpretations of policy and the subsequent practices they may decide to undertake. Therefore, drawing on the different sources of data gathered (interviews, teaching biographies and observation), the chapter attempts to identify some of the modes in which teachers have 'enacted' language policy (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012). In other words, it considers how teachers have 'interpreted' the language of policy and 'translated' that interpretation into contextualised teaching practices. Contextualised teaching practices are defined here as pedagogical strategies that teachers employ to respond to both the social challenges of their contexts and the policy demands, considering the resources at their disposal.

Figure 6.1 below illustrates the main concerns of this chapter. Drawing on key concepts of policy enactment theory, ways in which teachers make sense of policy (policy interpretation) and ways in which their understandings have come to play in their practices (policy translation) will be examined.

Interpretation

- Perception of the policy
- Views on the importance of English
- Reinterpretation of policy goals

Translation

- Impact of mechanisms of implementation
- Contextualised teaching practices
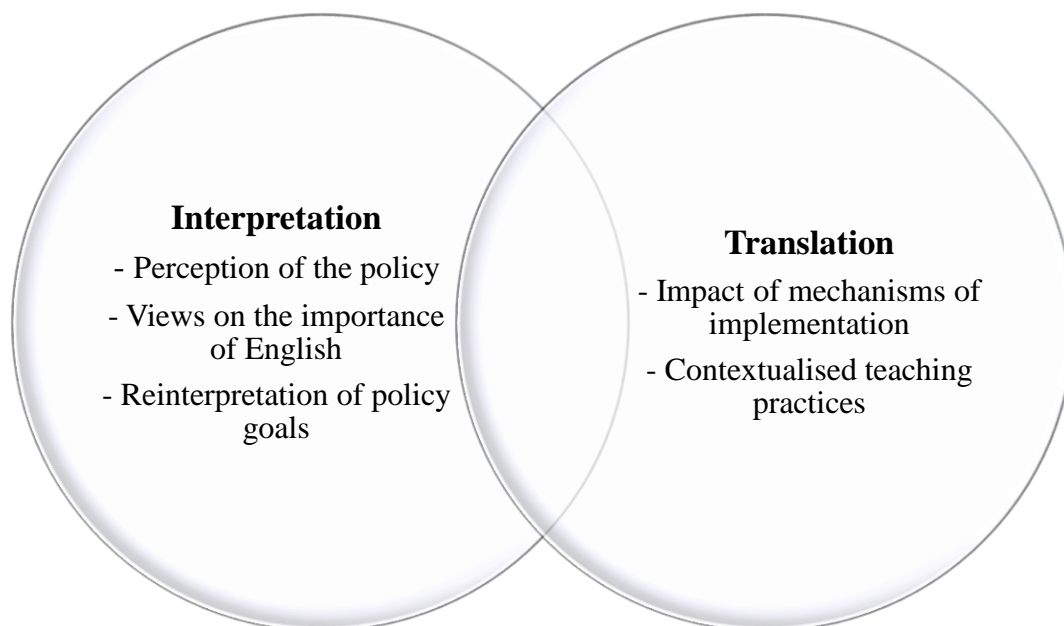
Figure 6.1: *ELT policy interpretation and translation in rural contexts*

The analysis first grapples with the general perceptions teachers hold of the policy. It then turns to examine their views on the importance of English in rural contexts as well as their ideas on alternative goals for ELT in these contexts – or what I call reinterpretation of policy goals. The analysis then moves on to explore the views of teachers in terms of the impact of the mechanisms of implementation of the policy on their practices, which refers to what Ball, Maguire, Braun, and Hoskins (2011, p. 621) call ways in which "policy is translated into the language of practice." These mechanisms include the programmes for professional development, curricular guidelines[16], national examinations, and the provision of teaching resources. Subsequently, the chapter reports on some of the creative practices teachers have devised in order to accommodate to their circumstances and the resources available. These creative practices, it shall be argued, are indicative of the power of 'educators as policy makers' (Menken & García, 2010) in their micro-contexts (their classrooms). As figure 6.1 also shows, both the interpretation and translation are interconnected. These processes are discussed separately for practical reasons but, as will be seen, interpretations generate translations and translations may generate reinterpretations.

Before we start it is important to reiterate that the following discussions are the product of a systematic thematic analysis involving three main steps: i) integrating data into common themes; ii) developing initial interpretations; and iii) reinterpreting the data in relation to theory (see section 4.5.1 for procedures of analysis).

6.1 Interpretations of the ELT policy: views on English and policy goals

This study is concerned with rural teachers' perceptions of their professional practices and identities considering both language policy and the multifarious situational factors of rural contexts they have to deal with. As noted in the introduction, factors such as teachers' own values, resources, school contexts and, as I emphasise in this research, issues of social justice act as filters to the way language policies may come to be enacted in any context. That is to

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[16] Throughout this chapter the word standards will be used interchangeably with curricular guidelines. This is because the set of teaching descriptors for ELT issued by the MEN in 2006, is usually identified with the term standards (*estándares*).

say, teachers' own beliefs and experiences, the resources at their disposal, the particularities of the school as well as the social issues present in rural communities mediate attempts to make sense of policy and, thus, also contribute to shaping teaching practices. In other words, all these factors come to bear in the different sorts of readings of and responses to education policies (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012). On the basis of these ideas, this first part of the chapter reports on how rural teachers have read and responded to the current ELT policy by focusing on three main aspects: i) their general perceptions of the policy (section 6.1.1); ii) their views on the importance of English in rural locations (section 6.1.2); and iii) their interpretation of teaching objectives (section 6.1.3).

6.1.1 Teachers' general perceptions of the ELT policy

With regards to the first factor, it was found that teachers appear to have little familiarity with the policy, which in turn seems to have been caused by an apparent lack of impact in their contexts. These points stand out in the following interview excerpt from Clara's second interview:

Ferney: What do you know about the current national programme of bilingualism?

Clara: To tell you the truth, I have not been into that topic that much, but as far as I know, the general law of education says that second language acquisition should be instructed to students, right? […] and that there have been some immersion courses for some teachers on San Andrés Island and there has also been a sort of regional workshops that I understand are also English courses […] no information has really been given to the school, not at all.

Ferney: And how did you know about these?

Clara: To tell you the truth:: once I felt curiosity about what the Bilingualism programme was about and visited the Colombia aprende website, and there, I read. But like I said, I did not investigate at any depth. I just read general information about it.

Ferney: And have you had the chance to participate in any of those courses and immersions?

Clara: Well, I believe those things are very limited and it has not had much –like not much diffusion about them [immersions and courses] has been done for all English teachers

to become aware of them. I found out about what they do on San Andrés Island when I read at that moment. I do not feel there is enough diffusion about who could participate, not really, I have not heard of it.

Ferney: **In your view, what impact has the programme had on your institution?**

Clara: None, none at all.

Ferney: Why?

Clara: We have not received much information about that programme here in the school, about the bilingual programme, not at all. Just one time, in August [2014], the school got a letter informing the principal that in the following days teachers of English needed to take a test and that we had to be checking the Colombia-aprende website to find out where we needed to go to take the test. We did follow the information on the website with two of my colleagues and did not see anything about specific dates, then nothing happened. That has been the only communication we have had at school. There has not been any information specifically for teachers. (Clara:INT2)[xv]

In relation to this excerpt, a first point worth noting is that teachers like Clara have not had the chance to formally discuss what the policy as such implies. There seems to be an absence of what Ball, Maguire, and Braun (2012) call 'policy narrators' – a term used to refer to anyone in the school context helping teachers interpret what the policy consists of and what is expected from them. Teachers are responsible for being up to date with latest developments affecting their job, or opportunities available. They seem to be expected to do this on their own. Using Clara's term, teachers are expected to be "curious" enough to take the initiative to read documents related to the policy, for example those available on a website of the MEN (http://www.colombiaaprende.edu.co/)[17]. As a result, when teachers were asked about what they knew of the policy, as evident in Clara's account, it was common to find that they were "not into that topic that much." In fact, as can also be seen in the excerpt, most teachers (including Eva, Ana, Maria, Hilda) largely tend to interpret the ELT policy exclusively in

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[17] This is an education portal which is presented as "the main access point and virtual meeting of the Colombian education communities through the provision and promotion of the use of quality content and services that contribute to give everyone equal opportunity to learn around Colombia." It was released on May 24, 2004, within the project of New Technology by Ministry of Education in Colombia, and is currently led by the Office of Education Innovation with the use of the new technology of the Ministry of Education.

relation to the material implications for them, such as opportunities for professional development, and the call to take proficiency tests.

Interestingly, Clara, like other 6 out of the 10 participants in this study, has not been able to take part in any of the immersion programmes or regional workshops she refers to. Despite that, these (missed) opportunities represent one of the main points of reference of teachers to the policy, especially in her school where, as Clara says, they "have not received much information about that programme." It is precisely due to this lack of information that teachers may interpret the policy and the opportunities as something far beyond their reach, as something they might not need to do much about, and something that has not had any impact in their contexts. This perceived lack of impact is also evident, as Ana has observed in her region, in the fact that teachers' have simply been requested to take proficiency tests, and no other action has been taken:

> This programme is intended to impact institutions through training directly to English teachers […] but here in Pasto or in Nariño, we have not seen anything. Teachers have only participated in the diagnostic of their proficiency to identify the level according to the Common European Framework [...] (Ana:INT2)[xvi]

Following Ball, Maguire, and Braun (2012), the process of policy interpretation involves teachers' making meaning of policy text and figuring out what it implies for them. However, in the specific case of language policy in rural Colombia, there are different factors that interfere in this process. As suggested by Clara, one important factor is the lack of information, and a lack of 'policy narrators', as already pointed out. Another factor is the notorious instability of the ELT initiatives added by the major and sometimes sudden changes made to the ELT policy (Bonilla Carvajal & Tejada Sánchez, 2016). Teachers seemed not to be aware of changes in the names, goals and strategies of the ELT programmes. One example of that is the fact that teachers recognised the policy by the name used when it was first presented in 2004 (Plan Nacional de Bilingüismo), a lot more easily than by either of the other two that had emerged by the time of the fieldwork (2015). Furthermore, in Clara's excerpt above, it can even be seen that her notion of the programme dates back to 1994 when the current general law of education was issued. This law stated that a foreign language

should be taught in schools with no preference for a given language. The subsequent ELT initiatives are actually a modification to such a policy in the general law of education (see further on this in section 2.3), but she does not seem to be aware of that.

However, it is important to note that three teachers (Arturo, Eva and Maria) report having had some sort of additional guidance about what the policy consists of. In the field observations, it was noticed that some Secretariats of Education, as autonomous entities, have undertaken smaller initiatives to promote ELT. Thus, it was observed, that in Casanare (where Arturo and Eva are based), there is an agency responsible for leading projects aimed at training teachers (e.g., with regional immersion courses[18]), and providing teaching resources (e.g., textbooks and guides for curriculum design). Similarly, Boyacá (where Maria is based) seems to be another region where teachers are invited to immersion courses fairly regularly (just after I visited Maria, she went to participate in her third immersion course). These teachers report having been provided with additional information about the policy through presentations (Maria's case) or through guide books on how the curricular descriptors should work (Eva and Arturo's case). These teachers, nonetheless, were the exception; all the others, like Clara, are supposed to figure out on their own what the policy may imply for them.

In sum, there is a high level of unfamiliarity with the ELT policy among the group of participants. Also, as is the case of teachers who have not taken part in any immersion programme, they hold the idea that the policy has had little or no impact in their regions. Despite all this, not being aware of the implications of the policy does not mean that teachers' work is not affected by it. As we will see in section 6.2 below, different mechanisms of the policy have directly or indirectly contributed to shaping their practices. Before that discussion, though, I would like to analyse the meanings teachers have constructed around the importance of English.

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[18] The immersions are approximately one week long. Teachers are invited to interact in English with their colleagues and with their instructors (usually native English speakers). Activities they engaged with are aimed at improving their proficiency level and in discussing methodological alternatives they can use in their schools.

6.1.2 English as key to success and as part of reality

In spite of the little awareness and apparent lack of impact of the policy discussed above, teachers' views on English on the surface tend to be consistent with the motivations of the MEN to implement the national ELT policy. It was usually agreed among the participants that English can be important in the life of rural students as it may play a key role in their potential future success. It is important because in any profession nowadays, as Maria explains, for students to obtain a professional degree, "they have to take a test of English and if they know English, they get graduated but if they don't know English, they can't graduate"[xvii] (Maria:INT1). In a similar vein, Arturo sees that English is "fundamental" not only for studying but also for performing and competing in the labour market doing many different jobs, as his own experience has shown. As he reports below, those are things he has tried to make his "students aware of." Interestingly, Arturo's views resonate with the MEN's idea that learning English may open doors for intercultural exchange, because, as he says, knowing this language opens possibilities for travelling abroad.

Ferney: **[…] from your perspective, does English open opportunities to them [students]?**

Arturo: Yes, in fact it does, it does (.1) as:: has been my case, I knew that English was:: is fundamental in any field, in any profession to speak another language opens many doors and that is what I have tried to make my students become aware of. Moreover, from knowing English, other opportunities for intercultural exchange, of staying in another country can be opened. It is also relevant in any curriculum vitae to find a better job in the future (Arturo:INT1)[xviii].

From a similar point of view, Ana argues that more than important, English is quite necessary. In her experience, those students who have had the chance to enrol in a university have had to pay for courses of English as they have found that throughout the university programmes, English usually comes in as a requirement.

Ferney: Do you think it is important to teach English in rural areas?

Ana: It's not important but necessary, quite necessary. Look teacher, the students from there, from [name of village] who have had the chance to study at the university, the first thing they had to do was to pay a course of English because in all university programmes the first thing they study is English. (Ana:INT2)[xix]

For other teachers, like Jairo, English should be seen beyond the idea of a requirement or school subject. He sees English as something that is a part of the reality of students, even in the rural context he is located. Jairo observes that English is in fact part of his students' reality ever since social phenomena that have been thought of as exclusively urban have come to influence rural people too. He particularly talks about the influence of music like Punk, Rap, and Heavy Metal as well as foreignisms[19] that are conventionally associated with urban life. This leads Jairo to invite his students to see English beyond the idea that they have to learn it because it is an obligation at school or because they have to take a national examination with a component in English. In Jairo's view, English is also present in the life of students in the things they like (e.g., music), or in simple activities such as understanding how a given appliance works.

Ferney: **From your perspective, how important would it be for students here to learn English?**

Jairo: Well, I think that:: in that sense it comes to my mind the:: so called urban tribes. I think that they are neither tribes nor urban. Tribes because in the modern context where we live, we cannot call them tribes, nor urban because here in the countryside, we already see guys who like Punk, who like Heavy Metal, who like foreignisms, those things. So, I tell them "if you like music, how nice it would be to understand what we are listening to […] and a case happened to me, three or four weeks ago, that I found a kid with some worksheets, with the copies of a song in English, something I did not assign them for homework, SOMETHING I DIDN'T.

Ferney: **uhu**

Jairo: what are you doing? "well, I am here:: help me translate please what it says, I mean the title of this song" and, it looks like they have already started to, to do this –I think it is important because English is part of the modernity we live in. And they are realizing that already. So, for example, let's switch the mobile to English "no, I can't" "switch it to English and you'll see it is easy.

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[19] According to local newspapers, some of the common foreignisms in Colombia include the use of *stop, twin cam, clutch, switch, and by-pass* ("Extranjerismos más usados," 1999; Peralta Romero, 2012). Frequently, the pronunciation of these words are influenced by the Spanish language.

One student also told me "what if I buy a TV and the instructions are in English only?" So I think they are realising that English is not so much a school subject, it is something we have to use […] I mean, we have to study English not just for the ICFES but because we have to use it. We have to use it for what we like and for what we need. (Jairo:INT1)[xx]

Jairo's observation is consonant with the findings of a study exploring the influence of popular culture on Chilean language teachers to choose this profession (Menard-Warwick, 2011). Although focused on teachers, the study suggests that popular culture and especially global moves on popular cultures expressed by means of music, films, and internet can be a more motivating factor for teaching or for learning English than the widely promoted economic benefits of English.

In this excerpt, Jairo also reports on strategies he has used for helping students view English in the same way he does. For instance, he has motivated them to switch the language in their mobile phones to English, or to try to understand the songs they like. His efforts seem to have been worthy as shown in the episode where he finds one of his students trying to understand the lyrics of a song. (Later I shall return to creative ways teachers use in their practice).

These views teachers hold seem to be aligned with the agendas underlying ELT policy. Teachers see English as something relevant to learn, as something that may indeed open up new opportunities to students, as something that is present in their everyday lives in the things they like and do. As shown, these views rely heavily on teachers' own professional convictions that teaching English is, or at least can be, important for their students. Their own values as professionals, their own experiential knowledge, their beliefs, or in other words, their cognition (Borg, 2006) fuel the idea that what they do is pertinent and relevant, even in contexts where the value of learning English is far from being as palpable as stated in the ELT policy (see chapter 5).

In this context, although teachers clearly see the importance of English, the most immediate connection students can make with benefiting from it (i.e. access to higher education) is still an unsolved issue of social inequality affecting students' attitudes towards learning this language. Therefore, such social issue, among other factors, seems to play a primary role in the sort of negotiations that teachers have to make between their beliefs, the policy and

students' attitudes. The result of this negotiation is a reinterpretation of ELT goals which, at the same time, starts to indicate ways in which their approach to English comes to deviate from the policy. These are the issues I move on now to discuss.

6.1.3 Making English fit: a reinterpretation of ELT goals

With regards to ELT goals, as discussed in chapters 1 and 2, the objectives of the different ELT programmes in the country have been set out in terms of achieving certain levels of proficiency, which are supposed to secure access to those multiple benefits English is associated with (e.g. intercultural exchange as well as better jobs and academic opportunities). This study shows that although rural teachers share some of the governmental views on the importance of English – as has been just discussed above – the achievement of the existing goals requires a series of conditions (e.g. infrastructure, resources, access to higher education, and sufficient hours of instruction) that are far from guaranteed in some rural locations (see further on this in section 6.2). In the absence of these conditions, when discussing the idea of students obtaining a B1 level of proficiency on leaving school, teachers reacted by stating things such as "that goal is impossible" (Ana: INT2; Lily: INT1) or "very difficult" (Clara: INT2) or, on a more optimistic note, "possible but in the long term" (Maria: INT2) and "with a lot of effort" (Eva: INT2). Teachers also seem to hold these opinions because they have observed that this same lack of appropriate conditions translate into students' lack of enthusiasm towards English learning as they hardly find a reason to do so. It is in this context where teachers have come to reinterpret their teaching goals in what I see as a more socially sensitive way, which prioritises the appreciation of English over aiming to achieve a given proficiency level. In the following lines, I will illustrate this argument.

One of the most salient issues described in Ana's narrative opening chapter 5 is how making English fit into the life of students represents one of her most daunting challenges. In such tough circumstances described, Ana wonders, "what about English? And what about any other subject?" (lines 36-37). These questions represent teachers' struggle to make students familiar with a language that appears to be far removed from their worldviews and from their most pressing needs, as discussed in chapter 5. In the view of teachers this disconnect further

challenges their job, as students are likely to develop negative feelings towards the language. "Fear," "apathy," "difficulty," "reluctance," "boredom," "monotony," "distance," "abstractness" and "laziness" were common sentiments teachers used to describe what they see as the tendency in the attitudes of students towards English. Having noticed these attitudes, teachers have come to establish that one of their goals, perhaps the most important one, is precisely to try to combat these feelings. As Jairo puts it, the objective is to:

> "make students not fear English, to prevent them from feeling bored, to make them see English not just as another subject at school but as a language that is alive"[xxi] (Jairo:INT1)

Or simply, as most of the other participants said, "to make them like English." As Jairo also comments,

> […] when I arrived here it [the objective] was to make them [students] understand that English is not difficult, right? Of course there are certain topics that have some complexity but with our work here, the idea is to present the knowledge in a didactic way and:: give them modes in which they can understand it. Then, the first problem I had was that; I mean to make them understand that it is not impossible to learn, right? […] (Jairo: INT1)[xxii]

The big challenge is also described here by Jairo as the difficulty to make students see English as something that they can actually learn or, as Ana says in her story, that English is not an abstract entity of which they only know lists of words from the board (lines 117-119). Jairo also underscores that, as a teacher, it is his responsibility to use strategies to present the language as something accessible and interesting to students. In the excerpts below, Ana and Lily share this view as they think that it is the teachers' *mission* to make students like English or, in Ana's words, to awaken their love for this language, to make students appreciate English. Lily explains that in order to achieve that objective and combat apathy, attractive pedagogical activities can be used (songs, rhymes and riddles are examples Lily mentions; notably prayers are also seen as an attractive way to teach English (see section 6.3.1)). Making students appreciate English is a flexible objective these teachers have established for themselves. In Ana's view, this objective proves important in the long term because as she reports, her previous work on awakening students' love for English is a reason why some of

her former students feel grateful for now that they are at the university and have had to study English again. Had she focused merely on following curricular guidelines with the aim of attaining policy goals, those students might still be struggling to make sense of English.

> The mission is to awaken their [students'] love for a foreign language. Awaken in the children their love for that language. The need –I mean if a person sees that something is necessary and beautiful, that person will want it, right? So I think that depends on the teacher, open up the door to kids for them to learn but with love; and the kids have to see the commitment of teachers as well. When a person sees that something is beautiful and necessary, that person is going to be interested in it. Look, I have students that are now at Universidad Mariana here in Pasto and they tell me "thanks for teaching us to love English, to see that English is not difficult, that it is possible to learn it" […](Ana:INT2)[xxiii]

> The mission is (.2) to make students like English. It's what I said, I did it with English and it seems to have worked out. With songs, with rhymes, with riddles it has been possible to introduce English to them and thus combat apathy. (Lily:INT1)[xxiv]

This primary objective teachers have in combating negative feelings towards English is an alternative socially grounded interpretation of the ELT policy objectives. Although in the architecture of the policy there does not seem to be room for these more flexible objectives, teachers report on privileging their own professional judgement built through experience and familiarity with the context. They have reshaped teaching goals in such a way that a minimum basic condition of seeing English as something meaningful is guaranteed before aiming to achieve proficiency levels set out in the policy. In light of the acute economic challenges of rural communities and the uncertainty to really benefit from English, these more flexible objectives completely make sense. As discussed in chapter 5, cultural and economic issues affecting rural communities need to be addressed before aiming at ambitious goals that, as things stand today, appear to respond to the interests of transnational organisations rather than Colombian citizens (Bonilla Carvajal & Tejada Sánchez, 2016).

Ball et al. (2011) differentiate two types of education policies: imperative and exhortative. The former are concerned with attaining goals and raising the performance of students in tests and examinations. In this type of policy teachers are expected to set aside their 'reflexive judgement' and just focus on delivering (p. 612). The latter, on the contrary, welcomes 'judgement', 'originality', 'creativity' and 'passion' on the part of teachers (p. 615). Although the ELT policy in Colombia seems to be a typical type of imperative policy,

judging from the discussion above, rural teachers have managed to act more in the exhortative lines of policy as a way to negotiate between immediate contextual needs and policy demands. They have been able to use their professional judgement to produce some more socially sensitive goals and as I demonstrate in section 6.3 they have also brought along originality and creativity into their practices. All this, at the same time, is indicative of the fact that teachers have the potential to be autonomous professionals capable of devising and reflecting upon their own bottom-up, locally sensitive, innovative and meaningful strategies to support their practices (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, 2012).

On the other hand, it is also important to notice that these socially sensitive objectives are in tension with what all teachers are expected to achieve. Students are tested at the end of their high school, and as Eva explains below, ideas on the quality of schools and thus of teachers hinges upon how well students perform in these tests. In this context, the reinterpretation or accommodation of the learning objectives cannot completely escape from the pressures of the 'imperative' ELT policy. They are imbued in a dynamics of 'deliverology' (Barber 2007 as cited in Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012) that is hard to escape from. For teachers in general, as Eva shows, having students obtain good results in the national examinations is something they cannot ignore.

> […] It is satisfying to see students with good ICFES scores because schools are measured by ICFES. If they obtain a good result, then it is a good school, if they don't, then it is a bad school. This has challenged all of us here, all teachers, all teachers in all areas. We have not obtained good results so far. [Students] always reach half the scores. Some obtain 1 or 0. (Eva:INT2)[xxv]

As further discussed below, teachers have had to mediate between the tension of what they have come to understand as an important objective for their practice (make English fit the local context) and what they and their students are being measured by (national standardised tests). Although teachers seem to devote lots of attention to the former, the latter is what matters for policy makers and stakeholders. Teachers seem to be aware of this, and would like their students to obtain good results, but as in Eva's case, that is far from being the case. The story can surely be different if what can be realistically achieved in these contexts was considered in the goals of the policies or if the conditions of schooling were enhanced substantially (e.g. professional development, resources, infrastructure, as will also be

discussed below). Furthermore, if we consider that by 2015 only 3.2% of school leavers in the country had achieved the desired proficiency level stated in the policy (MEN, 2016b), it can be concluded that these considerations are also necessary in urban schools. Therefore, this fact contributes to further dispel the idea that low achievement in rural schools is due to a lower capacity of students. To a large extent, as this study highlights, low achievement is rather caused by issues of social justice such as deprivation, marginalisation and invisibility (Fraser, 1997) affecting rural life (see chapter 5).

Summing up, as Ball, Maguire, and Braun (2012, p. 44) explain, "interpretation of policy is a process of meaning making which relates the smaller to the bigger picture; that is, institutional priorities and possibilities to political necessities." Considering the smaller picture, there is evidence that suggests that teachers have reached the conclusion that they need first to awaken students' appreciation of English as a preliminary important requirement before aiming for any specific proficiency level. This view clearly illustrates Borg's (2006) thesis that contextual factors directly affect teachers' beliefs, their theories of teaching and their ideas of what teaching is about, which at the same time affects their practices. (Examples of this will be given in 6.3). In order to further illustrate the reasons why teachers have developed these ideas around policy goals, the next section discusses in detail the teachers' perceptions around the impact that the mechanisms of policy implementation have had in their contexts.

6.2 Translation of the ELT policy into practice

Having dealt with general meanings teachers have constructed around the policy and importance of English as well as their (re)interpretation of policy goals in the preceding sections, I now discuss how policy has "translated" into teachers' practices. As conceived in the theory of policy enactment, the concept of policy translation involves a series of practices, materials, concepts, procedures and orientations that have been developed in response to a given policy and in relation to specific contexts (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012, p. 45). In the present analysis, I particularly look at these by examining the impact of some of the most salient strategies of the ELT policy implementation in relation to what teachers have observed

and done in their own contexts. These more salient strategies included in the three national programmes of ELT undertaken since 2004[20] are: opportunities for teachers' professional development, the design of ELT curricular indicators (standards) to guide syllabus design at schools nationwide, alignment of national examinations (e.g. Pruebas Saber 11 or what teachers refer to as ICFES) with policy goals, and the development of teaching resources. In this section, each of these strategies is examined.

6.2.1 Teacher development programmes

As discussed in chapter 2, since the launch of the National Programme of Bilingualism in 2004, the MEN has undertaken a series of teacher training programmes aimed at both raising teachers' proficiency and enhancing their methodological repertoire. One of the most popular initiatives among participants has been the immersion courses on San Andrés Island for a period of 4 weeks. This course was[21] intended to help teachers who, having been placed as holding a B1 level of English (through a test), were interested in reaching a B2 level. With that aim in mind, teachers were accommodated with local English speaking families as a way to trigger the use of English in everyday interactions. In addition, they participated in an intensive programme of lessons of English and methodology as well as instruction on the use of technology for teaching purposes (MEN, 2016b). As the MEN also reports, by 2013 approximately 500 teachers had benefitted from this course. Other initiatives at a smaller scale observed in this study include immersion programmes organised by regional offices of Education.

First of all, it is worth recalling that out of the ten participants in this study, only three (Maria, Eva and Arturo) have participated in one or more immersion courses or other professional development programmes offered within the frame of the ELT initiatives. The other seven participants report not having had the chance to do so for several reasons. These include:

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[20] As discussed in chapter 2, these programmes are: Programa Nacional de Bilinguismo 2004-2010; *Programa de Fortalecimiento al Desarrollo de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés* 2010-2014; Colombia Bilingüe 2014-2018. In fact, technically there have been four programmes if we consider that Colombia Bilingue was a modification of Programa Nacional de Inglés proposed by the former minister of education.

[21] As stated in chapter 2, this training programme stopped running in 2014

working in the primary school (Dora), as the immersion courses are usually aimed at high school teachers; being discriminated against for coming from a rural school (as happened to Ana, see chapter 5); being located in a remote area (as happened to Arturo); being fearful of losing their provisional posts because of being away for too long (as explained by Camilo); or not being informed of those opportunities (Clara and Hilda).

The teachers who have benefitted from the programmes agree on viewing the professional development opportunities as very useful and impactful on their teaching strategies. Eva, for instance, maintains that the most evident impact from attending one such course was the motivation she felt to start using English more often in her lessons. She reports that this is something that both students and parents have appreciated. Moreover, this has been useful for her as a strategy to practice her English more.

> After the immersion in Aguazul, I started to use English in my lessons. Before I just taught students the structure and practiced it, that was it. I didn't think it was possible to talk to them in English. But as in the immersion we were told to speak in English to students, I started to do so and students liked it. They congratulated me and asked me "profe se la fumo verde[22]?" @@@ but they liked it and some parents also congratulated me. Moreover, I have found it useful as I have been able to practice my English, when you stopped using English, you forget it. I still do it. (Eva:INT1)[xxvi]

Similarly, in Maria's experience, what also seems to be quite impactful is the fact that she has gained confidence as a language user. This is because during the courses she has had to deal with several instances where she needed to speak in English to large audiences. By successfully sorting out these situations she has concluded that her level of English was better than she thought. In reporting on one of these instances, she says:

> When it was my turn to talk a teacher told me "hey why do you say that you don't speak English, look at all those things you said about Boyacá, look at all those marvellous things" The thing is that I can speak as such, what I cannot do is to comprehend, to hold a conversation

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[22] This is an expression used to show surprise when actions of people are out of their "normal" way of doing things. To emphasise this, the expression is a metaphor to compare people's behaviour when they smoke weed that is not ready. The closest translation I can offer is: teacher, "are you using drugs or something?"

in English. So, they were fascinated with what I said about Boyacá in ENGLISH. (Maria:INT1)[xxvii]

In this excerpt, Maria reports a comment made by one of her colleagues to whom she had presumably expressed the lack of confidence she had in using English – as she also declared to me in one informal conversation before my visit to her school. The acknowledgement by another teacher appeared to have a positive effect on her self-image as an English user, and probably had a positive impact on her self-esteem as a teacher, too. However, as shall be discussed in the next chapter, teachers still feel they need to do more to combat a weak image of themselves as language users.

Arturo, like Eva, has only had the chance to participate in one regional immersion. In his case, in addition to also valuing the chance to practice his English as well as enhancing and assessing his methodological repertoire, he highlights the opportunities to share with other colleagues as one of the things he appreciates the most.

> What I have liked the most was the immersion, I mean, to be able to speak, practice again my English and having been able to share experiences, expectations with my colleagues from other schools. I also realised that sometimes one is mistaken in the methods used to teach English. Maybe not to see it as a routine but as something more dynamic, more didactic […] (Arturo:INT1)[xxviii]

This is consistent with his preoccupations regarding a feeling of isolation he expressed during my visit to his school. Only Jairo, Hilda and Dora work in schools with more than one teacher of English. Therefore, for Arturo, training programmes are also a good opportunity to do networking and share with colleagues who work under similar circumstances.

In short, promoting the use of English in teachers' lessons, opening opportunities for them to practice the language, broadening the methodological repertoire of teachers, as well as facilitating dialogue and networking among teachers are instances of policy translation by means of immersion programmes. However, although teacher development programmes seem to be one of the most obvious and effective ways in which the ELT policy may have a

real impact in rural school, such impact is highly restricted to few schools. This is evident in the fact that many teachers have not had the chance to participate in them.

Furthermore, it is also worth noting that these programmes are not without problems, as found for example in the (ir)relevance of some of the contents or activities proposed and in the frequency with which they are offered. For example, criticism of these programmes includes the idea of teachers being compelled to memorise long lists of phrasal verbs that proved to be useless afterwards at their schools, as reported by Eva. She also feels that these opportunities should be available on a more regular basis, as in her six years of experience she has only taken part in one. This resonates with the findings of a study exploring the interpretations of teacher development programmes in the region of Antioquia (Correa et al., 2014). The study showed that although teachers welcome professional development programmes undertaken in their region, they think there are several issues to address in order to make the programmes better. Low coverage, social insensitiveness of some of the material provided, and lack of resources at schools to apply what they learn are examples of those issues. Moreover, in the programmes of professional development teachers describe, there appears to be little room for potentiating effective practices teachers may have developed on their own. That is, teachers' expertise can be used as a resource from where trainers can build. Ignoring this may simply lead teachers like Arturo to feel that what they have been doing is simply "wrong". A different nature of professional development aimed at building from what teachers already do may prove even more pertinent. This is precisely one of the strongest suggestions in an earlier study with rural teachers (Bonilla Medina & Cruz-Arcila, 2013). The study showed that in some contexts alternative localised teacher development programmes, which for example take teachers to understand and account for the contextual factors in their practice, can prove more useful than exclusively being instructed on language and methodology. Professional development programmes of this nature, as this thesis further suggests, can be quite useful to empower teachers' situated expertise, as evident in the decisions they make in the classroom, and as suggested by their reinterpretation of teaching goals (discussed above) and in their creative contextualised practices (see section 6.3).

6.2.2 Curricular guidelines

One important strategy in the implementation of ELT policy has been the setup of curricular descriptors to guide syllabus design nationwide. By means of such descriptors, teachers are shown what is thought to be a detailed path to follow in terms of what to do in their classrooms in order to achieve a B1 level at the end of high school (MEN, 2006b). As discussed in chapter 2, these descriptors are aligned with the theoretical underpinnings and classificatory scales of the CEFR. Thus, they are supposed to help develop communicative competences (i.e., linguistic, pragmatic and sociolinguistic), which are contained in descriptors of achievement for each school year. Table 6.1 shows how the alignment with the CEFR has been set out (MEN, 2006b).

At the same time, these descriptors are classified into those that are related to receptive (listening and reading) and productive skills (writing, conversation and monologue). As explained by MEN (2013b), the inclusion of monologue as a separate production skill allows to differentiate what learners can say in a conversation from what they say in presentations or conferences where they need to talk for more extended periods of time.

	Grade	*Expected level*	*CEFR*
Primary school	First to third	Beginner	A1
	Fourth to fifth	Basic 1	A2.1
High school	Sixth to seventh	Basic 2	A2.2
	Eighth to ninth	Pre-intermediate 1	B1.1
	Tenth to eleventh	Pre-intermediate 2	B1.2

Table 6.1: *Alignment of ELT standards with CEFR*

Teachers are often required to write and submit a syllabus at the beginning of the school year following these guidelines. Interestingly, when teachers commented on how they organise the syllabus contents it was often found that they resist these standards by sticking to what

they have been doing over the years, which, in their view, apart from having worked well, seems to be more realistic. Clara, Eva, Lily and Maria, for instance, state that they have designed their own study plan of contents, which takes the standards in consideration but not as the only guiding reference. In Clara's words:

> Some things from the standards are considered. There are things we take into account, and there are other things that, let's say, we have used for a long time because we think they are appropriate, so we keep using them. (Clara:INT2)[xxix]

Following the standards alone is interpreted as being "complex" or "too advanced" (Eva: INT2) for what can realistically be done, or as being "designed for urban contexts" (Hilda: INT2), where more resources are supposed to be available. Thus, teachers report having used other points of reference such as the contents of textbooks or, as Eva explains below, their judgement of what students are able to do.

> […] I had to draw on the standards which are a little, let's say, complex for this level. The standards state that we have to talk and do monologues in English and things like that, but that is difficult to do here because students do not talk, so how can you ask them to do monologues […] I consider the standards, the sociolinguistic, pragmatic and communicative competences to write my syllabus but also what I could see each student could do, how far they can go so as not to demand too much. Then, I accommodate the contents also in a way using textbooks. (Eva:INT2)[xxx]

Eva shows awareness of how the descriptors are organised. She shows familiarity with the fact that such curricular guidelines are a series of learning indicators aligned with what is defined as communicative competence. She is also familiar with the idea that teachers are supposed to consider monologues. This knowledge of the standards indicates that her view of the standards as being "complex" is well informed. Therefore, as the following excerpt shows, she has decided to approach these guidelines and the syllabus as flexible instruments. Such a flexible approach allows her to resist the descriptors themselves and incorporate adaptations considering other references such as textbooks as well as her own everyday practices. Interestingly, for Eva, having a plan either based on the standards or not, does not

mean that, as she says, she cannot "break the rules" by coming back to work on topics students are supposed to know already.

> I take a month in a lesson but students have already forgotten things the following year. Then, I have to do intervals, I mean, I teach what is planned but it is also an interval, I mean, I repeat once again […] I think I break the rules but it is not a straitjacket, is it? Maybe it is because nobody has come to see my lessons, nobody notices it or if the principal realises it, as she is a teacher of English too, she wouldn't mind, she wouldn't be as strict as:: -there are big schools here in [name of town] where the coordinator comes to the lessons and [the teacher] has to be working on the agreed study plan. (Eva:INT2)[xxxi]

Among a larger set of different positions policy actors may take, Ball, Maguire, and Braun (2012) refer to 'policy narrators' – already referred to above –and 'policy enforcers' as two of the main perspectives anyone in the school context may adopt in an attempt to facilitate policy interpretation and "implementation." In the absence of both policy narrators and enforcers, as the previous excerpt shows, the flexibility to negotiate with curricular descriptors is facilitated. Eva has the freedom to move back and forth and even away from her planned syllabus. As she highlights, the story can be quite different in bigger (usually urban) schools where there are subject coordinators precisely responsible for enforcing and monitoring the application of the syllabus.

Lily and Dora, two teachers with extensive experience also in urban private schools, further illustrate how curricular standards are resisted this time by adopting a personalised approach in the organisation of syllabus content. Teachers explain that they have got their own study plans, which they travel with. These are organised and adapted to what they observe in the different schools (rural and urban) they have worked at. These practices indicate, once more, that teachers' own professional values and experiences come in as central foundations on which teachers frame and guide their practice, and thus, counterbalance the external demands coming from the curricular descriptors.

All in all, the resistance teachers have towards the use of the standards is another instance of how they have enacted ELT policy. The curricular descriptors are interpreted as useful or pertinent only to a certain extent. In view of that, teachers resort to sticking to what they have conventionally used over the years and what they reckon to be realistically possible in their

contexts with the resources available. Therefore, what Olsen (2016) calls teachers' 'wisdom of practice' – "the personal, biographical, nontechnical influences and experiences that each of us possesses" (p. 47) – seems to play a more prominent role in curricular planning than the descriptors as such. In this context, as shown, for the participants of this study, curricular descriptors can be adapted, accommodated, ignored and broken. To some extent, it could also be argued that the approach teachers take is indicative of a need to question the (in)adequacy of the CEFR as the *only* point of reference to set out and assess language teaching practices (cf. Leung & Lewkowicz, 2013; McNamara, 2011).

6.2.3 Effects of Pruebas Saber 11

Pruebas Saber 11 is the main mechanism to measure the performance of students, teachers and institutions on the national level, and thus, the best indicator (for the Ministry of Education at least) to assess the achievements of the ELT policy. Schools and teachers are measured on the basis of the scores students obtain. In fact, school rankings as well as students' future opportunities to enrol in state universities hinge greatly upon these scores. All these factors make Pruebas Saber 11 crucial in the whole education system of the country. Bearing in mind all these implications, and as this study confirms, Pruebas Saber 11 are indeed an inescapable reference point for teachers; ultimately, it is the most tangible sign of success or failure of teaching practices in the eyes of the community and stakeholders.

As discussed earlier, although teachers have to devote a great part of their efforts to make English fit into the life of students, they cannot completely ignore this formal structure of evaluation. In fact, these examinations exert such a great pressure on teachers that, as Hilda indicates below, teachers might come to feel "attacked" by them. She refers to the standardised examination in negative terms and suggests teachers might be vulnerable to the harmful effects of the pressure put on them. Probably, some of these effects may include a bad reputation for the school and for the teacher, if the scores are not high.

> […] we need to improve a lot in reading comprehension, as I told you, because we are being evaluated through reading comprehension in the ICFES, the government attacks us this way. (Hilda:INT1)[xxxii]

And if there is an "attack", then teachers need to be prepared to respond to it, in this case by trying to prepare students in the skills being tested. The English component of this examination consists of 45 multiple choice questions around grammar and reading comprehension tasks, as explained by the *Instituto Colombiano para el Fomento de la Educación Superior* (ICFES, 2015). Therefore, as Hilda says, reading comprehension then becomes a priority. In other words, the pressure of examinations leads teachers to confront the "terrors of performativity" – monitoring, regulation and control systems (Ball, 2003) – by prioritising their tactics to respond to targets, indicators and evaluations over their own personal values. In the long term, following Ball (2003), these external pressures might actually become part of how teachers understand themselves as professionals. It seems to be the case that the focus of Pruebas Saber 11 on grammar and reading comprehension has an impact on some teachers' practices. It was found that attempts to align teaching to the test have translated into teachers adopting traditional grammar oriented methodologies, which in turn clash with the communicative principles of the CEFR underpinning the policy. Ana, stemming from her observations in her current role as a mentor, explains that teachers tend to follow a grammar-translation methodology in their lessons. Although this methodology is considered traditional, old-fashioned and ineffective in mainstream discourses of ELT, Ana argues it could match the grammar and reading comprehension questions students find in Pruebas Saber 11. As a way to illustrate this, in the following fragment Clara explains how her practice, or changes in her practice are an attempt to respond better to the demands of the ICFES – or to the 'attacks' in Hilda's terms. The fear of getting low scores in this test has led her to privilege reading comprehension over other skills.

Ferney: Has there been any moment where you decided to implement changes in your practices because something happened?

Clara: Eh:: yes. especially for Pruebas Saber, for the ICFES tests in 11th grade. Before I used to teach grammar, right? The verb, the noun, the adjective, well, grammar and isolated sentences, right? Then I realised -and obviously looking at what is required

in the ICFES test is that students interpret texts, obviously grammar too, but overall is the interpretation of texts […] so, more or less the first half of the term I concentrate on instructing grammar and I call the second half *reading comprehension*, I then work on texts and reading comprehension questions […] and I also think it is important to have students memorise some parts of the texts as a way to practice pronunciation too. That has been what has changed my teaching methods. (Clara: INT1)[xxxiii]

The way Pruebas Saber 11 are structured has translated in Clara's practice in organising the emphasis of her lessons in two periods during the school year: the first on grammar and the second on reading comprehension. This is a clear example of how the policy may come to have a notable influence on teachers' practice. Interestingly, even though Pruebas Saber do not include speaking, Clara is concerned with having students practice their pronunciation, which further accentuates the idea that for her, oral competence is an important element in learning a language. This also suggests that in her view tests are perhaps incomplete as this skill is not included.

In a nutshell, the previous examples show that although teachers have many reservations to the ways Pruebas Saber work and the big pressure these represent to them, they cannot resist the implications of this examination in any easy way. On the contrary, they tend to adopt strategies in their practices aligned with what students are likely to find in such tests. In attempts to do this, an interesting tension with the communicative teaching principles teachers are supposed to follow emerges as the so-called traditional teaching methodologies (e.g. grammar translation, memorisation) seem to better match the nature of the test. This constitutes a major internal contradiction of the policy structure that needs to be addressed by for example including other types of questions or testing writing and speaking skills, as some teachers seem to suggest. Doing this, however, would also imply additional challenges for policy compliance as students would be required to demonstrate a given proficiency level not only by choosing a right answer in multiple choice questionnaires but also by producing appropriate written and oral texts. At the same time, new arrangements would be necessary to the ways the component of English is structured in Pruebas Saber 11 in order to include these other skills. Although these actions add complexity to the setup of policy, they would more coherently, truthfully and even meaningfully account for students' language learning process.

6.2.4 Material context

Stemming from a policy enactment perspective, resources (e.g., infrastructure, teaching materials, infrastructure, budgets) play a paramount role in explaining how policies cannot simply be implemented, and therefore, how these are reinterpreted, modified, resisted and ignored instead (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012). This section deals with how this more material dimension of rural education shapes ways in which the ELT policy comes about in these contexts.

The data in this research precisely shows that this material dimension of policy can explain to a great extent the reasons why the policy goals are unrealistic in the view of teachers. Both in the experiences teachers report and in the field observations, there is enough evidence to confirm that the lack of appropriate ELT teaching materials and resources is a fact in many rural schools. For example, none of the schools visited had a specialised classroom with appropriate equipment and software to support language learning; an issue that, from the teachers' view, is less likely to happen in an urban school. Furthermore, schools either had quite small libraries with outdated textbooks (e.g. books published in the 1980s and 1990s) and audio-visual materials (e.g. learning packs accompanied by videos in VHS format) or did not have a library at all (e.g. Clara's school), in which case teachers seem to have the full responsibility for finding and funding their own materials. In addition, it was found that schools did not have enough basic equipment such as audio players or LCD projectors (as became evident in my visits, on average schools had two audio-players and one projector for all teachers).

In these circumstances, the chances teachers have to reach the intermediate levels of proficiency in English stated in the policy are reduced considerably. These chances are also reduced because the pedagogic materials that the MEN has supposedly made available to all teachers are not really having an impact. As explained in chapter 2, some of these materials include *ECO for Colombia* (a set of learning materials exclusively designed for rural contexts in the country) as well as other resources like *My ABC kit* (games, flashcards, stories, worksheets and audio-recordings for primary school) and *Bunny Bonita* (a series of videos, flash cards and worksheets for primary school as well). In the data collected, there was no

evidence that *ECO for Colombia* or *My ABC Kit* were available, or even that teachers knew about them. Teachers were more familiar with *Bunny Bonita,* which was available in five of the seven schools visited. However, teachers reported that they have not found it very useful because they are designed for primary school pupils – and in this level teachers are not usually qualified in English language teaching. The following, taken from my field notes, is an example of what I observed in this regard at Arturo's school.

> Arturo showed me the pedagogic material he had for teaching English. All of it in his own classroom. It consisted of some old textbooks published in the late 80s or early 90s. He also showed me one book, he says "he uses a lot." It is called C*urso de Inglés en 120 Horas* (Course of English in 120 hours). He had also referred to it in the interview. He also had the package of Bonny Bonita. He reports he has this package because the primary school teachers, the level to which the material is designed, did not know English, let alone how to use that material. He also had the same basket of materials teacher Viviana had in her school, with more updated textbooks, CDs and DVDs provided by the regional education office. However, just like in Eva´s case, Arturo said he did not use these material that much because "it is too advanced" for the level of the students and also because "students tend to damage the materials" and he had signed as responsible for those materials (FO14, Arturo, 28-09-2015. Listed in Appendix E).

As can be inferred from the previous excerpt from field observations, some schools have other ways to obtain pedagogic materials, but even in these cases the impact has still proved limited. The regional office of Casanare, where Eva and Arturo work has provided pedagogical material (a set of textbooks, dictionaries, and photocopiable worksheets) to all schools. However, this material seems to be of little use for two main reasons explained by Arturo above: i) it is often too advanced for the level of students and ii) teachers are reluctant to let students manipulate the materials because if they are damaged teachers may be held responsible for paying for them. As a consequence, the scarce material available is likely to remain packed or unused.

Another salient factor that further reduces the possibilities teachers have is the highly limited access to the internet. In fact, this study also confirms that access to the internet is still a major issue in rural schools. With no exception, teachers state things like:

> We do not have a computer room as such, with internet, because in Internet there are many things about English but we do not have that resource (Maria:INT1).[xxxiv]

> Very few times there is internet service and when there is, it is really slow, despite being only 30 minutes away from Bogotá (Clara:TB).[xxxv]

> When I arrived at the school, there was no internet service, and now that there is, it is slow and it is impossible to teach a lesson with a [computer] programme (Eva:TB).[xxxvi]

> [Students] do not have a good service of internet, so there is a little backwardness (Camilo: INT1)[xxxvii]

Teachers regret not having at their disposal a good internet service. They are aware of the myriad alternatives the Internet may offer. Therefore, not having access to it, as Camilo points out, is interpreted as a sign of backwardness. On the other hand, it is worth noting that some teachers also see that the limited technological resources schools have can be better taken advantage of if teachers were not "lazy" to use them, as Maria self-critiques, or if some teachers were helped to overcome their "fear of technology", as Ana has observed in her current role as a mentor. In any case, the scarcity of appropriate learning resources and infrastructure, as well as very limited internet access are material realities in many rural schools which directly have an impact on the ways policy is interpreted and translated. For example, as discussed in 6.3.3 and 6.3.4, some teachers have opted to design their own material and attempted to find alternatives to benefit from the limited technology available.

In summary, going back to the theory of policy enactment, it can be said that in the interpretations and translations of the ELT policy discussed in the previous sections, it is evident that different contextual dimensions have played a part. Ball, Maguire, and Braun (2012) classify four dimensions: i) situated contexts, ii) professional cultures, iii) material contexts and iv) external contexts. With regards to the first dimension, the fact that teachers work in rural locales leads them to deal with social struggles of the region, which lead them reinterpret their teaching goals. It also implies limited opportunities for professional development as it is more difficult for teachers to keep up to date with and take advantage of opportunities because they are simply not aware of such opportunities, or they are not considered. The issue of the need for more locally grounded training was also pointed out. With regards to the second dimension, it was observed that teachers' professional judgement (i.e. their values and experiences) have played a prominent role in, for example, negotiating with the curricular descriptors and syllabus contents. At the level of the third dimension,

material contexts, it is confirmed that teachers' view of policy goals as highly challenging might be grounded to a great extent in the highly limited resources at their disposal. Finally, in terms of external contexts, it has been found that whatever the circumstances teachers feel compelled to try to comply with mechanisms of evaluation and control like Pruebas Saber 11 as their image and the name of the school are at stake. Notwithstanding these circumstances, as shall be discussed below, teachers still manage to respond to their professional challenges in creative ways.

6.3 Contextualised practices: creative ways of making English fit and translating policy

The previous chapter showed how teaching English in rural Colombia can be quite a challenging endeavour, especially in light of cultural and economic social arrangements existing in the country. Thus far in this chapter, it has also been shown how classroom practices have been negotiated with policy demands. In fact, all the interpretations and translations of policy discussed above start to suggest that rural teachers are active policy actors and to a certain extent 'policy makers' (Menken & García, 2010). They have the power to negotiate between what is asked from them and what they reckon feasible and important. In so doing, they sometimes are actors of policy but at other times, inescapably they are subjects to it (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012). Teachers are actors of policy, for instance when they reconstruct standards drawing mainly from their professional values or when they reinterpret teaching objectives in their own terms. They are objects of policy especially in face of rigid mechanisms of evaluation of performance such as Pruebas Saber 11. In the latter case, as sketched out above, attempting to comply with the demands of the national examination is harder to resist. Fortunately, in the whole of 'the onion of language policy' – a term Ricento and Hornberger (1996) use to metaphorically illustrate how policies consist of multiple layers: national, institutional and classroom – the classroom is located in the core. Being in the core, therefore, provides teachers room to exert their role as policy actors in ingenious ways. This section includes four examples of that:

a) Infusing language teaching with cultural values

b) Valuing students' linguacultural repertoire

c) Incorporating multimodal literacies

d) 'Squeezing' their expertise

6.3.1 Infusing language teaching with cultural values

Thanks to the work of scholars interested in exploring the link between language and culture (e.g. Byram, 1989; Kramsch, 1993; Kramsch, 1995), it is now widely accepted that these factors (language and culture) are constitutive of each other. That is to say, "language is deeply implicated with culture and an important part of it" (Sonia Nieto, 2010, p. 146). Language is not simply a means to an end but an end or action in itself which contributes to constructing and interpreting social and cultural reality (Pennycook, 2010). Therefore, from these premises the idea that teaching a language implies cultural matters becomes irrefutable.

In this study, such inseparable relationship of language and culture stood out in an interesting attempt on the part of teachers to show their learners that in English they could also find a space for reproducing their deep cultural values such as their religious beliefs. To illustrate this, it is necessary to know that 90% of Colombians are estimated to self-identify with Christian religions, and the vast majority, 85%, are Roman Catholic (StudyCountry, n.d.). It is also believed that rural communities show higher devotion to religious practices[23] – which, apparently, is associated with their lower socioeconomic status, discussed in the previous chapter. In this context, as documented in my field observations and interview data, teachers have ingeniously used these cultural dynamics in their favour by successfully incorporating *prayer* in their teaching strategies, or in what Maria describes as their everyday "routines" in their lessons. Such routines, as was evident in the field work, involve starting their lessons with a prayer in English (the case of Dora, Arturo, Hilda, Maria and Lily); and making up their own prayers aligned with given contents of the lesson (the case of Lily and Dora). The following is an example of what I observed in this regard:

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[23] The presence of the statue of the Virgin Mary in the libraries of two of the seven schools visited is an indicator of the importance of religion is rural communities.

This is the first class I observed at Maria's school. It is a group of approximately 30 seventh graders. The teacher starts with what she later on in the interview called "my normal routine". It consists of a prayer she used. The prayer was intended to thank god for food and for things received. I am located at the left corner at the back of the classroom, and from here I can notice how all students seem to know the prayer by heart and how they were also able to say it clearly with very good pronunciation […] (FO29, Maria, 12-10-2015, listed in Appendix E).

When being inquired about this practice later on in their interviews, this is how Dora and Maria, in particular, explain the use of prayer as an integral part of their pedagogical approach:

[…] sometimes we thank God for example for our food. If we are learning food, I include prayers thanking God for our food. If we are learning family members, I also do so for the members of the family, for my grandfather, my grandmother. That's the way I incorporate all the vocabulary we study, in daily experiences they have […] they like this and that helps them learn English. [Dora:INT2]xxxviii

I have always liked to pray in Spanish, I am Catholic, I like saying the rosary, I pray at home. And children like prayers a lot, and they like learning things in English and among the things they like are the prayers and:: I have it as part of my routine and all learn the prayers very well and every day we say them. (Maria:INT2)xxxix

Interestingly, prayers are described as being motivating for students. As Dora explains, they are easy ways to connect students' daily practices with the use of English and to do so she even makes up prayers adapted in relation to the contents she is working on. In the case of Maria, she explicitly explains that she uses prayers not just because students like them but also because she is a religious person too. This is important because both teachers' and students' cultural values become immersed in the meanings they construct about English. At the same time, all this indicates that the connection of language and culture is approached by teachers as a way to establish representational links with the values of the community. In other words, teachers' use of prayers seems to stem from the premise that valuing English in the cultural practices of students – termed before as making English fit – can be made easier if it is used in connection with their deep cultural values, or put differently, if it is used as an important element in their (re)imagining of the world.

Furthermore, apart from triggering motivation and cultural familiarity towards English, prayers are also used to address specific language learning issues. At least that was the view of Lily, who reports using this strategy particularly to develop oral skills in her students, which she considers a major challenge.

Ferney: What is the most frequent difficulty you have to deal with when teaching English?

Lily: To talk, *speaking*, to speak in English. We have implemented [strategies], we have classroom projects, we use PRAYERS because they are very religious, here they always pray and [cultivate] values and all that. So, I always in the morning I tell them "today we are going to pray to ask the Lord for the value of friendship, or the value of responsibility or for different values" and we say a prayer. Then, in every term, I make up a prayer to pray to God, to the Virgin Mary, to the guardian Angel and to baby Jesus. Then, every term, I make up a prayer for verbal fluidity, but we also //have the songs//

Ferney: //Do they like that?//

Lily: They like that. All students learnt it, ALL. We also have the songs but with the songs they say "ah, the thing is that we have a bad voice (*voz de tarro*), I don't sing"@@@ so, that is why they feel less embarrassed to pray than to sing. They like to pray more, they like prayers more, so I have used prayers […] in the morning, I always do prayers with any grade. Our Father in the first term, in the second term it was the Guardian Angel. (Lily: INT1)[xl]

Consonant with my observation of Maria's classroom above, Lily has discovered that on the basis of students' religious views, having them memorise prayers in English has been an effective strategy to develop oral skills. The success of this practice is such that, as Lily also explains, it proves to be more appealing to students than using songs, a mainstream strategy used in language teaching as a motivating factor. In Lily's view, this is the case primarily because that strategy is in line with their cultural values as well as their personality traits as they "feel less embarrassed to pray than to sing." This infusion of language education with religious views, as shall be discussed in the next chapter, also plays a significant role in the self-understanding of teachers as professionals.

6.3.2 Valuing students' linguacultural repertoires

The previous example shows how teachers' creative practices may be informed by their cultural sensitivity and intuitive ability to build from their students' worldviews. In this study, another instance of teachers' creativity following this line is the use of what García (2009) calls 'translanguaging' (see also Canagarajah, 2011; Creese & Blackledge, 2010 on this notion). This term underlies a dynamic view of bilingualism where languages are not considered as separate systems, but as elements within a whole linguistic repertoire people can use fluidly and in an integrative manner. In other words, a translanguaging perspective of bilingualism emphasises the practices people perform with all the linguistic resources at their disposal, rather than being limited to the linguistic resources of what traditionally is understood as one language only (García & Wei, 2014). According to Garcia and Wei (2014) and Creese and Blackledge (2010), a translanguaging approach to education underlies a flexible pedagogy that opens up the possibility for teachers and students to use all their linguistic and cultural resources for facilitating content learning – linguistic content in the case of this research.

As Hilda reports below, she intuitively endorses the use of translanguaging in her lessons as a sort of cultural bridge between students' cultural background and new forms of representations of such backgrounds (i.e., English). Particularly, she refers to the idea that words with cultural loads such as "cuy" (guinea pig, an iconic gastronomic product of the region) "cedazo," (handmade strainer), "hornilla" (a wood burner, usually in the form of a hole with a metal support on the top) or colloquial expressions such as "qué chimba" (an expression which, depending on the context, can be used to express either joy, irony, or disagreement) can make the use of English more meaningful as students see there is room for, as Hilda says, what is "theirs" in the target language.

> **Ferney: Have you identified any particularities of teaching English in rural zones?**
>
> Hilda: […] maybe the knowledge they have of what is out of the rural context […] there are expressions that astonish students, as they do not really know the outside context, I mean they are framed (1.) within their own context. Then, at least me, I try to locate myself in their context, what they have, for example, domestic animals, nature, what

they have there, and cultural aspects. So, they come and ask me "teacher, how do you say *cedazo*?" so they ask me how to say terms that are from that region.

Ferney: Yes::

Hilda: The *cuy* for example, which I do not know how it is been called currently, but [I say to them] "cuy is cuy" it is a name but it does not have to change because it is not going to be recognised anywhere else.

Ferney: Ok

Hilda: Then I think there is a clash with regards to certain terms, but the truth is that I apply what they have. So, from what they have, I make eh:: writing exercises. For them to communicate, we take dialogues, I make them take some terms they use, or their own expressions normally used when they are upset. For example in a dialogue they say –I don't know if you've heard of the term "*qué chimba*!" so, we also use that term within English, I mean, we use what is theirs.

Ferney: Ok, so those expressions are used in Spanish?

Hilda: Yes, they are their expressions and their words. Not all, all pure English, but here the little English that is taught is used properly.

Ferney: How has this strategy worked for you?

Hilda: Well, in terms of oral expression, it has worked well because they like it, they have fun, I mean it is a way in which students' interest for another language can be triggered. The idea is not to make them get away from what is theirs, the idea is that little by little they start absorbing the English language. I mean, I think that the mix of the two is ideal because through half-joking learning English becomes more interesting and fun. (Hilda:INT1)[xli]

Hilda seems to understand the usefulness of using a bilingual repertoire and combining resources of both languages (Spanish and English) as an effective pedagogic strategy, which is not reduced merely to coping with lack of proficiency. She sees it as strategy to build from students' cultural and linguistic repertoires to make learning English meaningful for them. That is, she promotes the mix of what is theirs (their local cultural expressions in Spanish) with what is new (English) in order to trigger their appreciation of English or at least to familiarise them with the L2, in an attempt to "develop the weaker language in relationship with the one that is more dominant" (García & Wei, 2014, p. 64). This sort of practice seems to also resemble the idea that literacy development is necessarily connected to cultures and histories of individuals as opposed to an autonomous and technical process (Street, 2002, 2003). This practice can be seen as a resource rather than a problem to be fixed, from the

point of view of new literacy scholars. Likewise, translanguaging practices like the one Hilda endorses contribute to dispelling early approaches to the use of one's L1 in acquiring an L2 in pathological or language deficiency terms, as suggested some years ago (see e.g. Brice, 2000). These practices are also in tune with advocators of the important role translation may play in language learning (Cook, 1997, 2010).

The flexible approach Hilda takes to teach English was also evident in classroom observations. One example of this was identified in a lesson with eighth graders:

> Hilda started her lesson by showing students a sketch of a town in construction. In Spanish she invited her students to imagine it as an ideal place to live in ten years time. She instructed them to work in pairs and, still in Spanish, come up with a description of this ideal place. Right after that, drawing on students' descriptions in Spanish, Hilda started to explain how to express those ideas in English, and explained the use of the auxiliary verb *"will/won´t"* with examples: *"the town won't have rubbish"* with its translation "*no habrá basura en el pueblo."* Following the teacher's examples, students started to express their own ideas but this time in English. While they attempted to do so, the use of Spanish to negotiate meanings among the groups was not only evident but also welcome by the teacher (FO21, Hilda, 07-10-2015, listed in Appendix E).

In this observation it was evident that Hilda uses an initial discussion in L1 as a platform to give ideas to students about what to write in English later on, which in her view gives students a greater understanding of what they are doing. Students and teachers' L1 is clearly used as a resource for contextualising students, for offering enough clarity as to what the purposes of the lesson are and for negotiating meanings among students in the pair work stage. The use of Spanish instead of being restricted, is seen as an important support.

Hilda's recognition, endorsement and promotion of a mix between students' own linguistic and cultural backgrounds and their learning of English highlight the pedagogical use of translanguaging for building background knowledge in order to facilitate meaning making, and thus deepen understanding (García & Wei, 2014). Hilda's intention of valuing the linguistic resources and the cultural backgrounds of her students for teaching purposes in not ideal contexts may in fact be worth further research in the Colombian rural context. For the purpose of this study, suffice it to say that the reading of her circumstances had led her to adopt a rather interesting approach to help students make sense of English. Such an approach, in her view, is attractive to students and suitable for her school context.

6.3.3 Incorporating multimodal literacies

Despite the lack of resources and internet access in schools, noted above, students' engagement with multimedia and digital texts in the classroom was not completely absent. In fact, in an attempt to still find other ways to draw students' attention towards English, teachers have maximised the limited technology at their disposal and have found ways to incorporate its use. A case in point is Arturo. During field observations, I witnessed how he integrated the use of smart phones to engage students in a number of learning and assessment activities. For example, in one of his lessons with seventh graders where he was working on the use of simple past tense, I observed that:

> As part of the class then he asked students to learn 20 verbs in English. The list of 20 verbs included 3 headings: Infinitive, Past and Spanish. Then he used one strategy I though was uncommon: he recorded his own voice pronouncing the verbs students had to memorise. He recorded his voice in the mobile phone of some of the students and then they were advised to share the recording with other students using Bluetooth (FO13, Arturo, 28-09-2015, listed in Appendix E).

This is what he says when being asked about the purposes of this practice:

> The mobile […] -it is for the acquisition of vocabulary and pronunciation, then as we did yesterday, I was teaching them regular verbs in past […] so we do a little list of regular verbs, first I make groups each of them with [at least] one mobile phone, they record the verbs, then they [students] with those verbs –because the other topics have already been assimilated, write sentences or texts where they have to use the vocabulary that we have recorded. So, what I do is to record and evaluate the contents we have studied, the vocabulary and the pronunciation of the new vocabulary or:: in 9th grade we are doing transcriptions. I read a long text […] first, I give them the audio recording for them to assimilate the transcription, the reading with the audio, and then I come to each group and check if they are learning to write and listen. And the other [strategy], after listening to the recording, an oral evaluation takes place where I do not say anything in English, I say in Spanish the meaning and they say and write it in English […] with 9th grade, that [strategy] is the one that has worked best as students just with the fact of sending files via *WhatsApp* get motivated because we are using the mobile phone, students have affinity to that. Students have come the following day saying "teacher, I already leant it, I know all the text, I am ready for the dictation." (Arturo:INT2)[xlii]

As he reports, the mobile phone serves as a tool in the classroom for students to complement their traditional literacy activities (based on printed texts) with texts they are creating and

disseminating through their smart phones. In this case, the phone works mainly as a means to store and circulate teachers' modelling of language use for students to engage with in subsequent oral and written activities. This practice echoes the idea that in the XXI century digital communication technology has led literacy practices to develop in multiple directions and forms, as argued by multimodal literacy scholars (e.g. Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Kress, 2010; Walsh, 2010).

Multimodal literacy is an umbrella term to describe the process of "meaning-making that occurs through the reading, viewing, understanding, responding to and producing and interacting with multimedia and digital texts" (Walsh, 2010, p. 213). As observed in Arturo's case, even though the production of and interaction with multimedia texts are not as sophisticated as they can be in contexts with much more access to a wider range of communication technologies, these processes still prove to be pedagogically significant in his context. Vocabulary building and pronunciation training are the main purposes of using phones Arturo mentions. However, in light of his report, it could also be argued that autonomy, collaboration and motivation are other important processes to underscore in this practice. Autonomy is triggered as students are provided with the opportunity to use the teachers' input as frequently and as much as they wish. Collaboration seems to play an important role because, as was apparent in the field observations, during group work students became a source of peer feedback. At the same time, as Arturo argues, motivation is increased since students are usually eager to use their phones in classroom tasks. These are ways in which the mobile phone as a mode of meaning making in the classroom has 'affected, changed and shaped' (Jewitt & Kress, 2003) the process of learning English.

On the other hand, some could critique Arturo's teaching practices for focusing mainly on memorisation, translation and transcription of texts. These pedagogic strategies are often labelled as traditional, of little use and ineffective in current communicative trends of language teaching. In contrast to these views, as further discussed in chapter 7 (see 7.2 & 7.4), in this study these practices have emerged as being part of local pedagogies (Canagarajah, 2005) that, although not aligned with current mainstream discourses on ELT methodology, can still prove valuable. As shown here and as has also been reported in Guatemala (Coelho & Henze, 2014), in rural under-resourced school settings with little

contact with English, rote learning activities that include the limited technology available can be more effective than following teaching methodologies thought to be in vogue (cf. Cook, 1997). The use of the affordances mobile phones offer, for example, may open up meaningful pedagogical opportunities. As demonstrated here, and as argued by Coelho and Henze (2014, p. 159), teachers are able to use the resources they already have in new ways, which means that,

> what had been described as an ''absence'' of resources can be viewed instead as the ''presence'' of resources. The previous view locates their world in deficit terms, whereas the second view sees their world as one with assets. Certainly, this is more empowering to teachers as well as students.

6.3.4 'Squeezing' their expertise

As has become apparent in the present discussion, teachers are not taking passive attitudes either towards policy demands or towards contextual challenges. On the contrary, to different degrees, they seem to agree with Ana when she says that "a mistake would be to just complain and do nothing" (Ana:INT2). From this understanding, as observed above, they have tailored their teaching in a socioculturally sensitive manner and have maximised the resources at hand. In fact, the three practices just discussed can be seen as clear instances of the sort of expertise teachers have developed throughout their years of experience. This is a type of expertise that, bearing in mind the findings of this study, combine the academic training they may have had access to with, perhaps more importantly, their own capacity to read and act upon the circumstances mediating their teaching. Although important, their expertise can be looked at not so much in terms of how much English teachers know or how familiarised they are with mainstream theories and methodologies, but in terms of how well they can relate to their contexts, as the above examples indicate.

This sort of expertise, some other times, is also demonstrated in attempts to face challenges like the lack of teaching materials. In these cases, some teachers have come to design these materials by themselves. Some of the most remarkable examples of this include full teaching guides as a substitute to textbooks (Jairo) and initiatives to design and compile computer

mediated pedagogic material that can be available even without internet access (Dora). A striking observation from these examples is that in both cases, the process of developing material has been supported by research. That is, teachers are not simply relying on their intuitions and hunches to address the aforementioned problems. Beyond that, these attempts appear to involve a systematic process of observation and reflection, which to some extent guarantee the relevance and applicability of the work done. This is how Jairo describes his experience,

Ferney: Can you tell me about how you came up with the idea of designing your own material?

Jairo: [W]hen I worked in [name of former school] we were aware of the problem of not having a textbook hm:: why? Why the absence of a textbook? Because parents did not have economic resources to buy it. Then […] in a meeting with other English teachers, we decided to design a textbook adjusted to the standards of the Ministry and adjusted to the syllabus at that time too. So we did some work and typed a textbook for each grade, a text for primary and another for high school. Then, I saved it. I said, "this is going to be useful, I am sure it's going to be useful" and when I arrived here at [name of current school], I found out that there was no textbook, a guide to work on reading or in word recognition. So, I modified the textbook in order to adjust it to the syllabus of the school and the needs of students.

Ferney: You told me it was the product of a research project?

Jairo: Yes […] it consisted of identifying appropriate activities for students on the basis of their ages, so, depending on the age and the level. [The research also aimed to] analyse whether a given activity was useful to learn vocabulary or practice conversation.

Ferney: Was that research your own initiative or was it proposed by the school?

Jairo: […] the truth is that the research as such emerged from the need, the particular need I also found here, teachers did not have a guiding text book, a guiding text to follow processes. Then, the textbook is organised for students to reach the level we required in order to succeed to the next grade, right? So, the intention of the text, at the beginning, was to tackle that need, [and also that] parents couldn't afford an expensive textbook. (Jairo:INT1)[xliii]

By acting as a material developer and by doing so in a systematic manner, it can be argued, Jairo is 'squeezing' his expertise in order to respond to a pressing contextual need. Not being trained as a researcher did not prevent him from "acting at the edge of [his] competence"

(Tsui, 2003, p. 276)[24] and endeavouring to provide solutions. Another sign of the complex and systematic work done is the idea that he is aware of the standards for ELT and, thus, used them as a point of reference for the materials designed. In other words, his attempt goes beyond mere strategies to cope.

A similar case of squeezing their professional expertise to offer long term solutions is Dora. The expertise she had gained in her 20 years of experience and through the Masters course she was completing at the time of fieldwork, appear to have empowered her not only to try to address the issue of lack of material in her benefit but also in benefit of her primary school colleagues, most of whom were not qualified in English teaching. She did this by designing and compiling a set of pedagogical computer-based materials as well as by offering informal professional development opportunities to her colleagues. As she reports,

> Last year I provided training in teaching English in primary school to colleagues from my institutions through the creation of materials I have compiled with HINTS to teach songs, poems, prayers, and I also provided a few links to do so. Currently, as I have noticed the need to find innovative resources, which at the same time are attractive to children, I am doing a MA in Educational Technology (*Maestria en Tecnología Educativa*). My goal is to motivate primary school children to learn English through the use of technological tools, and at the same time, share with my colleague teachers tools to facilitate their pedagogical practice. (Dora: TB)[xliv]

As documented in field observations, as part of her MA thesis Dora has designed a blog where she has compiled a series of hints and pedagogic resources (mostly worksheets and interactive activities) to practice listening, vocabulary, reading and writing (many of them designed or adapted by herself). As she explained, her challenge was to make available those resources without the need of internet access, which at that time was still unsolved. It is worth noting here that, like Jairo, Dora's attempt is also informed by careful and systematic research procedures, which, as argued here, serve as a good way to maximise the scope of their professional action.

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[24] This is a term Tsui borrows from Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993). The term is used to argue that expertise is developed mainly in circumstances where people approach a given issue laboriously at the fullest of their capacity and in so doing create growth opportunities for themselves.

To sum up this section on teachers' practices, drawing on the critical pedagogy principles underlying this research, it can be said that teachers' sociocultural sensitivity as well as their attempts to creatively make the most of both the resources at their disposal and their own expertise are indicators of valuable actions teachers are willing to undertake in an attempt to negotiate between external demands and situational challenges. These are also examples of the sorts of small steps Crookes (2013) talks about when referring to the practicability of critical language pedagogy and of Kumaravadivelu's (2006b) emphasis on the power of teachers as transformative intellectuals who are able to devise their own effective practices. Following Canagarajah (2005), these localised initiatives can even be seen as relevant to be brought to the fore and put into negotiation with other more global and mainstream practices. A whole different dynamic might be in place if for example initiatives like the ones teachers in this study have undertaken are boosted and further supported. Teachers would not be seen simply as technicians who need to be given all the tools and instructions to use those tools but as intellectuals able to construct their own tools, and from whom others can actually learn.

6.4 Summary and concluding remarks

This chapter has shown that rural teachers have enacted ELT policy in creative and sometimes unexpected ways. It also highlights the idea that the language classroom should be seen as a 'site of struggle', where the teaching practice is "characterised by tensions, ambivalence, and contradictions" (Sayer, 2012, p. 98). The analysis shows that teachers tend not to be very familiar with the nature and implications of the policy and perceive very little impact of it in their contexts. Despite that, it is also shown that on the surface teachers share some of the MEN's agendas behind the policy in seeing English as a necessary language to learn and as a language of opportunity. This position of teachers, nonetheless, starts to diverge from this shared understanding as they have to deal with, among other factors, insufficient support, lack of appropriate resources and students' apathy towards English. In particular, drawing also from the findings discussed in the previous chapter, it is suggested that students' apathy may be caused by not finding immediate utility and relevance in learning this language. In fact, one possible implication of this study is that only when the

serious issues of social inequality affecting rural communities are addressed and ameliorated, will rural students start to better make sense of learning English and, in turn, of ambitious policy goals. In this context and as things stand, teachers have come to reinterpret the purposes of their teaching in more socially sensitive terms. That is, general objectives of the ELT initiatives are accommodated to what appears to be more feasible and appropriate from their point of view (a situation that is likely to occur in urban areas too). In many cases, as shown here, the accommodation of these objectives is made in terms of addressing students' reluctance by awakening their interest and – in the words of several teachers in the study – *amor* (love) for English.

This reinterpretation, however, is far from doubting the capacities of rural teachers and students. On the contrary, this chapter reports many telling examples of how capable and resourceful teachers can be in trying to make room for English in students' worldviews. Ignoring, accommodating, and 'breaking' curricular descriptors, tailoring teaching practices in light of the particularities of their context and their professional values as well as making the most of their expertise and resources at hand are some of the instances of their capacities and agency. From a critical pedagogy perspective, these instances are of great value since teachers act as agents of social change and resistance of domination by proposing their own methodologies, interpreting, accommodating and appropriating policies from a socially sensitive perspective. Thus, it could be said rural teachers can be seen as professionals with valuable experiences and wisdom from which others may benefit.

However, there are some formal structures of control from which it is more difficult to escape. That is the case with Pruebas Saber 11. As there are enormous implications attached to how well students perform in this examination, teachers understand that they have to accommodate their practices to help students perform well. This is a clear example of how the translation of language policy has been simultaneously a process of invention and compliance (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012, p. 48) for these teachers. Sometimes teachers are able to 'change' policy but some other times policy changes their practices too.

Finally, I would like to highlight that the framework of policy enactment has been powerful to scrutinise ELT policy in rural schools. In particular, it has been useful to analyse how language policy is interpreted and translated in real contexts – not the idealised schools

education policy usually takes as reference. That is to say, school contexts, external pressures, infrastructure, resources available, and more broadly, issues of social justice are factors that contribute to attributing different meanings to both policy and practices, as discussed here, and to teachers' professional identities, as shall be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 7   Being a rural English language teacher

7.0 Introduction

The preceding two data chapters examined the implications of the architecture of ELT in Colombia for social justice and the ways in which ELT policy is enacted in rural contexts. In doing so, some light has already been shed on how teachers see themselves as professionals. The findings discussed in these two chapters suggest that in general teachers have come to see themselves as professionals faced with quite a big challenge as their work conditions are far from ideal. Despite difficulties, teachers also believe that their job, teaching English in rural contexts, is important as this language may play a significant role in the future life of their students. The analysis has shown that over time, teachers' views of the rural context has shifted from being reluctant to taking up a job there to feeling professionally comfortable and stable by doing it. Furthermore, it is clear that teachers also take various (and sometimes contradicting) positions vis-à-vis the rural context and the policy as such. This is evident in the fact that teachers tend to see the objectives of the policy in flexible terms. They understand themselves as professionals with the right to ignore, adapt or renegotiate curricular guidelines and privilege their own experiential knowledge.

These ideas around the sense of who teachers are will be taken further in this chapter. I shall do so by combining a series of analytical tools. First, the present scrutiny benefits from Brubaker and Cooper's (2000) nuanced analytical approach to the notion of identity. As discussed in chapter 3, these authors argue that in order to add analytical precision to all the meanings usually associated with the term 'identity,' an alternative intertwined set of terminology can be useful. They propose three clusters of terms: i) identification and categorisation (how one self-identifies or is identified by others in specific situations); ii) self-understanding and social location (the sense of who one is

in relation to the social context and how one acts accordingly); and iii) commonality, connectedness and groupness (different ways and degrees to which one can feel a member of a given group). As Brubaker and Cooper argue, these terms are useful to examine multiple issues related to a sense of *being* with much more analytical precision than the 'heavily burdened' term *identity* can offer. This is because this term has been used and 'abused' to mean many things, which in turn has made it highly vague and of little use for analytical purposes (see further discussion on this in chapter 3).

As demonstrated in this chapter, the use of this toolkit has been helpful in this study as it has allowed me to approach identity formation as a process (rather than a state), which at the same time permits exploration of tensions between identifications of teachers made by others and those made by themselves in different situations and points in time. It has also been useful in pinning down ways in which participants have understood the implications of being rural teachers as well as the ways in which they have established ties with both rural communities themselves and communities of teachers of English. In the present analysis, these three clusters serve as the major themes used to approach the data.

In order to go beyond *what* participants said in their stories, this analysis also makes use of positioning theory (Davies & Harré, 1990; Harré et al., 2009) as a complementary analytical device to examine *how* they told their stories. As further discussed in chapter 4, positioning theory allows us to examine how individuals discursively construct themselves as coherent subjects into storylines they produce. Such construction, Harré et al. (2009) argue, is mediated by shifting patterns of moral orders (set of rights and duties) speakers appropriate or reject. Therefore, the use of this analytical tool adds to the scrutiny of teachers' sense of who they are the idea that there is a moral dimension underlying the manner in which they present themselves in the discursive reconstruction of their own experiences.

Furthermore, the use of these analytical tools is aligned with the sociocultural approach to identity formation this study follows. In my research I do not consider identity as something biologically or cognitively predetermined but, on the contrary, as being constructed by means of the relationships we establish with the world at different points

in time, under different circumstances (Norton, 2013; Olsen, 2016). Examples of these relationships of relevance in this study are participants' past and current teaching experiences, their beliefs, future expectations, ways to interact with and feel part of rural communities, ways they engage with the culture and politics of their work settings as well as the ways they construct themselves discursively (see chapter 3). Moreover, as stated in chapter 3, a sociocultural view of identity formation permits a close examination of how ELT plays out in relation to issues of cultural misrecognition and economic maldistribution (Fraser, 1997) as experienced in rural communities (see chapter 5). This is done by exploring how the sense of who teachers are is shaped in response to or in relation to those social issues.

Before I start, it is also important to note that there are many different characteristics among teachers and that they do not constitute a homogeneous group. As table 7.1 below shows their level of proficiency in English, years of experience, contexts they have worked at, their place of origin, and their work status are some of the most striking variables among the group.

Teacher	Level of English reported	Years of teaching experience		Context of work experience		Origin		Work status	
		Over 15	10 or below	Rural & Urban	Only rural	Rural	Urban	Permanent	Provisional
Ana	B2	X		X			X	X	
Maria	B1	X			X	X		X	
Dora	B2	X		X			X	X	
Clara	NG	X		X			X	X	
Camilo	NG	X		X			X		X
Lily	NG	X		X		X		X	
Eva	B1		X	X			X		X
Hilda	B1		X		X		X	X	
Arturo	B2		X	X		X			X
Jairo	NG		X	X			X	X	

NG= Not given

Table 7.1: *Heterogeneity across all participants*

As presented in this table, some teachers believe their proficiency level ranges from B1 to B2 according to the CEFR[25]. As this information was voluntarily disclosed in narrating their experiences, 4 participants (Clara, Camilo, Lily and Jairo) did not make specific allusion to their proficiency level. As we shall see later, nonetheless, teachers' perceptions in this regard strongly came to bear in their sense of who they are as professionals. With respect to the number of years into the teaching profession, it can also be seen that most participants (6) were highly experienced with over 15 years of teaching. The other 4 teachers' experience ranged from 5 (Arturo) to 10 years (Hilda). Thus, it could be said that although none of the participants is a novice teacher, there may be a big difference in the richness of experiences between the most and least experienced. Referring now to the context where these experiences have taken place, the table shows that, except for Maria and Hilda – who have only worked in rural schools – most teachers have prior experience in urban contexts too. This again is another important salient factor in the heterogeneity of participants, which, at the same time connects with the origin variable of the table. While only 3 teachers come from rural families, the other 7 appear to have gained familiarity with rural life mainly throughout their professional practice. Finally, in terms of their work status, 3 teachers have been unable to find a permanent position and, therefore, are not as stable as the others.

This heterogeneity makes every teacher unique, and thus, as Olsen (2016) states, talking about their identity is a way to celebrate their uniqueness. However, as Olsen also suggests, their uniqueness leaves room for some shared understandings, conflicts, contradictions, and positionings with other teachers. In this context, informed by the factors that make each participant different, this analysis aims to find points of convergence in an attempt to build the case for common understandings and undertakings among participants. An example of this can be found in Ana's extended story presented at the beginning of chapter 5. On the whole, the incidents she recounts and her reactions to the events she lived have affected the way she understands herself today as a teacher in a unique way as she was immersed in a particular location, with a

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[25] Teachers' perceptions of their proficiency level often come from placement tests they have been required to take as part of ELT policy implementation.

particular group of students, at a particular time of an acute armed conflict. Her concerns and ideas of how she needed to act as a teacher, as reported in chapter 5, and as will be further demonstrated in this chapter, resonate with other teachers' concerns, ideas and actions, despite working under different circumstances. It is in this spirit that the findings in this chapter are developed.

The chapter starts by discussing how teachers construct identifications of themselves as successful professionals and how such identification is built on an alternative meaning of success that moves away from policy compliance. The analysis then moves on to show how teachers' understandings of who they are as professionals are associated with their religious views. The third part of the chapter deals with the relational ties teachers have established with rural communities as well as with an imagined community of good/highly qualified teachers.

7.1 Teachers' identification: creating alternative narratives of success

Following Brubaker and Cooper (2000), this analysis starts by talking about teachers' identification. As noted, this notion allows us to approach the idea of *being* as a process occurring in social life under different circumstances by different people (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). In this particular study, this analytical concept has been useful to pin down tensions and contradictions between identifications of teachers made by groups in power (e.g. policy makers) and those made by teachers themselves or people they interact with on a daily basis (e.g. colleagues, students, parents). For the purposes of this analysis, I call the former *etic identification* and the latter *emic identification*. This study shows how, for instance, these two types of identification are in stark opposition to one another. From the vantage point of policy makers, for instance, there is a tendency to identify English language teachers in general as technicians who need to further develop their skills in order to better deliver on the instructions they are provided with (e.g. curricular guidelines, specific teaching methodologies) and thus attain policy goals, as critiqued by local scholars such as Guerrero (2010), Sierra Piedrahita (2016) as well as other international scholars (e.g. Kumaravadivelu, 2003).

From the point of view of policy makers in Colombia, therefore, as Guerrero argues, the voices and knowledge of teachers of English have been ignored and undervalued since they are expected to "just follow orders" (p. 35) and attain prescribed goals. This is why not reaching policy goals or not doing well in international examinations (as has widely happened so far) are likely to be enough evidence to also identify teachers as unsuccessful or 'faulty' professionals. For example, in reaction to a low performance of Colombian students in PISA[26] (Programme for International Student Assessment) examinations or in a ranking of countries by English skills conducted by EF[27] (English First), frequent media reports blame teachers for being the prime cause of the supposed or assumed failure (e.g. Fortich Mesa, 2013; Gossaín, 2014; Guiaacademica, 2015b).

Given the challenges attached to teaching English in rural contexts I have referred to throughout this thesis, it would not have been surprising to corroborate these ideas of lack of success among rural teachers themselves. This would particularly be an immediate expectation, for instance, in so far as rural students are usually outperformed (by their urban counterparts) in all national standardised examinations (Delgado, 2014). Nevertheless, from an emic perspective of identification, data shows that teachers construct a quite positive image of who they are. They actually tend to portray themselves as successful professionals. As shown below, the notion of success for them, however, is built on alternative narratives not necessarily in line with policy compliance but rather with a recognition of their work from what the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor (see Taylor, 1994) calls 'significant others.' In Taylor's view, the sense of *who one is* is construed in interaction with others and the ways in which one feels (mis)recognised by them. Thus, the term serves to refer to the groups of people who play a significant role in one's life. In the case of teachers of English, it can be argued that the group of significant others include their students, their fellow teachers, school coordinators, parents, and in some cases ELT specialists. A case in

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[26] PISA is a triennial international survey which aims to evaluate education systems worldwide by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students. This test is implemented by the OECD (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), an European transnational organisation promoting public policy around the globe.

[27] English First is an international education company focused on English language training courses. This company has offices in over 107 countries.

point to illustrate this alternative identification as a successful professional is Arturo. He feels he has done his work well and he is sure of that not because students have reached high levels of proficiency but because his students have explicitly recognised his work.

> I have really felt that I've done my job. We have not advanced much but my students already know the basic stuff, the elementary things. I wouldn't say that they leave [high school] with a C1 or B2 level but my pupils like my lessons a lot. I use images a lot, *flashcards*. I prepare activities, games. I even treat eleventh graders as little kids […] I bring to them activities for primary school kids and they feel very –they have even told me "teacher, with the only teacher we feel there is a [learning] process is with you" those are my students' words. I do think that in the discipline, demand and good lesson planning is where success lies [...] this year a group of students approached me and said to me "teacher, it is the first time we feel we learn English with a teacher, we are really learning, teacher." (Arturo:INT1)[xlv]

In this excerpt, it is interesting to note that Arturo's sense of professional success is the result of hard work, creativity in the implementation of pedagogic strategies on the one hand and of being demanding with students on the other. This suggests he feels that not reaching high levels of proficiency is not due to lack of effort on the part of either himself as a teacher or his students. Thus, the fact that goals are not attained does not directly mean, for him at least, that he has failed as a teacher. On the contrary, students' recognition of his work counts as an important indicator for him to identify as a good teacher.

In other instances, ideas of success are also fuelled by the recognition from school coordinators of the teacher's work, as evidenced in students' achievements, which is the case of Hilda. In the following excerpt, we can see how she was identified as a successful teacher through a recognition given to her for the work done in her first year at her current school. Her students obtained higher results in Pruebas Saber 11 compared to previous years with different teachers.

> […] the pupils I worked with last year, pupils who:: liked to investigate a lot. Any word they did not understand, anything that:: -I told them, "ok, it's this word" or they look

it up in the dictionary or:: they observed the word in a text and then asked me, thus they had the motivation, and those pupils did really well in English. They had a score that:: -higher than the previous years, then it is a satisfaction –it's an acknowledgment that the principal, who is not at the school anymore, made me. She said to me that it was an acknowledgement as my students had obtained a higher score […] (Hilda:INT2)[xlvi]

Again in this example, the recognition from a significant other in the professional field, in this case the school coordinator, seems to play an important role in the ways teachers may create alternative narratives of success to the ones coming from policy makers. In this case, the idea of success is built from a bottom up view of achievement where what counts is not precisely to achieve policy goals as such but, as Hilda implies, to do better than before. However, the fact that Pruebas Saber is taken as a point of reference to "measure" this success means that policy is not completely absent in this alternative positive construction of teachers' identifications (I shall come back to this point later). What is striking is that policy is considered as just one factor, and perhaps not necessarily the most important one. Value given to their hard work and recognition from students (as shown above), or from the whole academic community, as the following excerpt shows, strongly come in as other factors to consider.

In Armenia was where I found a job [for the first time] in a private school which I liked so much that I even forgot that there were chances [to work in the state sector] […] there I forgot about it because in that school at the end of the year I was evaluated by the principal, the board of parents and the students. They also decided whether we would have a job the following year or if we were sacked [...] and I did so well that despite being *Pastusa*, and with my accent and all that, because when I started to work in Armenia, people said "here comes the *gringa pastusa*" […] thus, despite that, my work was valued in that school and always every year I was given my job again […] (Ana:INT1)[xlvii]

In talking about her first job at a private school Ana highlights how comfortable she felt there thanks to her work being valued by the whole academic community, headed by the school principal. Proof of the value given to her work is the stability she could

have despite strict and regular evaluations. Interestingly, in this community, she was identified as a "gringa pastusa." This categorisation seems to also be a sign of the recognition of her as a valuable and thus successful teacher. To better understand this, it is necessary to spell out what the two terms mean. The term *pastusa/o* is used in Colombia to refer to people from Nariño, and people from this region are thought to have a strong accent in Spanish. The term *gringa/o* is used to refer to foreigners, especially from the United States, and thus, this also associates the term, in Ana's case, with having high proficiency in English. Clustering the two terms seems to be a positive identification of her as a professional teacher. Despite the fact that she had a strong accent, she was seen as having a good command in English. Even though that experience took place before moving to work in a rural state school, referring back to it now suggests that this categorisation has played an important role in her current positive professional self-identification.

This alternative construction of professional success evident in these cases above resonates with what Leung (2009) calls 'independent professionalism' (a socially and politically sensitive sense of professionalism). He uses this term to establish a contrast with the sort of 'sponsored professionalism' (institutionalised views on professionalism usually "promoted by regulatory bodies to introduce reform and/or by professional associations to advocate change" (p. 49)). Following Leung, the latter is more likely to be the approach adopted by policy makers in the implementation of education policies aligned principally with market interests, as is the case of the ELT programmes in Colombia. In this sense, professionalism in teachers is usually constructed upon technical principles of knowledge of the subject matter, and delivery of curricular guidelines and teaching methodologies, aimed at attaining given goals. This sponsored view of professionalism seems to underlie the negative etic identification of teachers as 'faulty' or unsuccessful, as noted above. In contrast, from a more independent understanding of professionalism, as the cases of the teachers shown in this chapter illustrate, ideas of professional success are more locally grounded in light of the sense teachers have of how their work is perceived and appreciated by their significant others. The tensions between these different understandings of success and professionalism

entail important implications regarding ways in which teachers are being represented in policy making. I would argue for a need to make room for independent understandings of professional success in current and future policy developments. Before I further elaborate on this point, let us consider other instances strengthening the case for alternative and more socially grounded views of teachers.

The identifications discussed so far in the construction of teachers' selves as successful professionals have included the school community. Beyond the local school context, their independent sense of professionalism also involves the recognition from a third group of significant others. In particular, teachers refer to instances where people who are supposed to hold some level of expertise in ELT have exalted their work. Included in this group, as the data suggests, are competent English language users (native speakers of English and local highly qualified teachers), local writers of ELT materials, and ELT researchers. Some teachers (Camilo, Maria, and Dora), for example, report on cases where they have coached their students to participate in public performances in English at cultural celebrations in their schools or in regional school contests. The fact that in the audience or in the judging panel there were native speakers of English or other local specialists assessing teachers' work is an important factor in shaping teachers' positive perceptions of the sort of professionals they are. This is specially the case when students have either won the competitions or have been verbally complimented on their performance. Here is how Camilo puts it:

> With the pupils, eh:: I made a:: presentation in English about:: Billy Wilkings, a story of two cowboys, short, I adapted the text, I wrote the adaptation, I made up a few lines, I did a () with tempera, the kids participated and we signed for the municipal championship of bilingualism. In the competition with about 5 or 6 other schools, and on that occasion I won. I beat the others with that presentation in English […] in the judging panel there was a teacher from London, so I heard, […] some teachers who were experts in English but from Armenia, and they were the jurors. I won, I won, we won with the kids that prize, and the additional prize was a place to participate in the championship of Bilingualism but at the department level. (Camilo:INT1)[xlviii]

Camilo puts special emphasis on several points here to build an argument of professional success. First of all, he emphasises all the things that *he did*: he made a presentation, he adapted the script, he made up a few lines in the script, and thus *he* won the prize. At the same time, while making clear the things he did, he then included the students. But all this clarification seems to gain further importance as he (they) won the contest, and the people who awarded the prize and who assessed his work were ELT specialists of some sort. The recognition of the work done allowed them to participate in a similar contest but at a wider regional level with many other contenders from other municipalities. Although they did not win again, having reached that point meant his work was acknowledged by people who held some authority in his field. Such experience, at the same time, contributed to constructing an image of himself as a teacher grounded in the same alternative narrative of success as the cases shown above (i.e. their work being acknowledged by significant others).

In connection with this previous point, most teachers also seem to interpret their being considered to participate in this study as another gesture of recognition from an 'expert'. The fact that a researcher was interested in knowing about their work for some teachers represented a reason to be happy and feel important. For example, Hilda says that:

> […] this [the participation in this study] is a:: a new experience, I had not had it and to be able to talk to a person that has more experience eh:: in English is –in the language, well, one is happy because one does not have a person who knows English well everyday here […] the presence of another person gives you strength, to say:: well, wow I feel important because I was chosen as a teacher of English @@@, as a teacher of English, that is. (Hilda:INT2)[xlix]

Hilda expresses her feelings of happiness and satisfaction for having been taken into account in this project as that positioned her as a professional with valuable experiences to share. In other words, her professional history mattered to a significant other, and that interest from me (the researcher), as Camilo states, "motivates and makes oneself

feel important" (Camilo:INT2), especially because as Dora explains, researchers are usually interested in urban locales and the rural contexts tend to be ignored[28].

Further to the recognition of others as instances of identification as successful professionals, teachers also use self-identifications to reinforce the same image. For example, they brought up the achievements with their students as well as their own achievements, both as learners and teachers, as arguments to shape their positive image. That is certainly the case of Maria and Clara, who find in their students' scores in Pruebas Saber 11 evidence of their accomplishments as professionals. On this particular issue, Clara said:

> […] every year we improved a little, [the scores] were increasing a little since I arrived as fortunately the area of English has been improving. Sometimes a lot, on other occasions very little, but fortunately since I am here it has never lowered […] it is precisely because of that, fear it may lower, that the percentage of the school decreases, because of that I have seen the need to focus on reading comprehension in English. (Clara:INT1)[1]

Clara refers to how her students have been progressively improving the results they obtain in the national examinations, since she arrived at the school 9 years ago. She clearly states this improvement is slight but steady, and although it is perhaps still very far from the policy goals, those scores serve the purpose of making her look like an effective professional. Interestingly, in connection with the discussion in the previous chapter, her achievement seems to be grounded in the sorts of decisions she has made in negotiating the policy. As discussed in chapter 6, Clara has decided to focus on grammar and reading comprehension in her lessons as an attempt to align her practices to the nature of Pruebas Saber. This illustrates what Ball (2003) argues when he says that education policy is likely to shape teachers' sense of who they are and should do as, usually in the long term, teachers come to assimilate it as the right thing to do. That

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[28] This situation, as explained in the methodology chapter, was actually a plus in this study. Teachers highly appreciated the interest of a researcher in examining what life for a rural teacher of English is like because that rarely happens.

is, as also noted above, teachers' alternative notion of professional success does not necessarily imply moving completely away from policy requirements. As shown in the previous chapter, external pressures such as national examinations and school rankings do have an effect on teachers' practices and thus on their sense of professional being.

Not all positive self-identifications, however, were constructed in relation to Pruebas Saber. Dora's notion of success is built from the idea that thanks to her work, her primary pupils now seem to be really eager to use English at school. This is remarkable because, as she explains, when she arrived at that school, students were very shy and would not even interact with her in Spanish. As she says, now not only are they willing to greet and sing to her and other teachers at the school in English but are also keen on taking part in a special annual event she organises at the school she calls "the Bilingualism project," a day where students perform different sorts of activities in English (e.g., plays, songs, poems, rhymes) to the rest of the school.

The discrepancy between teachers' emic identification and ways in which they are being represented in education policy raises major implications regarding a need to reconcile different strands of beliefs around who teachers are and what they should know and do – in other words, their professionalism. These two strands, as the data has shown and as figure 7.1 below illustrates, can be understood as two different directions and perspectives from which identifications of teachers may be carried out. In Colombia, it appears that an etic perspective of identification underlies an often more common and *default* way to define who a good (and thus successful) teacher of English can be. This is the perspective of policy makers and regulatory bodies (e.g. MEN, regional offices of education). They have tended to develop language policy aligned with market needs under the consultancy of transnational ELT agencies (e.g. the British Council) – which sometimes act as another regulatory body (see chapter 2). Coming back to Leung (2009), this is the perspective underpinning the idea of sponsored professionalism. By looking at the structure of language policy in Colombia, it becomes apparent that at least three main characteristics constitute this view: a good teacher i) holds a high intermediate level of English, ii) is familiar with and uses current mainstream communicative methodologies; and iii) can follow instructions from policy

makers effectively. The first characteristic is evident in the urgency and pressure put on teachers to take proficiency tests and language courses in pursuing the minimum desirable B2 level of proficiency stated in the policy. The second is apparent, for example, in the curricular descriptors developed following the CEFR, which explicitly endorse communicative principles of language learning and teaching. The third is accentuated by the expectation of teachers to mainly act as technicians who need to apply methodologies to achieve pre-established goals, as pointed out above. These characteristics echo what, in the theory of policy enactment (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012; Ball, Maguire, Braun, Perryman, & Hoskins, 2012) is known as 'deliverology,' "a technology of performance [which …] establishes connections between the aspirations of authorities and the activities of individuals and groups" (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012, p. 139). The notion of deliverology seems to be a good proxy to the dynamics of etic identifications of teachers, whose professionalism is mainly determined by how well they fulfil the three aforementioned characteristics, which are thought to be necessary in order to get policy done.
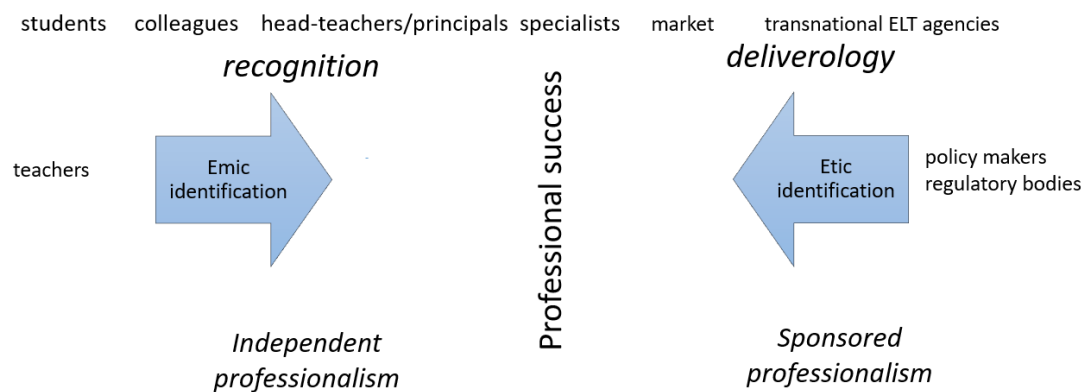
Figure 7.1: *Strands of beliefs about professional success*

In contrast, from an emic identification perspective, this study shows that there is an alternative and more socially grounded view of what professional success might mean. As reported above, recognition of teachers' work on the part of their significant others stands out as the most important element underlying this alternative view. As shown,

sometimes this recognition takes the form of verbal or symbolic acknowledgement from members of the school community. Some other times, teachers' reflection on students' achievements becomes another type of self-recognition that strengthens their positive image as professionals. ELT specialists constitute one special source of recognition too. Although this group of significant others are not in constant contact with teachers, and may in fact be more tied to hold external views on teachers' work, they can contribute to the construction of teachers' alternative narrative of success. As noted, this may happen when specialists undertake actions that exalt and boost teachers' own practices as opposed to actions aimed mainly at instructing teachers on what they should do.

As observed, though, in this emic identification of teachers there is still room for policy. As discussed in chapter 6, teachers cannot completely escape from policy demands. This is why recognition from head teachers and school principals and even from teachers themselves is likely to be made in relation to doing better than before in national examinations and thus being a bit closer to the idealisations of policy. However, unlike the identifications made in line with sponsored views of professionalism, attempts for policy compliance are not necessarily the most valuable indicators of success. As also demonstrated in chapter 6, other important teaching agendas include awakening students' love for the language and, as shall be discussed below, getting students to imagine better futures where English may play an important role.

As noted above, this approach to teachers' work is consistent with Leung's (2009) notion of independent professionalism. Following Leung, this sense of professionalism highlights the possibility teachers have to interrogate the relevance and feasibility of, for example, ambitious policy goals, fixed learning descriptors and mainstream methodologies in light of given circumstances and act accordingly. Although rural teachers' interrogation of these factors appear to be rather intuitive, as shown in chapter 6, they have been able to creatively negotiate these in a variety of forms, relying mainly on their experiential judgement. As demonstrated, this negotiation has involved a

reinterpretation of policy goals, resistance to learning descriptors and the use of teaching methodologies that are labelled as traditional and widely regarded as having little value in current communicatively dominated discourses of ELT pedagogy. Therefore, even the idea that teachers need to follow mainstream methodologies seems to be highly contested. In the next section, this point will be further illustrated.

This research thus suggests that there is a need to consider these first-hand understandings of professionalism in the ways teachers in general, and rural teachers of English in particular are represented. This does not necessarily imply a radical rejection of sponsored views of professionalism but a reconfiguration of the belief systems of what teachers should know and do. Surely, addressing market needs in language policy, and considering the developments of the scientific tradition of ELT can prove of higher value if, instead of being imposed, they are integrated and brought into negotiation with social needs and teachers' situated expertise (see chapter 6). Therefore, instead of a situation where teachers are maligned for being unable to attain goals, they can be empowered to build from what they already know and do and perhaps undertake actions aimed at working towards the targets of policy makers. These targets, at the same time, need to be more in line with what students and families need, not *only* with what the market and transnational companies demand.

The findings discussed in the next section are consistent with this need to include independent views of ELT teacher professionalism where teachers are not simply expected to hold technical knowledge, apply it and achieve given goals.

7.2 Teachers' self-understanding: missionaries cultivating aspirations

In exploring the sense of who teachers are in relation to the social context or what Brubaker and Cooper (2000) call self-understanding and social location, my data suggests that teachers view their professional image as highly associated with that of a

missionary. From a traditional definition, the category of missionary is usually assigned to people who have been given the task – or the mission – to travel long distances in order to help others through activities such as evangelisation and education. In the former case more particularly, their task also consists of persuading those they are working with to believe in a given set of principles (usually of a religious nature). As I shall discuss in this section, this notion of a missionary is often evoked by teachers to describe the ways in which they tend to understand themselves. It also appears that such understanding, at the same time, leads them to act in certain ways either in an attempt to accomplish their mission or in combating some obstacles in their way.

First of all, it is worth noting that teachers feel that "a superior force" has taken them to work in rural locations. Moreover, as will be made clear below, a job in rural schools has represented a 'blessing' for them. This is because teachers seem to understand that being who they are and where they are has been "God's will" (Hilda, Ana, Camilo, Maria) or their "destiny" (Eva). Hilda illustrates this point by saying that:

> […] as a teacher and with such a big mission that one has, God has blessed me so much […] I have grown as a teacher, I have grown spiritually and I have admired a lot the people where I have worked, the further away I have been, the more people have appreciated me because they realise that one does not go there for money, we don't. It is a pleasure to get where they are despite the difficulties. (Hilda:INT1)[li]

Not only does Hilda acknowledge she has a mission, she also understands such a mission as being "big." At this point in the thesis, it should be clear that this characterisation of her mission probably refers to the multiple social issues teachers in rural schools report having to deal with. Despite that, it is interesting to note that the mission of developing her professional practice in the remote places she has been to is put in rather positive terms. She says God has "blessed" her, that she has "grown spiritually and as a teacher", and that having such a mission has meant being welcomed in the different communities she has worked with. This understanding of herself as a missionary actually resonates with religious notions of the same concept. This is the way in which Zacharias Tanee Fomum, a Christian ministry and professor defines it:

The missionary is unique, distinct and original. He is *chosen by God*. He is called by God. *He is blessed by God* to accomplish a specific portion of God's missionary enterprise. He is handcuffed and bound to hear God's voice and obey him. *He cannot just do what he wants*, he is singled out for a unique purpose (Tanee Fomum, 2015, emphasis added)

It is very interesting that the ideas of teachers having been placed in rural locations by God's will, or that feelings of being blessed for having been chosen to be rural teachers are quite well associated with traditional views of what a missionary is from a religious point of view. Clearly, teachers' own religious beliefs have permeated into the images they have constructed as professionals. In the image of missionaries they do not seem to be doing what they wanted but rather what they believe God has assigned them to do.

Moreover, in connection with the idea of being on a mission, as Ana highlights below, to be able to carry it out, teachers can be thought to have been provided with a special gift (*un don*). In referring to the moment when she had to leave the rural school (located in the conflictive area she portrayed in the opening story of chapter 5) in order to have better health care one of her daughters needed at that time, she says,

> I wanted to continue to work there, I mean to take advantage of my –the gift (*el don*) that God gives us as teachers, because I think it is a gift, isn't it? Not anyone can be a teacher and the teacher has to handle human beings. So, I said "I would like to contribute my grain of sand (*dejar mi granito de arena*) in these human beings through teaching English. (Ana:INT1)[lii]

"Not anyone can be a teacher" stresses Ana. Perhaps this statement makes a lot of sense in the circumstances where she had to develop her five first years of experience in a rural school. Having a gift, in her view, seems to explain the fact that teachers like her are able to deal with the challenges that are usually encountered in rural schools.

Besides, Ana also says that she would like to "contribute her grain of sand (*dejar su granito de arena*)" to the formation of human beings. This idea is important as she is not referring to her students simply as students but as human beings and that teachers' task (as she also says in the opening story of chapter 5, lines 50-53) is to try to help their students as much as possible, which implies going beyond a focus on language instruction.

Coming back to Leung's (2009) differentiation of sponsored and independent notions of professionalism, it can be said that while policy makers expect teachers mainly to follow learning descriptors, reach and maintain at least an intermediate level of English, and, perhaps, be up to date with methodological developments, rural teachers' professional self-understanding points to a very different direction. Their professional goals seem to be more oriented towards a holistic development of students as human beings. That is, as the excerpts suggest, behind the task of teaching English, teachers seem to have taken on the "undercover mission" of cultivating aspirations in their students. In the following lines, I shall explain and illustrate what this means.

Along with the idea of awakening students' appreciation of English (discussed at length in chapter 6.1.2), teachers have come to understand that as professionals they may play also an important role in making their students imagine and pursue a better future. As a result of pervasive issues of poverty, economic marginalisation and cultural misrecognition of rural life (see chapter 5), teachers have observed that students' and their families tend to aim low in terms of their ambitions and possibilities for the future. It follows that such limited ambitions are likely to prevent them from realizing their full potential. At least that is the view of Jairo, who in describing his students, said:

> I describe them [the students] as people who don't:: don't know the potential they have. That's sad perhaps because there is so much potential but because of the difficulties they do not realise the things they can do. I think that here at the school kids have a big potential and the fact that they don't have help from the government saddens me, their potential to follow roads of success is truncated by this […] I would describe them [the students] as very, very valuable people as rough diamonds, who just need a little push, I don't know, a little stimulus on the part of the authorities, the government. […] (Jairo:INT1)[liii]

By comparing his students with "rough diamonds," Jairo sums up his view of students as talented and competent individuals, whose talents and competences are yet to be triggered. Although he particularly positions the government as the one who should provide these opportunities for students to develop what he describes as their "huge potential," data in this study actually shows that teachers themselves seem to have taken on that task as part of their responsibilities. They have come to understand themselves and act as, what I call, cultivators of aspirations. That seems to be "the grain of sand" Ana is talking about.

In teaching English and in making students familiar with this language, teachers report on different strategies they employ to broaden the sorts of future projects students might have for themselves. A first step to take, perhaps, as Jairo seems to suggest above is to make students – and even parents – aware of what Sen (2009) would call 'all the doings and beings' that might be available to them. These include (as stated by teachers): earning scholarships and thus accessing higher education and becoming professionals, traveling around the world, gaining status in their communities as well as earning a decent living without the hard physical work that many of their families have to endure. In order to open the students' minds up to these possibilities, Eva for example explains that as a rural teacher she has to "sell the students the idea" that through learning English and finishing their high school, these options may become available to them[29]. The following is an example of how Maria seems to do exactly that:

> […] in a municipality a boy told me "teacher, why should I learn English if I am going to stay here in the countryside looking after cows? I don't need it to talk to the cows" and I told him "ah but you could look after cows and study or wouldn't you like it" (as I said in the written text, I sometimes do as much as one can to motivate students), so I told him "of course, you could look after cows and you do not need to talk in English with the cows but you could study veterinary, you could study agronomy, you could

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[29] In some of the rural schools, this has been easier to demonstrate because a few former students were provided with such opportunities. For example, 2 girls at Dora's school, one girl at Maria's school. In Lily's case, as explained in chapter 5, indigenous students, according to the law in Colombia, have a wider range of options to access higher education. And in Arturo's and Eva's cases, in the region there is a petroleum company operating, and this company has a scheme of scholarships that at some point can be won by any of their pupils.

study something which allows you to look after the cows and that people call you DOCTOR, and that they tell you "hey, you are very important here in the region, how knowledgeable you are! Wouldn't you like to have your own beautiful, well established farm? Wouldn't you like it?" and sometimes kids reconsider. (Maria:INT1)[liv]

There are several interesting points to discuss from the excerpt above, but for the sake of my analysis this story is particularly useful to illustrate how teachers may cultivate in students (a reluctant one in this case) the idea that a promising future through education can actually be at their disposal. The parenthetical note provided by the teacher is also important to further illustrate how Maria positions herself as a teacher who does this cultivation on a regular basis. In other words, it is part of her professional sense of being. Her story ends by saying that sometimes on this sort of occasion "pupils reconsider." This suggests that her cultivations start to bear fruits. These instances of cultivations of ideas in students can also be associated with encouraging students to 'invest' (Norton, 1995) in their learning as a way to widen their social, economic and cultural capitals (Bourdieu, 1986). As Norton (1995) would argue, language learning can be potentiated by students own social needs as these might be addressed in a better way if they could communicate in a given second language. In this case, as the example above illustrates, learning English is associated with the possibility of gaining social status, and a better economic standing. This is the idea teachers feel needs to be taken up by their students.

Other ways to cultivate aspirations resonate with what Morgan (2004) would describe as teachers using their identity as 'image-texts'. In his self-study, he uses this term to demonstrate how a teacher may use his multiple identities (in his case as white, male, native speaker of English, and husband) as well as his symbolic capital (e.g. all the experience he has gained as a language teacher) to induce students to have rich discussions, reveal and renegotiate cultural values and identities as well. In other words, the teacher acted as a text for students to interact with. Although in a different way, in this study teachers also seem to appreciate the value of their own identities as a strategy to accomplish their aforementioned mission by positioning themselves as useful role models students may follow. An example of this is Lily, who comes from

the same indigenous community she is now working in. She has come back to her community but this time doing a qualified job that is considerably better paid than what a low skilled worker in the region (most of the population) may earn (see section 5.3). As discussed in chapter 5, in her lessons, Lily devotes time to talk to her students about the future opportunities of studying, traveling around the world and finding a good job. Using her own image as a successful case, she attempts to cultivate high aspirations in her students and places English and their education in general as important vehicles to pursue them.

In Arturo's context, however, these attempts to cultivate aspirations by using his own image prove harder as being a teacher is not necessarily linked to economic success given the fact that many low skill jobs in the petroleum company operating in the regions are much better compensated. Despite this situation, Arturo still thinks that,

> […] my students see me as:: an example, as a leader because I have always tried to motivate them, I've tried to explain to them that through education it is possible to improve life styles as I am an example of that. I also grew up in rural regions, I was always motivated to study and my parents always supported me and thanks to their support and to knowing that through studying I could improve my standard of living is that I am what I am, so it is an incentive for me and I try to use my own case as an example to my students. (Arturo:INT1)[lv]

As discussed in the previous section, teachers tend to configure an image of themselves as successful professionals. As suggested in this quote, this success – although not very much in economic terms – can be useful to invite students to aim high in their lives. Like in Lily's case, the fact that Arturo has a rural background comes in here as an important element to demonstrate again that it may be worth 'investing' in a better future in order to increase their cultural capital at worst and open up the possibility of strengthening their economic and social capital at best.

Given the important mission teachers understand they have, coming back to Ana's opening story in chapter 5, ideas of the attributes of a 'good' rural teacher of English are constructed as well. Ana insists that one of the imperative qualities is to be

qualified. That is, the responsibility of teaching English should not be in the hands of teachers of other subjects, who do not have the expertise a teacher like her has. Second, as also suggested by most of the other teachers, being a teacher requires sensitivity to students' needs and problems. This means that teachers also need to be open to being "friends" of their students, and to act like "their second parents or their psychologists" (Dora:INT2). As Arturo, Eva, Maria and Ana herself emphasise, this sensitivity is important because being aware of the difficulties of students is a good indicator of how demanding or flexible they could be in terms of language learning and how teachers should tailor their own methodologies and classroom dynamics accordingly. On this point Ana is very critical of limiting opportunities of students by adopting pedagogies (e.g. memorizing long list of words from the board or working mainly in translation activities) that she feels do not contribute to boosting students' learning. This is an important point because as Norton (2013, p. 17) states, there are "particular pedagogic practices in language classrooms [that] can either constrain or enable students in the reimagining of possibilities for both their present and the future." The point is that teachers' own methodological approaches in terms of language teaching may contribute to opening students' eyes to future options. Or as Ana and Jairo claim, teachers need to "leave imprints" on their students and avoid passing unnoticed in the lives of their learners. A way to leave those imprints is by connecting what they do in the classroom to what life is like outside it for their students. This is consistent with the attempts teachers have made to undertake the sort of contextualised teaching practices discussed in the previous chapter (see section 6.3). What is even more striking is that these practices seem to represent a sort of hybridisation of received wisdom of how professional language teachers should act, and rote learning strategies teachers have found useful through their experiential knowledge and social sensitivity. One of these strategies discussed in chapter 6 that nicely strengthens the metaphor of teachers as missionaries is the use of prayers in the classroom. As discussed, teachers incorporate prayers in their classroom routines in order to trigger students' motivation and facilitate familiarity with English. However, the most common ways they use the prayers are through memorisation and repetition, which as Lily reports, is an effective method to develop their oral skills in English.

All these ideas around the apparent shared understanding of a need to cultivate students' aspirations seem to respond to teachers' view of themselves as missionaries, as noted above. However, although this view of themselves is constructed in rather positive terms by, for example, referring to their experience in rural locations as a blessing, data also suggests that this same blessing comes at a cost to teachers. In this regard, Ana says that:

> I think that's the price that one as a <u>missionary pays</u>, because one is like a missionary when one goes to work there [in a rural area], home destabilisation. (Ana:INT1)[lvi]

In this excerpt, Ana makes clear that in her experience, being a missionary comes with a price. If some teachers describe their mission as a "blessing", it can also be argued that the downsides of it, its price, can be described in terms of some kind of "curse". It follows that this may range from personal to professional levels. Ana's excerpt above illustrates the former. She explains that the cost of her coming to work to a rural location was the destabilisation of her home. This is because as her school was remote and hard to access, she had to be away from her family for extended periods of time, which eventually led to her divorce. It is important to highlight here that despite this serious negative repercussion for her personal life, the fact that she refers to it as a price for having been working in a rural school downplays the negative load of this experience. Usually a price is paid to obtain some kind of benefit (e.g. material good, a service), and that price is expected to be worth the retribution. It is interesting then how Ana attempts to send the message that working in a rural location is so positive that it might even be worth the high price she had to pay in her personal life. This is consistent with Ana's representation of herself throughout the data as a very critical and committed professional who is also highly sensitive to students' problems. Another sign of this is the fact that she returned to work in the same rural community at the earliest opportunity she had, this time as she says with the possibility of "having a higher impact" (Ana:INT1) in her current role as a teacher mentor.

At the professional level, teachers' self-understanding as missionaries is accompanied by serious concerns about their proficiency level in English. Their concern arises as they do not feel challenged to use their English in their school contexts. They do not have plenty of opportunities to use their language and thus their self-image as teachers of English is affected by certain lack of confidence as English users. This has led teachers like Eva, as mentioned in the previous chapter, to use English with more frequency in her lessons as that is the main opportunity for teachers themselves to practice as well. The lack of confidence as language users is also evident in Clara's self-understanding as a teacher of English, which in her view is distant from the view students have constructed of her,

Ferney: how do you think your students see you?

Clara: Well, @@@ in general I think they admire me because when I try to speak to them in English, some of them tell me "teacher, I would like to talk like you do, how nice, where did you learn? How did you learn?" so, without being petulant, right? But I can feel that from some of them, they admire me in a certain way, although I don't deserve it @@@ (Clara:INT2)[lvii]

In describing how she thinks her students see her as a teacher, she explains she feels they admire her especially because she can speak English. That fact, as also brought to my attention by Eva, plays an important role in her students developing admiration for their teachers of English. Nevertheless, Clara feels she does not deserve their admiration, as perhaps she feels that her level of English is not as good as her students think it is. In the preceding chapter, I discussed the case of Maria, who had to confront her lack of confidence as a language user in her participation in one of the immersion programmes held in San Andres. Here I would like to add some more details to that case in order to illustrate this point. Once the immersion started Maria felt her level of English was too low to be there sharing with instructors who hold a high level of English. Maria actually describes English as a "trauma" or as a "torture" she endures. Teachers' fears in this regard seem to arise from their lack of opportunities to use the language in contexts other than their classrooms. Coming back to Leung (2009) again,

this does not represent a major challenge in their rural context for them because, among other possible explanations, their independent professional sense as educators and as cultivators of aspirations seems to supersede their sponsored professional expectation as effective language instructors and users. However, as teachers of English they also understand that they need to look for other ways to keep their English alive, and perhaps gain more confidence as users of this language, which as Ana suggests is "a must" in their profession:

> […] I have to be updated much more […] I also have to look after what is mine, which is English, that's why I am [doing courses] at SENA, I am reviewing my English with that […] some levels of English offered by SENA, they are free and I already have two certifications @@@. And my children tell me "mom, if you are already a licensed language teacher, why do you sign up [for those courses]? I say, "well I have to be updated" I have to study also because I have a proficiency course in English, I take it at the end of January [2016] why? Because I am very interested in looking after my profession. (Ana:INT2)[lviii]

In Ana's view, teachers like her have to keep updated, carry on studying, and challenge themselves, or in other words as she says, "take care of their profession." Here she suggests there are accessible ways such as free courses online. Another alternative she mentioned in the interviews is to create those opportunities themselves by finding colleagues or other proficient speakers to interact with. As Ana explains, she has been unable to attract many teachers to do so, probably because of the same lack of confidence teachers may have. In carrying out this study, in fact, I was seen as one of those proficient speakers teachers could benefit from. This is why, as I write up this thesis, interactions in English with some participants (especially Ana, Eva, and Maria) are still going on. Therefore, carrying out research like this, apart from serving as a source of recognition to teachers (as noted above), also may represent an alternative opportunity for their professional development. As this study demonstrates, carrying out research with rural teachers is a good example of the possible locally grounded strategies for professional growth I referred to in chapter 6 (see section 6.2.1).

Furthermore, Ana's views on the need to maintain a constant interest in developing as professionals resonate with other teachers' intentions to engage in Master's degrees. This, however, has proved complicated in a rural context (another price to pay) where the offer of postgraduate courses is either nil or not closely related to teachers' fields of interest. Here it is worth noting that Masters in ELT, applied linguistics or related fields are rather scarce and are concentrated in the major cities of the country, which makes them too costly, especially for teachers coming from remote locations. In addition, the fact that connectivity is still precarious in many rural locales makes the option of online courses unfeasible. These are the main reasons preventing teachers such as Arturo, Maria and Eva from undertaking their MA studies. Despite all this, as discussed in the next section, a few teachers have managed to undertake postgraduate studies.

To conclude this section I would like to expand on the missionary metaphor in order to highlight a few implications this study raises. First of all, the use of this metaphor serves as an interesting point of reference for portraying teachers' positionality in the ELT landscape in the country. Their own religious views seem to underpin their sense of who they are and how they should act: they are blessed missionaries with specific tasks to do. Despite the acute issues of social inequality lived in rural contexts, teachers regard their work there as a blessing because what they do can be much more appreciated, because they can make better use of their 'gift' of being teachers, and because as Hilda highlights, they can "grow spiritually and as teachers" as the main retribution for their work is not precisely their salary but the satisfaction of their work being highly appreciated. The specific tasks they have been assigned (their mission) imply much more than a focus on language instruction or fulfilment of learning descriptors. It involves leading students to *believe* in English as an important element in possible better futures. As reported in chapter 6, teachers believe in the importance of English and thus seem to be faced primarily with the challenge of getting their students to share their beliefs. This challenge, at the same time, is aligned with a sort of 'pastoral' duty they have taken on of broadening students' aspirations.

From the point of view of the capabilities approach to social justice (e.g. Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 2009), such a mission is important as the repertoire of all the doings and beings that students are expected to value become wider. From this understanding in mind and from the point of view of positioning theory (Harré et al., 2009), teachers seem to 'ascribe' to the duty of acting more like educators and less like "merely" teachers of English. That is, besides teaching English, teachers assume the more comprehensive responsibility of doing what is in their power to trigger possibilities for social transformation in their students. The actions in their power reported in this chapter include: i) considering students as human beings with needs, problems and aspirations, which teachers need to be sensitive to; ii) tailoring their practices and methodologies in light of those needs and problems; and iii) using their own image as teachers and as professionals to inspire students. In connection with teachers' independent sense of professionalism discussed above, therefore, teachers seem to resist their external positioning simply as technicians who need to be concerned almost exclusively with best strategies for teaching English, following curricular guidelines and doing well in national examinations.

Teachers' self-understanding as missionaries also offers an interesting counter narrative to the critical views from Western scholars on the missionary work developed by evangelical ELT teachers around the world (e.g. Edge, 2003; Pennycook & Coutand-Marin, 2003). Some of these critiques include the idea that Christian missionary teachers may be involved in a variety of manipulations for religious indoctrination or neo-imperialism that can be facilitated by taking English as a platform or an excuse to do so (Edge, 2003; Johnston & Varghese, 2006; Pennycook & Coutand-Marin, 2003). These critiques are valid and make sense in contexts such as the USA, the UK and Australia where there are great flows of immigration of people from around the world who also hold a great variety of religious views. It can also be argued that such critiques are also pertinent in contemporary missionary expeditions in the so-called developing countries. However, this study strongly suggests that there is another perspective on the relationship between religious beliefs and ELT practices that remains underexplored. As shown, in a context like Colombia, the metaphor of missionary seems to comprise a whole complex assemblage of teachers' agency to

tailor their professional practices out of the confines of the scientific tradition of ELT. A further example of this is found in teachers' attempts to enact their mission, where they have come to employ a variety of teaching practices that may at times challenge what current trends in communicative or task-based methodologies would have us avoid. A case in point is the effective incorporation, on the part of teachers, of traditional rote-learning strategies such as memorisation, repetition and even translation of prayers in order to foster motivation, fluency and general familiarity with the target language. This fact resonates with Cook's (1997, p. 231) call for a "recognition of the complexity of language learning" that avoids the unhelpful imposition of certain ways of thinking and acting in language teaching, a tendency usually found in every fashionable paradigm of language teaching.

Up to now in this chapter the sense of who teachers are has not examined the influence of teachers' relational ties with rural communities and other groups of English teachers. This issue is addressed in the next section.

7.3 Ways of belonging: affiliations with rural and imagined communities

In continuing with this nuanced analysis of teachers' identities, it is also worth analysing how ideas of who one is are linked to ways of establishing relationships with given social groups and communities (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). In this regard and on the basis of the aims of this research, three main observations have emerged from the data. The first one relates to Norton's (2013) conception of identity as linked to future possibilities. One such possibility teachers often evoke is their aspiration of affiliation with an imagined community of best teachers. Norton (2013, p. 8) defines imagined communities as "groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of the imagination." Teachers in this study often seem to direct their hopes to the future in connection with being part of an imagined community of highly qualified teachers. As discussed in the previous section, teachers tend to have a weak image of themselves as language users, which probably prevents some of them from feeling part of such imagined community of expert or

highly qualified teachers. Despite the challenges they have to deal with, teachers tended to describe themselves as willing to do more in terms of their professional development and as having plans to become better teachers (in the sponsored sense of professionalism) than they were when fieldwork was carried out. Clara for example says,

> I want to carry on studying, I mean, first in order to improve my level of English, get updated let's say […] get updated and maybe know other ways to teach English because sometimes I feel like I only use traditional methods and I would like to learn new ways to teach English. And, obviously improve my level of English. (Clara:INT1)[lix]

Clara's is a telling case in this respect because, as noted above, she does not feel she deserves the admiration her students have towards her as a teacher of English. One way to legitimise their admiration and to consider herself part of the group of best teachers is through continuing their professional development. Her desire to update her methodological repertoire and improve her English actually started to materialise as this study was developed. After having waited for several years for a scholarship to do her Masters, in 2016 she finally obtained it and is now pursuing this degree. In addition to Clara, Ana and Dora were in the middle of completing their MA studies as well. These are the teachers who through their current efforts are able to construct an enhanced image of themselves as qualified teachers. Clara, is probably assimilating in a different way her students' admiration now that she is close to obtaining a postgraduate degree.

Other teachers such as Arturo, Maria, Hilda, Eva who have not had the 'economic freedom' (Sen, 2001) to do postgraduate studies also seem to align with the possibility of becoming or at least feeling better teachers in the future by taking smaller steps in the short term. One of these smaller steps is to exclusively focus on their level of English. Maria, for example, in explaining that the options for her to do a Master's in ELT or related areas are minimum at this stage in her career, states that,

I do have something planned but I do not know at my age, at this point, I do want to improve my level of English, it is the goal I have I would say, I do not know if in a short term or next year but it is my level of English. (Maria:INT1)[lx]

Clearly, Maria is concerned about her current image as a teacher of English who does not feel confident enough with her level of proficiency. Like Clara, Maria has future ambitions, which fuel the possibility of imagining herself differently. These teachers reflect what Olsen (2016, p. 47) points out when he referenced what he describes as a common saying: "a teacher is always in the act of becoming." This suggests that there is always a possibility of becoming a better teacher, and this possibility seems to be also linked with another possibility of creating new affiliations to imagined communities of better teachers who share certain expertise on the one hand and confidence as language users on the other. In other words, as demonstrated in Sayer's (2012) study of the ambiguities and contradictions of ELT for three teachers in Oaxaca, for teachers the social meaning of using English in contexts with little contact with this language is potentiated as it is associated with possible (albeit imagined) practices such as the ones just discussed here (i.e. doing an MA in areas related to ELT or improving their proficiency in English) or others he reports (e.g. attending and presenting at ELT conferences, and gaining more influential positions).

In more direct connection with rural communities, a second observation was that teachers who come from or have contact with rural contexts throughout their lives (the case of Arturo, Maria, Lily), have developed a strong sense of belonging to these. Interestingly, they evoke this belonging as a surplus when, as discussed above, they present their own identities as image-texts for students to see in them examples of personal accomplishment. As an example, it is worth recalling Lily's case. She says, "I belong to [this] indigenous reservation (*resguardo*)" (Lily:INT1). This gives her some authority to use her own experience to inspire her students. This strong connection with her community, furthermore, also endows her with a sort of privilege as teachers belonging to the indigenous community are preferred over 'outsiders'.

A third way of belonging to the rural community is found in the relational ties teachers have encountered in cultural practices. To illustrate this, it is necessary to return to the idea that some teachers find that their deep religious views have an echo in the communities they are working with. In addition to the three teachers just mentioned above, this observation also applies to Dora and Hilda. As discussed in the preceding chapter, this relational tie has actually been used by teachers as an appealing pedagogic strategy where both students' and teachers' values converge. As also noted, religion thus may work as a unifying factor characterizing a community of believers to which both teachers and students belong. Prayer is not simply used because it can be an effective strategy, but also because it is an important component of who students and teachers are (see section 6.3.1).

The previous three observations of ways of belonging to both rural communities and imagined professional communities further strengthen the implications of this study regarding rural teachers' positioning. Although they have constructed an alternative narrative of professional success they still find it necessary to meet mainstream requirements to be considered good English language teachers. These include institutionalised cultural recognition (Bourdieu, 1986) of their professional skills they can obtain through postgraduate degrees as well as further training in their command of English. These requirements resonate with the "costs" of being located in rural schools, discussed previously. Projecting themselves towards meeting those requirements allows these teachers to imagine the possibility to be considered one of those highly qualified and proficient English teachers – as perhaps some of them have already done – and therefore be identified as such by more people external to their community. Furthermore, in connection with carrying out their mission, teachers feel that having a rural background and sharing religious values with students and the community can be key facilitators.

7.4 Summary and concluding remarks

This chapter has laid out a detailed scrutiny of what it means to be a teacher of English in rural Colombia. In this scrutiny, it first becomes evident that the many challenges teachers have to confront in rural schools –which I have addressed in terms of issues of social justice (see chapters 5 and 6) – do not prevent them from construing a possible emic identification as successful professionals. The image of success and professionalism is not necessarily grounded in policy compliance. Instead, it is rooted in instances of value and appreciation of their work on the part of their significant others and on the part of teachers themselves. This positive emic identification constitutes an interesting counterargument to what success may mean in the eyes of policy makers and stakeholders, where teachers are mainly expected to have the necessary skills to follow instructions as this is thought to be the only way to attain desired goals. Failing to attain goals is likely to be sufficient evidence to construct negative etic identifications of teachers as deficient and thus ineffective.

As demonstrated in this chapter, the goal of professional ELT teachers in Colombian rural areas does not seem to be limited to a 'technical rationality' (Schön, 1983) of implementing a given set of methods, strategies, and curricular guidelines. They appear to have developed a socially sensitive understanding of themselves and their profession that accounts for their own and their students' needs, problems and aspirations. Language policy still comes to bear in this understanding but as one imperative external pressure teachers have to deal with anyway. In this context, I argued, there is a need for policy makers to also be aware of and consider the 'real' (as opposed to ideal) contexts where policy is implemented and thus also consider ways in which teachers' work can be appreciated and potentiated. This is of particular importance if we think of the teachers' alternative narrative of success as actual claims for respect, esteem and appreciation of their work, or put differently, as claims for the cultural recognition Fraser talks about in her framework of social justice (e.g. Fraser, 1997, 2000).

Furthermore and in connection with these implications, teachers' social sensitivity seems to conflate in interesting ways with their religious values in their self-

understanding and social location as professionals. In other words, they tend to draw on their religious views to make sense of who they are and how they should act. This is how they come to evoke the missionary metaphor to show how working in rural contexts may be considered a positive experience overall. As demonstrated, this metaphor further strengthens the idea that their sense of professionalism diverges to a great extent from the dynamics of 'deliverology' they are expected to follow. As Hilda said their "huge mission" is rather oriented towards what in critical pedagogy is known as creating opportunities for social transformation (Freire, 2000). For this to happen, making their learners believe in the value that learning English may have in their lives comes in again as a primary concern. In any case, as Eva says, they need to sell their students the idea that education (learning English included) is a promising path and that it is worth the 'investment' (Norton, 1995) of time and effort. Put in another way, teachers understand that learning English and students continuing their education are what J. Wolff and De-Shalit (2007) call a 'fertile functioning', a way to bring improvement in other aspects of human life.

As discussed in this chapter, nonetheless, taking up this mission has come with some personal and professional sacrifices which have affected their images as teachers as well. Opportunities for gaining more confidence as speakers of English or continuing their professional development are more restricted for rural teachers, and thus, just like their students they also have to use their agency and, as Norton (2013) says, use the power of imagination to establish future ties with imagined communities of better or highly qualified teachers. Finally, in analysing the sorts of forms of belonging to other social groups, there is some evidence to suggest that teachers' backgrounds and cultural values also play an important role in the extent to which they may feel part of the rural community and thus ways in which they can better enact their mission. This study, then, contributes to unearthing a great deal of understandings, contradictions, conflicts, frustrations, aspirations, manoeuvres, and decisions that are important to recognise the place that rural English language teachers may have in the ELT landscape in the country. These represent important implications firstly for policy makers who need to have a more socially-driven approach if English is to be inserted as a trigger for social development and equality. For the ELT community in general (researchers, teachers,

students, and transnational companies) the findings reported here also represent a fairer approximation of what it means to be a teacher in rural locations and thus learn to appreciate it.

Chapter 8   Positioning Teachers: Conclusions and Implications

8.0 Introduction

An important point of departure of this thesis has been the need to address what I have referred to as the invisibility of rural English teachers. Such invisibility, I have argued, is evident in the dearth of research on rural ELT practices on the one hand, and in the apparent lack of support being provided to these teachers, on the other. Hence, a salient agenda in this thesis has been to recognise this invisibility in order to *position* teachers. That is, this research sheds light on what teachers think and do and how they make sense of their practices and identities in relation to the context they are located. This has been useful to provide empirical indication of where they stand in relation to the national ELT landscape, especially given the extent to which English is promoted in current education policy. More specifically, it has also been of interest to explore how the rural sociocultural context – where issues of social inequality are more prominent – could also play a role in the teachers' perceptions of their practices and of their images as teachers. The following principal research question has guided this endeavour:

> What perceptions do English language teachers have around their professional practice and identity in rural Colombia in light of the local sociocultural context and ELT policy?

This question poses an open interrogation of how ELT plays out in rural areas as evident in teachers' perceptions regarding what it is like to teach English in a rural school and how these perceptions come to bear both in their practices and professional identities. In order to address this open interrogation, this research also draws on three sub-questions:

- How do teachers interpret, respond to and position themselves in relation to ELT policy, cultural values of the community, their own beliefs, and students' experiences?

- What role do language policy and the rural sociocultural context play in the configuration of these teachers' professional identities?

- How do issues of social inequality manifest themselves in ELT educational practices in rural settings?

The first sub-question deals mainly with teachers' interpretations and translations of policy and how these shape their practices (see chapter 6). The second sub-question is concerned with how teachers' sense of who they are as professionals is constructed vis-à-vis policy demands and the local rural contexts (see chapter 7). The third sub-question focuses on interrogating the social impact of ELT by examining the relevance of the ELT policy in relation to pressing social issues in rural contexts (see chapter 5). As discussed in chapter 2, issues of social inequality are prominent in the rural sociocultural context and have thus been considered as important points of reference in the study. In fact, as explicitly put forward in chapter 3, social justice comes in as a key theoretical underpinning guiding this research.

On the basis of these questions and considering the different theoretical, methodological and epistemological foundations, this study does three main things. First, it examines ELT in light of issues of social justice affecting communities in rural Colombia. Second, it exalts localised understandings of what English language teaching means and how such understandings come to bear in teaching practices and perceptions of teachers' selves. Third, it offers a critical interrogation of ELT policy from the viewpoint of rural education. Taking these three angles as reference, this last chapter discusses the conclusions and implications of the work done. In order to offer a wider picture of each of these three main domains of action, the discussion of implications is included in separate subsections. Developing this final chapter in this way will enable the integration of the conclusions and implications already sketched

out at the end of the three data chapters. The chapter finishes with a discussion on future directions and final remarks.

8.1 ELT and issues of social justice

I started this study on rural education with the aim of examining the factors that in Colombia fuel a palpable denigration and subsidiary role given to rural lifestyles and peoples. Academics and rural development experts all agree that the rural sector in Colombia has been neglected for many years (e.g. Grupo-Dialogo-Rural, 2012; Martínez-Restrepo, Pertuz, & Ramírez, 2016; PNUD, 2011). Such neglect is put in terms of a huge social, political and historical "debt" with this sector. It is generally agreed among this group of experts and scholars that such a debt refers to an increasingly widening rural-urban gap generated, to a large extent, by an urban-oriented development bias that has translated into a constant negligence to address socioeconomic issues of the rural sector that include poor education and health systems as well as economic marginality and deprivation. It has also been pointed out that governments have continually failed to devise long term solutions to these problems (Grupo-Dialogo-Rural, 2012; PNUD, 2011). To make matters worse, the rural sector has been the worst affected by the acute armed conflict that afflicted the country for over half a century. Although a peace agreement was signed recently with FARC, it is still uncertain what awaits for the rural sector in what has been known as "the post-conflict era."

In my own professional field as a language teacher educator, I could not avoid thinking that the promotion of English in the education system by means of language policies with ambitious goals was yet another instance of urban-centeredness and neglect of rurality. My interest to explore in depth this particular issue started to grow further as I noticed that the promotion of English began to be associated with economic growth, social mobility, social development, equity (MEN, 2014b), and, in the frame of negotiations with guerrilla groups, even with peace building (Presidencia-de-la-Republica, 2014). I grew sceptical of how all these words and ideas could actually be

operationalised in rural contexts where the "social debt" is still to be paid. Could English be the solution to lack of opportunities for economic marginalisation and deprivation as well as a trigger for social mobility and development for rural inhabitants? Before starting this study, I was almost sure the answer was a firm no! After finishing, it has become clear that rural teachers seem to have a different perception. Although they find it challenging to make English fit into the lives of rural students as discussed in chapter 5, they are far from thinking that English has no place or no role to play in the construction of better futures or in achieving some sort of social transformation.

Teachers in this study are of the view that despite a lack of immediate benefits of learning English available for rural students, in the long run English may play an important role in envisioning and constructing better futures for them. This could be a future in which students may widen their cultural and social capitals by, for example, gaining professional degrees, travelling around the world, and opening up academic and economic opportunities (on this see sections 5.3.1, 6.1.1 and 7.2). In other words, teachers tend to view English as an element with the potential power to help students develop what Sen (2009) and Nussbaum (2011) would call their full potential as human beings. Teachers seem to be aware of the advantages that pursuing a Spanish-English 'enrichment' model of bilingual education (Hornberger, 1991) may have for their rural students and do not seem to see it as a privilege of middle and upper social classes only. Although the conditions in which they operate in rural locations are very different from what may be experienced in wealthier private and bilingual schools in the main cities, teachers seem to hold tightly to the idea that the opportunities that are opened by knowing English may also be available to their rural students. However, they understand that some sort of preparatory work for actually learning English is necessary. That is why they tend to focus a great deal of their efforts on stimulating students' curiosity toward, interest in and appreciation of English. This tendency emerged in this study, not as the easy way out in order to not comply with policy, but on the contrary as an important precondition and step to take considering current limitations and future possibilities.

In a critique of some attitudes teachers tend to adopt when working in low income schools and with students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds in the US, S. Nieto (2002, p. 5) regrets that some teachers assume that "their primary responsibility is to 'teach the basics' because students are thought to have neither the innate ability nor the experiential background of more privileged students." This low aspirational approach to education, however, does not seem to be the main ethos rural English teachers have in their reinterpretation of and certain distance they seem to have with policy goals. The data in this study strongly suggests that such a reinterpretation is rather an instance of teachers' agency to deal with pressing social needs and still boost students' capabilities in ways teachers may not even be aware of. Of course, ideas of what can realistically be done may come to bear too and teachers may not always act with the clear intention of helping students envision a better future. In short, teachers are professionals attempting to make sense of their practice in the midst of a number of challenging situations. Although in their attempts they may not always work with clear aims of social transformation, what this study highlights is their interest in, as Ana said, contributing their grain of sand to make a difference.

8.1.1 Implications regarding issues of social justice

The discussion above does not mean, however, that it is not necessary to address the issues of social inequality affecting rural contexts. On the contrary, this study further stresses the importance of securing the minimum standards of living a 'decent' government needs to offer (Nussbaum, 2011) in order to better make sense of English. The cultivation of aspirations teachers do with their students (discussed in section 7.2) needs to find echo in real possibilities to actually benefit from English. One of these minimum conditions pointed out in this study is access to higher education. Following the recommendations of previous research reports (see e.g. Grupo-Dialogo-Rural, 2012; Matijasevic, 2014; Perry, 2010; PNUD, 2011), other actions imply to find long term solutions to socioeconomic problems by, among other possible actions, converging rural and urban economies, greater investment in social welfare for rural

communities, better redistribution of productive lands, devising opportunities that benefit small farmers over big rural entrepreneurs, and increasing political representation for rural inhabitants. These actions are necessary to start to pay the increasing social debt with rural communities mentioned above.

Still other actions that are more related to the architecture of the policy can be undertaken too. Although this theme will be further discussed below, I would like to highlight here that the nature of any language policy that takes the banner of social development or social mobility should not respond to the interests of transnational companies over national needs and opportunities, as has happened in Colombia. That is, the promotion of English in the country cannot be motivated mainly by offering cheap labour to transnational companies so that they can save money when opening call-centres or acquiring outsourcing services in the country, as suggested by president Santos and the Ministry of Education (MEN, 2014a, 2014b). As noted throughout this thesis, there are issues to solve to guarantee that learning English pays off and really becomes an instrument for social mobility. As the PNUD (2011, p. 44) puts it quite nicely, it is necessary to have "more state in the market and less market in the state." That is, it is necessary to stop deifying the market and to start regulating it much more in such a way that the Country's own needs and virtues are considered above external demands. Investing in the promotion of English in the country is important but it can surely be done in more democratic, realistic and ecological ways if it is done concomitantly with other attempts to address social issues that can notoriously be more pressing.

At the same time, as also demonstrated in this study, it is necessary to change attitudes towards what is rural. The rural-urban gap has also facilitated the emergence and spread of negative and usually pejorative attitudes towards almost everything related to rurality, especially its people. This is how farmers, rural teachers, rural students, as this study also shows, can be thought of as less capable, less important, and, therefore, less worthy of esteem and respect. Following Fraser (1997, 2000), a symbolic cultural change is necessary towards recognition of rural inhabitants in general as individuals who are on a par with others and who, therefore, deserve the same levels of respect and

esteem and, consequently, the same chances to develop their capabilities. As shown in chapter 6, teachers themselves have gone through a process of dispelling negative preconceptions of what is rural and of the capacity of students. A similar process is necessary from the rest of civil society in general as well as from social institutions.

8.2 Exaltation of localised understandings and practices of ELT

As noted, even in circumstances of critical social issues, teachers seem to view English language learning as an important part of their pupils' education. Nonetheless, their professional action is not limited to just teaching English. Showing a deep social sensitivity, teachers seem to be able to consider their students' problems and capabilities in the ways they decide to act. As teachers witness closely the sort of socioeconomic challenges many students have to deal with, they therefore include in their practices attempts to contribute to tackling these issues. As shown, for example, sometimes the English lesson is taken as an opportunity to provide advice to students, and offer a break from their personal worries outside the classroom by turning the lesson into something agreeable to students. Perhaps even more remarkably, teachers sometimes use their lessons as an opportunity to inspire students to, as Lily said, "be someone in life" (see sections 5.3.1 & 7.2). All this is indicative of the extent to which teachers see themselves as having social responsibility in their role as educators.

At the same time, teachers appear to understand that such inspiration has to do with leading students to appreciate the potential usefulness of English in pursuing future goals. Thus, in another clear sign of agency, teachers tend largely to focus their efforts on making students appreciate the value of English. This simultaneously seems to be a precondition to then work towards proficiency targets, which as shown in chapter 6, more often than not may be adapted or changed completely from what is written in the learning descriptors (see section 6.2.2). This implies that teachers can act as active 'policy makers' as they are able to change the nature of policy to some degree, turn 'imperative' policies into 'exhortative' ones where there is room for their reflective

judgement, as well as their originality, creativity and passion (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012; Ball et al., 2011).

Furthermore, when directly working towards developing proficiency in their students, a range of contextualised and creative practices were detected. As shown in chapters 6 and 7, making the most of their expertise and the limited resources available, making English compatible with religious values, cherishing students' own linguistic repertoire as a resource for L2 learning as well as using their own identities as pedagogic and inspirational texts are some of the most outstanding practices teachers engage with in an attempt to help students make sense of English and develop some proficiency in it (see full discussion in sections 6.3 and 7.2).

These practices at the same time seem to stem from and contribute to the construction of teachers' images as professionals. Olsen (2016, p. 44), referring specifically to teachers, compares the sense of who one is with a pair of personally unique glasses "constructed out of the materials of our own personal histories" and of how we experience the world in particular ways. This pair of glasses, Olsen argues, mediates the interpretations of the world of teaching and all its factors. Drawing on this metaphor, it can be said that through the glasses of rural teachers' sense of being, teachers feel they are doing their job well even though it is often not reflected in national examinations. The fact that they feel they work hard and that there have been instances where this work has been recognised and celebrated by their students, head teachers, school principals, colleagues and/or ELT specialists and researchers fuels an 'independent' sense of professional success that moves away from the 'sponsored' view of professionalism (Leung, 2009) largely determined by policy compliance. In other words, bearing in mind that as human beings we are in a constant search for recognition (Taylor, 1994) and that being recognised by others is indeed "essential to the development of a sense of self" (Fraser, 2000, p. 109), it can be argued that just like everyone else, rural teachers are in constant need for recognition and that the moments where they have obtained it have played an important role in building positive images of themselves as successful professionals. These images at the same time contribute to building a case for an alternative set of values about what teachers need to know and

do, a set of values that makes room for socially and/or situationally grounded meanings of ELT (see further discussion in section 7.1).

In line with this alternative view of success and coming back to the idea that teachers see the need to inspire their students to envision a future of opportunity and social change, it has been striking to notice how teachers' own religious beliefs have come to bear in the configuration of images of themselves. This is how, as demonstrated in chapter 7, the metaphor of teachers as missionaries can represent very well the ways they self-understand professionally. Rural English teachers are missionaries whose undercover mission behind teaching English is to cultivate aspirations in their students. As a result of such interpretations teachers make decisions that shape their practice in ways that are not considered in technical approaches to language teaching, let alone valued by policy makers (see section 7.2). As also discussed in section 7.3, religious values also serve as a strong bond between teachers themselves, their students and rural communities in general.

On the other hand, this study also suggests that teachers are concerned with the external pressures imposed on them by policy mechanisms such as Pruebas Saber and by the idealised image of a teacher of English represented in the policy. As a result, they are faced with the need to also judge their practices and images of themselves in relation to what is expected from them. With regards to the practices, some teachers like Clara and Hilda see the need, at least in the last year of high school, to tailor their teaching to the nature of national examinations. Similarly, referring now to the idealised teacher of English in Colombia, participants in this study tend to position themselves as professionals willing to do more (e.g. enrol in MA programmes, improve their English) as a way to open up the possibility of one day belonging to an imagined community of highly qualified teachers (see section 7.3).

8.2.1 Implications regarding ELT practices and identities

What is clear from all these ways to approach ELT in rural contexts is that current language policy is far from accounting for the variety of meanings that can be assigned

to second language education by given communities. In fact, it can be said that the history of ELT policy that Colombia has experienced, especially from 2004, comprises a narrow focus or perhaps even an oversimplification of what it means to teach and learn English. The dynamics of language policy seem to clearly reflect what Freire (2000) calls 'Banking Education' where good teachers are those who possess certain knowledge they are able to *deposit* in their students, and where, in the same vein, good students are the ones who are able to replicate such knowledge in tests. There are many other meanings highlighted in this research. These include teachers being seen as sources of inspiration for their students, teachers appreciating the value of English as a valid teaching objective, teachers' resourcefulness as well as the possibility of achieving professional success unattached to policy compliance. From the perspective of teachers, this study offers a multifaceted picture of what the endeavour of second language education may involve. Equally important, it also shows that difficulty and struggle are not the only connections we can make when referring to rural ELT practices.

By the same token, this study also suggests that there may be a wealth of unexplored teaching practices ensuing teachers' agency and ingenuity to respond to different social challenges and external pressures. The practices unearthed in this research resonate with other interesting cases such as that of Jaraba Ramírez and Arrieta Carrascal (2012). These teacher-researchers employed ethnographic approaches to reach a better understanding of cultural values and communicative practices of a group of rural indigenous students. Their approach allowed them to understand that handcrafting was was not only an important element of the economic activities of the community but also of who they were as a cultural group. Based on that understanding, these researchers devised their own methodological strategies involving handcrafting practices as a way to make learning English more meaningful in their school. There may very well be a wealth of other interesting pedagogic practices, but these remain unknown. As this study stresses, it is important to bring those practices to light as that can help to capture a better picture of how ELT is being addressed in diverse contexts. On that basis it would also be possible to build from teachers' efforts by, for example, setting up professional development programmes that are underpinned on the premise

that what teachers need to do is not necessarily completely different from what they already do. Perhaps, it can be said that teachers need to learn how to better take advantage of what they already do and how to bring this into negotiation with other possible alternatives. In other words, following Olsen (2016), teachers' 'wisdom of practice' and 'personal theories' (usually the product of experiences) can be enriched with professional theories (the product of research). In this fashion, what teachers already do and know is potentiated instead of simply discarded and ignored.

8.3 ELT policy and rural education

From a critical angle, this research demonstrates that it is highly problematic to devise ELT policy that considers language learning as a technical endeavour *independent* of the social context, where teachers and students are supposed to see language education mainly as an individual and cognitive activity (Street, 1993, 2002). As already highlighted, current language policy seems to reduce ELT to the mechanisation of teaching procedures and communication practices that are expected to facilitate the attainment of a set of proficiency goals. The CEFR has played an important role in such a mechanisation as the benchmarks it proposes are taken as the only possible and unquestionable reference to what it may mean to learn and to teach a second language, English in this case. As McNamara (2011) argues, there are localised meanings of language learning to which there is no space in the apparent 'universal' principles of the CEFR. Examples of localised meanings can be found in this study in the teachers' view that it is part of their goals to awaken students' interest towards the language prior to aiming for a certain level of proficiency. They also seem to focus on making English compatible with cultural values over insisting on language accuracy or effective interaction with native speakers as the CEFR does.

The objective of taking all high school students to reach a B1 level of proficiency (now proven impracticable) appears to have also come from such a mechanised understanding of ELT. The MEN justifies the setting of this goal from an estimate that in order to reach this level of proficiency it is necessary to approximately have 350 to

400 hours of instruction (see e.g. Cambridge-Assessment, 2013). It is believed that in the 6 years of secondary school in the Colombian education system, with three hours of instruction per week, students may even end up having more than the required number of hours, and thus pursing this goal makes sense, at least in theory (MEN, 2014b). What is not considered in this estimate are the diverse social and pedagogic circumstances in which this instruction is to take place. As this study stresses, issues such as economic marginalisation, deprivation or lack of opportunities to access higher education may come to play a significant role in the attitudes students develop towards English and thus in the processes and outcomes of instruction (see chapter 5). Other factors such as the lack of appropriate pedagogic resources, infrastructure, appropriate professional development opportunities and qualified teachers also affect the extent to which the estimated hours of instruction prove insufficient (see chapter 6). These are the sort of elements that make it unlikely that language policy will simply be implemented (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012). In fact, this study highlights that factors such as cultural values, teachers' and students' own histories, and the socioeconomic standing of rural communities permeate what it may mean to teach or learn a second language, and consequently influence the actions that teachers may deem necessary to take.

8.3.1 Further implications regarding policy

There are different ways in which ELT policy can be made less mechanised and more socially grounded. A good beginning could be to set out policy goals that can truly be operationalised considering the circumstances and resources available. However, it does not mean that lowering the government's aspirations in terms of developing language proficiency is the right path to follow. Perhaps more importantly, as this research strongly suggests, it may rather be advisable to think of alternative ways of looking at the broad ELT policy goals. This research stresses the need to consider objectives such as integrating English as a vehicle for social transformation and making it compatible with communities' linguacultural repertoires. Pursuing objectives such

as these would imply that the promotion of English needs to be integrated with other actions aimed to, for instance, eradicate poverty and deprivation and secure opportunities for academic and professional prospects both in Colombia and abroad. In the same vein, as research in other developing countries has shown, alternative more flexible policies can be more effective and socially relevant. In order to promote this flexibility and social relevance, English can be seen as "an enrichment subject rather than as a compulsory subject, [which also implies] the removal of English from high-stakes assessment" (Piller, 2016, p. 179). At the same time, this would also imply that the responsibility for policy compliance does not fall directly on teachers alone. The possibility to think of language policy in this way does not seem to be too distant from current discourses on English as a vehicle for social equity, peace and social mobility, as discussed in section 2.5.5. What has not been done yet is to set a framework that really brings those ideas to life. This thesis can perhaps serve as one useful source of reference in building such a framework.

In tune with Piller's (2016) suggestion of removing English from high-stakes assessment, this study suggests that the shift of focus in terms of goals could at the same time imply a change in the strategies being used to measure the impact of the policy: Pruebas Saber. Teachers such as Jairo and Ana are of the view that the purpose of their teaching should not just be to do well in national examinations but beyond that to really have an impact on students' lives. This also has to do with the responsibility they seem to take up as cultivators of aspirations, discussed in section 7.2. Therefore, a test of language proficiency (focused on reading and grammar) is insufficient at best. The focus should be shifted to analysing the ways and the extent to which English is indeed facilitating social mobility and transformation by devising mechanisms to track the ways in which knowing English opens up different sorts of opportunities, considering other strategies that also need to be in place.

Another area in which ELT policy can be made more socially grounded and less mechanised is teacher professional development. Following on from the idea of negotiating personal and professional theories spelled out above, Arturo and Ana actually suggest an interesting alternative to do so. They propose an extension to the

programme "Todos a Aprender." This is a programme of the MEN which aims to support teaching practices in the areas of Maths and Spanish language arts at the primary school level in regions of the country where students are underperforming, many of which are rural. In this programme an experienced and highly qualified teacher is sent to support teachers working in those regions by means of in-site observation and training (Colombiaaprendre, 2016). What Arturo and Maria suggest is that the programme may include ELT as another important area. By doing this, it would be possible to have highly qualified teachers bringing to bear the professional theories and expertise other school teachers may use to affirm, adapt or change their practices. This could be a very useful way to enhance ELT in rural areas through an informed approach to the social context in which it plays out.

In the same vein, fostering the use of narratives as a tool for teacher professional development may prove invaluable (Barkhuizen, 2015; K. Johnson & Golombek, 2011). The sole fact of listening to teachers may trigger a better understanding on their part of why they do what they do and of possible new paths. This is what K. Johnson and Golombek (2011, p. 397) call "the transformative power of narrative." This study suggests that teachers are craving professional development opportunities. Engaging teachers in reflection over their practices may be an empowering way to supply those opportunities. Although this was not a specific aim of this research, teachers did refer to the fact that sharing their experiences with a researcher was a reason for them to feel important on the one hand (as someone was interested in listening to them) and challenged on the other (as they were led to explicitly examine the principles underlying their actions and beliefs). This could also be true for teachers in urban or other national contexts. In fact as observed by Sayer's (2012) research of the ambiguities and contradictions teachers in Oaxaca have to face, English teachers were highly motivated to take part in research not only as a way to make their voices heard but also as a way to create opportunities to practice their English, get some kind of feedback on their teaching, and have someone to discuss their methods with.

8.4 Future research directions

This PhD research constitutes one of the first attempts to examine ELT practices in rural Colombia. Therefore, it seems to raise a lot more questions than it can answer. For example, this study focuses only on teachers. One wonders what new insights can be gained if students, parents and even community leaders are involved in similar research endeavours. A particularly recurrent question raised in the opportunities I have had to share and discuss my findings was what the views of students could be. This seems to be, then, one logical next step to take.

It could also prove worth carrying out a similar study but this time following a more ethnographic approach. The findings of this research can be an interesting point of comparison for other studies dealing with fewer cases, more extended observations and community immersions. These other methodological paths may confirm and enrich the findings of this study. However, they could also disprove or add interpretations discussed throughout this report. Regardless of the outcome, all these are valuable contributions to addressing the lack of awareness of how ELT is practiced in these regions. In conducting an ethnographic study, it would also be advisable to use pictures as part of the research design. I did take some pictures during field work but did not do so in a systematic way, which prevented me from enriching the analysis presented in this thesis.

By the same token, alternative research settings can be considered. Rural areas in Colombia are quite diverse. Some of this diversity could not be taken into account as they would have exceeded the realistic reach of this study. Rural locations predominantly inhabited by indigenous communities who preserve their native language (e.g. Wayuu communities in La Guajira), other locations where tourism is an active economic activity (e.g. coffee growing areas), or rural locations in the so-called poorest department of Colombia (Chocó) can be included in future investigations. This is important in future attempts to further analyse ELT in relation to cultural values, economic activities and matters of social inequality.

A particular interesting point I would like to continue exploring is the ways in which religious beliefs come to bear in ELT practices. As this study shows, these beliefs can play an important role in the construction of teachers' professional images and also in the teaching strategies they devise. I would particularly like to trace the foundations of these beliefs and the factors that lead teachers to draw on these. As I also noted in chapter 7, the critiques of the ways in which ELT has been integrated with religion seem to miss important points regarding how this relationship comes about in non-western contexts.

8.5 Final remarks

This research has exclusively focused on rural education. The findings and critical discussions developed over the course of this study might find some echo in other contexts as well, as has been suggested by urban teachers with whom I have had the chance to share some of my concerns and findings. Likewise, bearing in mind the broad scope added to this study by addressing issues of social justice in relation to education, it is also important to highlight that sometimes it was hard to limit the discussions to the field of ELT only. As a language teacher educator and researcher myself, I have used my area of expertise to construct this analysis, and in doing and reporting it, I think it is clear that many of the claims for more socially responsive education policies apply or can be endorsed and enriched by teachers or education researchers in other fields. Therefore, the contents of this report can also be considered as an invitation for further interdisciplinary conversation and reflection.

Finally, I would like to say that this study has been profoundly influenced by Freirean views on the power of education to produce social change. In this vein, it points out ways in which such a change can be sought. Therefore, in addition to the professional gains and growth I have obtained by carrying out this PhD research, I do hope this study can really contribute to bringing about more informed education policies and reaching a better grasp of rural ELT practices by recognising and listening to the voices of teachers represented here.

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Appendices

Appendix A: *Consent form*

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH STUDIES

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

King's
College
LONDON

Title of Study: RECOGNISING INVISIBILITY: THE POSITIONING OF RURAL ENGLISH TEACHERS IN THE COLOMBIAN CONTEXT

King's College Research Ethics Committee Ref:_____

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. The person organising the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part. If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

Please tick or initial

I confirm that I understand that by ticking/initialling each box I am consenting to this element of the study. I understand that it will be assumed that unticked/initialled boxes mean that I DO NOT consent to that part of the study. I understand that by not giving consent for any one element I may be deemed ineligible for the study.

☐

Please tick or initial

1. ***I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated 04/03/2015 for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information and asked questions which have been answered satisfactorily.**

☐

2. ***I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. Furthermore, I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data up to June 1st 2016**

3. ***I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes explained to me. I understand that such information will be handled in accordance with the terms of the UK Data Protection Act 1998.**

4. ***I understand that my information may be subject to review by responsible individuals from the College for monitoring and audit purposes.**

5. **I understand that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained and it will not be possible to identify me in any publications**

6. I understand that the information I have submitted will be published as a report and I wish to receive a copy of it.

7. I consent to being interviewed and to having some of my lessons observed

8. I agree to write a biography of my teaching experience

9. I consent to my interviews being audio recorded.

10. I agree that the researcher may use my data for future research and understand that any such use of identifiable data would be reviewed and approved by a research ethics committee. (In such cases, as with this project, data would/would not be identifiable in any report).

_____ _____ _____

Name of Participant **Date** **Signature**

_____ _____ _____

Name of Researcher **Date** **Signature**

Appendix B: *Information sheet*

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

REC Reference Number: (To be included)

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET

RECOGNISING INVISIBILITY: THE POSITIONING OF RURAL ENGLISH TEACHERS IN THE COLOMBIAN CONTEXT

I would like to invite you to participate in this research project which forms part of my PhD research. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in anyway. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study aims to raise awareness of the sort of challenges and opportunities that Colombian rural English language teachers deal with. It particularly aims to examine the ways in which both the social context and the national educational demands play a role in what teachers do and think in relation to their professional practice. In this fashion, this study attempts to make visible the realities of the rural English language classroom that have traditionally been neglected or put at a secondary level of importance in the national context.

Why have I been invited to take part?

Participants involved in the study include English language teachers who have been working in Colombian rural schools for at least one year. If you have been invited is because you match this profile.

Do I have to take part?

Participation is voluntary. You do not have to take part. You should read this information sheet and if you have any questions, you should ask the researcher. You should not agree to take part in this research until you have had all your questions answered satisfactorily.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you accept to take part in this research, you will be given this information sheet to keep and will be asked to sign a consent form. At a time convenient for you, I will first invite you to write a description of how you have developed as a professional English language teacher and of what the experience of teaching English in rural contexts has been like for you. To this end, I will provide you with guiding prompts of what you may include in the written description. I will then ask your permission to observe some of your lessons on approximately three occasions at times that are also convenient for you. With your consent, I would also like to interview you on two occasions. Once before the observations and a second time after all observations have finished. For the interviews, I will arrange a private area (for confidentiality reasons) or any other suitable venue in a local public site convenient for you. Each interview will last up to one hour. They will take the form of a flexible conversation. The interview will be recorded subject to your permission. Recordings of interviews will be deleted after transcription. Even if you have decided to take part, you are still free to cease your participation at any time and to have research data/information relating to you withdrawn without giving any reason any time before June 1st 2016 when I expect to have a first full draft of the research report.

What are the possible risks of taking part?

There are no foreseeable risks in participating in the study. The main disadvantage to taking part in the study is that you will be donating some of your time to take part. In case the topics to be discussed in the interviews generate you any sort of distress, the interviews will be ended immediately.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There are no direct benefits to taking part. However, the information I get from the study will help to make the voices of rural teachers of English, like you, be heard at a national level. Similarly, the outcomes of this study may influence current and future language policy in more sensitive terms towards rural realities. Furthermore, I will provide you with a summary of a final report describing the main findings and conclusions of this study.

Will my taking part be kept confidential?

All information provided is regarded as strictly confidential and will be held securely until the research is finished. Your participation is entirely voluntary. All data for analysis will be anonymised. In reporting on the research findings, I will not reveal the names of any participants or the organisation where you work. At all times there will be no possibility of you as individuals being linked with the data.

The UK Data Protection Act 1998 will apply to all information gathered and held on password-locked computer files and locked cabinets within King's College London. No data

will be accessed by anyone other than me; and anonymity of the material will be protected by using false names. No data will be able to be linked back to any individual taking part in this study. You may withdraw your data from the project anytime up to the point of publication of preliminary findings in June 2016. All recordings of data on audio-equipment will be deleted after transcription. If you ask me to withdraw your data at any time before June 2016, I will remove all traces of it from the records.

How is the project being funded?

The development of this PhD project is being funded by Colciencias. For further information visit: http://www.colciencias.gov.co

What will happen to the results of the study?

I will produce a final report summarising the main findings, which will be sent to you. I also plan to disseminate the research findings through publication and conferences in Colombia and internationally.

Who should I contact for further information?

If you have any questions or require more information about this study, please contact me using the following contact details:

> Ferney Cruz Arcila
> PhD Student
> Department of Education and Professional Studies
> King's College London
> ferney.cruz_arcila@kcl.ac.uk
> Tel: (44) 07 889274234

What if I have further questions, or if something goes wrong?

If this study has harmed you in any way or if you wish to make a complaint about the conduct of the study you can contact my research supervisor at King's College London using the details below for further advice and information:

> Dr. Martin Dewey
> Centre for Language Discourse and Communication
> Department of Education and Professional Studies
> King's College London
> London SE1 9NH
> martin.dewey@kcl.ac.uk

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering taking part in this research.

Appendix C: *Teaching biography guidelines*

Thank you very much for having agreed to take part in this study and for having agreed to write about your teaching experiences. The following are some guidelines that will help you describe your teaching history in rural settings. You will find a series of prompts for you to consider throughout your narration. Please think of this as a story about your professional life you are telling. You can use the guidelines as aspects to consider in your story but please also feel free to mention any other aspect you deem pertinent to include. You should know that all information provided will be used for research purposes only and that your identity will be entirely confidential.

1. To start, I would like you to introduce yourself and to tell the story of how you became a teacher of English. Please refer to important moments and stages you have had throughout the process. You may also refer to crucial incidents that led you into teaching.

2. Following this initial description, I would like you to describe, in as much detail as possible, how you came to work in your current rural work setting. I would appreciate it if you could refer to when this happened, to the crucial factors (e.g. people, plans, and opportunities) that influenced your decision and to how you felt about the idea of working in a rural location before coming and how you feel now. If you have worked in other rural contexts, please refer to them too.

3. Finally, I would like you to describe what, in your view, have been the most critical (positive or negative) moments you have lived throughout your experience teaching English in your current or other rural work settings. Please specify what happened and why you think those moments were crucial.

Appendix D: *Example of field observation*

Field observation 18: A long journey: Getting to Pinares School

Location: Nariño, Palmas School, located 2.5 hours away from nearest main city
Date: 6 0ct, 2015
Time: 10:30 am to 1:00 pm
Teachers: Hilda, Ana, Jairo
Context: I describe the experience of getting to the most remote school of the seven this study considers.

Research questions:	
What perceptions do English language teachers have around their professional practice and identity in rural Colombia in light of the local sociocultural context and ELT policy? - How do teachers interpret, respond to and position themselves in relation to the policy, their own practices, beliefs, students' experiences and cultural values? - What role do language policy and the rural sociocultural context play in the configuration of these teachers' professional identities? - How do issues of social inequality manifest themselves in ELT educational practices in rural settings?	
Notes	Remarks
Due to the distance from Bogotá (approximately 850 km) and the long road trip that I had to undertake to arrive at Pinares school, the agreed schedule had to be changed. I arrived one day later than planned to Ipiales, the nearest main city to the region the school was located. From this city, I had to find my own way to the village where the school was located. Thus, the first day of the visit started by experiencing what teachers have to go through when they want to get to their school from Ipiales. The transportation to the area is rather limited. The only means of public transport are jeeps, old and new. Each one with a capacity of 8 passengers but as I observed drivers wouldn't leave until they had packed at least 9 or 10 passengers. As Ana had explained to me "the road is not appropriate for standard cars," so jeeps are the only main source of transportation. It is 10:30 am and I am the first passenger to the second service that day, After a waiting time of approximately an hour and a half, there are 9 passengers and the driver is happy to start the journey. During the waiting time, I started to make these notes and talk with one lady who was also waiting. Apparently, as she explained, as the jeep we were on was quite old, people preferred to wait for the turn of a better and newer vehicle. This explained the long wait that day. Jeeps normally start leaving from Ipiales at 10 am, so people have to accommodate to that schedule. As the woman I was talking to also explained, people do have the choice to pay an express service, which is worth more or less what the driver gets when there are 8 passengers (50.000 COP).	

The trip finally started with me bent down as the jeep was not high enough for me to seat straight.

I carried on the conversation with the same woman, who now was sitting down right in front of me. She told me that all her children had studied at the same school I was going to visit, a school she regarded as being "quite good." The woman also mentioned that after finishing school, students don't usually choose Ipiales (the closest city) but other cities to go and study or work. This is the case because according to her "in Ipiales there aren't as many university programmes or job opportunities as there are in other cities such as Pasto or Cali."

In the conversation, I also learnt that for people in this region of the country it is not uncommon to find strong cultural connections with Ecuador. This was evident for example in the accent of Spanish of people in this region, and the use of words coming from Quechua (which is an indigenous language more common in Ecuador than in Colombia). In fact, as this woman said, the capital city of Ecuador was a lot closer for them to visit (usually 5 hours by bus) than Bogotá (approximately 18 hours by bus).

When I arrived, the teacher I had been in contact with (Ana) picked me up in a park where the jeep normally stops. The streets of the small village were not in pavement. Around the main square of the village I could see that there was a church, a couple of restaurants, a stationary, a police station and a small hotel, where I stayed. The church and the two schools in the area stood out for being the better looking buildings in the area.

Ana had to go to a meeting she had to conduct with other teachers she was mentoring but before leaving she introduced me to Hilda, another participant in my study. I started a tour around the village with her. She took me around the streets. I learnt that making cheese was one important economic activity in the area and went to visit one cheese factory.

Hilda took me to the school and showed me around its facilities except the library because it was where Ana was conducting her meeting. Something I learnt was that a former English teacher labeled all the rooms of the school in English: the library, the kitchen, the sports room, the bathrooms, the storage room, etc. All the labels looked in good condition and were part of the school environment. So far this was the only school with a noticeable influence of English in its environment.

After Ana finished her meeting, I continued the tour with her. As we walked around the village, Ana started to point at the exact places where the dramatic experiences she had narrated in the interview had taken place: "this is the exact place where the mom of one of my students was taken and shot" "this is the sawyer where I had to jump to in order to protect myself from a fire

interchange between the police and the guerrilla." She again reminded me of how bloody the past of this village was.	

Appendix E: *Summary of field observations*

Field Observation number	Title	Date	Context
1	Getting to know Clara and her school	21-09-2015	First teacher I was going to meet. We were going to travel together from Bogotá to her school.
2	Clara's first lesson	21-09-2015	Clara had been asked to sub one of the four teachers who had called in sick that day. She decided to use that time to introduce a song this class was supposed to perform in the 'English day' to take place four weeks after my visit.
3	Going around Clara's School	21-09-2015	Clara had finished her fist lesson for the day and the school coordinator gave her permission to show me around the school.
4	Clara's second lesson	22-09-2015	Clara is teaching a group of eighth graders. Her objective is to practice a song these students will sing in the English day.
5	Clara's third lesson	22-09-2015	Clara is teaching a group of eleventh graders. They are also rehearsing for the English day.
6	Meeting Eva and Ferney's "teaching"	24-09-2015	I picked up Eva at 5:15 am and travelled to her school together, as we arrived at her school I had to "sub" her as she was summoned by the principal to take part in a meeting.
7	Around Almendros school	24-09-2015	After the meeting, Eva decided had some time to show me around her school.
8	Eva's first lesson: Titanic	24-09-2015	Eva is teaching a group of seventh graders. She is working on the soundtrack of the movie Titanic and developed pronunciation and vocabulary activities.
9	Eva's second lesson: a quiz	24-09-2015	Eva is teaching a group of seventh graders. She used translation tasks to test her students.
10	Eva's third lesson: a small group	24-09-2015	Eva is teaching a group of ninth graders. Despite the small class size (9 students), Eva struggles to have these students participate in class.

11	Leaving Almendros School	24-09-2015	I report on general observations of how Eva seems to approach her teaching practice obtained in conversations with her during the day
12	Extreme hot weather: getting to know Arturo's context	28-09-2015	I provide details of Arturo's work setting.
13	First lesson at Palmas school: praying and the use of mobile phones	28-09-2015	Arturo is teaching a group of seventh graders. His lesson included the use of prayers and mobile phones as pedagogical resources
14	Going around Palmas school	28-09-2015	After the first lesson, Arturo showed me around his school.
15	Arturo's second lesson: a test	28-09-2015	Arturo is testing a group of tenth graders. He is using grammar translation activities in this test.
16	Arturo's third lesson: dealing with admin duties	28-09-2015	Arturo is teaching a group of sixth graders. His lesson is frequently interrupted as he also has to deal with emerging administration duties he was responsible for.
17	Leaving Palmas school: in conversation with Arturo	29-09-2015	I was supposed to carry on observation of Arturo's lessons but his lessons were cancelled that day because the principal sent students to take a mock test for the national examinations that were coming up. This observation describes a conversation I had with him that day regarding class interruptions, his admin duties and his teaching goals.
18	A long journey: getting to Pinares school	06-10-2015	I describe the experience of getting to the most remote school of the seven this study considers
19	Observing Hilda in action	06-10-2015	Hilda's first lesson, which took place with a group of adults (mostly school children's parents), who were taking part of a special school programme.
20	Hilda's second lesson	07-10-2015	Hilda is teaching eighth graders. The teacher is working on roleplays with puppets students have built.

21	Hilda's third lesson: the dream town	07-10-2015	Hilda is teaching another group of 8th graders. Drawing on picture of a town in construction brought by the teacher, the students are assigned the task of describing the things that would make this town ideal to live in.
22	Jairo's lessons: disruptions	07-10-2015	I describe how Jairo's lessons with 11th and 8th graders were interrupted by unexpected events: police searching the school, and a general assembly convoked by the principal.
23	Going around Pinares School	07-10-2015	Before leaving the school, Ana showed me around the school.
24	At Olivos school	08-10-2015	I visit Camilo at the school he had recently been hired now as a Spanish teacher. He showed me his new school, and introduced Lily, the official English teacher to me.
25	Arriving at Robles school	12-10-2015	I meet Dora in the closest city to the school, which is where she lives, we travelled to the school together and as soon as we arrived, she showed me it around.
26	At Robles's classrooms	12-10-2015	Dora decides to take me to all the elementary grades in her school, all students seemed to have prepared demonstrations of things they have done with her.
27	Leaving Robles school	12-10-2015	Before leaving Robles school I met the English teacher for 6th to 9th grades. I visited her classrooms and had an informal conversation with her.
28	Getting to Margarita's school and going around it	05-11-2015	I meet Maria at 7 am in the urban centre of the municipality where she lives and travelled together to her school. As soon as we arrive she showed me around her school.
29	Maria's first class: personal information questions	05-11-2015	Maria is teaching a group of seventh graders. The lesson focused on preparing and rehearsing the use of personal information questions that the students used with me at the end of the lesson

30	Maria's second class: Students' presentations	05-11-2015	Maria is teaching a group of eighth graders. Students had presentations on phrasal verbs.
31	Maria's third lesson: reading	05-11-2015	Maria is teaching a group of 11th graders. The lesson focused on a reading activity about sports in England and a translation of the text.
32	Second day at Margarita's school	06-11-2015	Maria wanted me to have the chance to meet all the students in the school and decided to take me for shorter periods of time to those classes I had not been to. I also had the chance to talk to other school teachers.

Appendix F: *Interview Schedule 1*

This is the first of two interviews that are part of the research project you agreed to participate in. Once again, I assure you that all the information provided here will be confidential and that it will be used for research purposes only.

The interview will take the form of an informal conversation in which I would like to address the following issues. However, we may address any other issue that may come up as the conversation develops.

1. **Your teaching history**. In this first part of the interview I would like you to tell me how your teaching career has developed. You may start by telling me about your academic qualifications, followed by a description of your work history as a teacher of English. I would also like to know how satisfied you feel about your profession right now, and what professional goals you still expect to achieve.

2. **Your teaching experience in rural contexts**. Here, I would like you to share with me a description of how your experience teaching English in rural contexts has been like. You may refer, for example, to:

   - Feelings and ideas you had before becoming a rural teacher
   - whether those feelings and ideas have changed
   - The particularities of the rural context that make your experience different from other contexts
   - Aspects that you think have facilitated or challenged your professional practice.
   - The most rewarding moment(s) you have had
   - A common difficult situation you have had to deal with

3. **Some examples about your experience in rural contexts**. Based on your lived professional experiences, I would like to know if you could provide examples of the following situations:
   - A particular lesson you remember because it was successful.
   - Opportunities of professional development you have had.
   - A moment of frustration you may have had.
   - A moment or incident that led you to make changes in your teaching.
   - A conversation you may have had with parents about the role of English.
   - The case of a student who stood out.

4. Finally, I would like to know a little bit more about the rural community you work in. Please tell me all you know about the life in this community. I would also like to know who your students are. After that I would like you to comment on the role English plays in the life of both your students and the community in general.

Appendix G: *Interview schedule 2*

This is the second interview, which is part of the research project you agreed to take part in. All the information provided here will be confidential and will be used for research purposes only.

The following are some themes I would like to address in our conversation this time. However, on the basis of how our conversation develops, other themes may arise.

1. **Feelings about the profession**. I would like to hear a little bit more about the feelings you have towards being a teacher of English in the rural region you work. What do you think you would do differently in an urban context?

2. **The social context and English language teaching.** I'd like to know your views about the life and education in the rural region you work at. You may refer for example to:

   - Students' attitudes towards leaning English
   - Ways in which learning English integrates with students' professional aspirations or social needs
   - Opportunities English provides students with
   - Ways in which you think English language teaching can be improved

3. **The impact of national programme of English.** Can you think of any instances in which the current national programme of English or the previous national programme of Bilingualism have had any impact on your professional practice?

Appendix H: *Sample of the use of a matrix in data analysis*

Research questions	How do teachers interpret, respond to and position themselves in relation to ELT policy, cultural values of the community, their own beliefs, and students' experiences? What role do language policy and the rural sociocultural context play in the configuration of these teachers' professional identities? How do issues of social inequality manifest themselves in ELT educational practices in rural settings?	
Themes	**Excerpts**	**Comments**
Ideas about working in a rural location	Pues mis expectativas antes, cuando terminé la universidad era trabajar en un pueblo o en una ciudad, no me miraba en el área rural (.2) pues porque me parecía le::jos, que de pronto no había muchos recur::sos, me imaginaba de pronto una escuela más feita, no conocía, no tenía conocimiento de las escuelas rurales (…) Y cuando llegué me di cuenta que era un colegio muy bonito con infraestructura bonita, me gustó (EVA:INT1)	Eva's initial ideas of what it was to work in rural areas seem to come from a misrecognition and negative ideas of rural location.
	R: ¿Antes de irse a trabajar en una zona rural, qué ideas tenía de cómo iba a ser su experiencia? M: Sí claro. Yo creo que lo que uno piensa antes de enfrentarse a esta situación es muy diferente a lo que piense después de haber realizado o de estar realizando un trabajo en la parte rural. A mí me parecía al comienzo, aunque para mí no es desconocido porque tal vez como lo manifesté, yo soy del campo, nací en Sutamarchán en una vereda, entonces me crié en el campo. (…) para mí, la educación rural, pues ya sabía y yo quiero mucho eh a la parte rural. A los niños del campo los quiero mucho. Sin embargo cuando iba a empezar, a mí me parecía que ir a trabajar al campo era muy difícil y que de pronto trabajar con esos niños que no aprendían, o sea uno tiene un concepto de que como que no es para uno. Uno quiere como quedarse en la ciudad, como no ir al campo, no untarse allá de gente del campo, a pesar de que uno se crio en el campo y de que sabía cómo era el campo, pero pues ya uno profesional piensa diferente. Pero a la hora de realizar, de estar uno ya dentro de esa educación rural, la situación es muy diferente. Yo tuve la oportunidad de iniciar en la educación rural en Saboyá, entonces en Saboyá, yo siempre hablo de los docentes, espectaculares. Los compañeros, una rectora bellísima persona y por lo tanto pues los estudiantes pues también. (Maria: INT1)	Although Maria was from a rural area herself, once she became professional, she also had second thoughts about going to work in a rural location, since being a professional now meant that probably she deserved something better, better meaning working in a urban area, perhaps.

Appendix I: *Sample of summary of comments emerging from preliminary observations*

Theme: Ideas about working in a Rural Context

- ✓ *Negative initial ideas:* Teachers in general held negative ideas of what their experience was going to be like. Even those teachers who came from rural locations. They had been affected by the discourses associating the rural location to backwardness. General beliefs included the idea that schools were going to be ugly and quite far away, isolated in the jungle (Eva), as something hard and that they deserved better (Maria) or that it was going to be hard to motivate students or that might not learn easily (Clara), referring to specific things such as pronunciation for example (Dora). Or as Camilo also said, that students were rather ignorant.
- ✓ *For most, those ideas changed or were outweighed by other aspects they found.* Eva found for example that the school had a nice infrastructure and was not as ugly as she had thought, Maria found that in most of these rural schools she found very supportive colleagues and administrators, Clara and Dora started to discover that students can easily be motivated to use English in their everyday life as they could be motivated to greet, and sing in English.
- ✓ *How those feelings have changed: Feelings of Comfort and stability.* It is convenient to work in a rural school especially for provisional teachers who see working in a rural area as a more stable job. After six years Eva, for example, can still have the same job, which gives her more stability. Had she decided to take some of the offers she had received of working in the towns might have meant that she would have been removed from her job. There is less competition for a post in a rural school. Maria also says that Teachers feel comfortable working in a rural area especially for the kind of people they find there. Jairo explains he is very comfortable working in a rural area. Although at the beginning he felt fear for what he has heard of the area where he was coming to work, specifically the armed conflict, he values the fact that teachers are well appreciated in these regions, and are respected, and his work is more valued by parents and the community, much more than it would be in an urban context.

Appendix J: *Evolution of thematic analysis as it happened before writing chapter 5*

Themes Emerging in the matrix	Evolution of these themes as developed in first draft of observations	Final organization of themes in light of theory
Ideas about working in a rural location Opportunities of the rural context Common difficulties Current feelings Who students are	Views on the rural context - Preconceive negative ideas - More positive a-posteriori impressions - Feelings of comfort - Feelings of stability	A misrecognised rural context in the architecture of ELT programmes - Making rurality invisible - English as key to success and as part of reality - Making English fit: a reinterpretation of ELT goals - Uncertain access to the promise of English Rurality in cultural hierarchies - Feelings of comfort and stability: the other face of rurality
Views on the role of English	The importance of English - English as key to success - English as part of reality	
Economic issues in rural locations	Challenges and objectives of ELT - Making English fit* - Insufficient resources and inappropriate infrastructure - Number of Hours of Instruction - Limited Access to Higher Education - Poverty	The impact of unfair socioeconomic structures on ELT ELT and Human development - On aspirations and unfreedoms
Resources and Hours of instruction	Thought to be more pertinent in chapter on practices	
Aspirations of teachers and frustrations	Initially dropped but reincorporated later on in light of theory.	
The role of parents struggle of finding a job What my visit meant Other challenging issues	Dropped as not directly related to questions	

Appendix K: *Original excerpts in chapter 5*

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[i] Me enviaron a una zona rural. Esa zona rural es un corregimiento que queda hm:: como a casi dos horas de Ipiales. Ipiales es una ciudad fronteriza cerca al ecuador, and :: hm:: esa zona donde yo fui a trabajar es una zona de conflicto, es una zona de guerrilla, es una zona de difícil acceso. La carretera es destapada, e::s un poco difícil. Así cuando es primera vez uno se impacta porque uno cree que va a llegar a un pueblo normal pero no, es:: apartado y siempre fue duro la primera vez que llegué porque tuve que convivir con (1.) con la guerrilla. O sea en el mismo sitio donde almorzaban los profesores, almorzaban los guerrilleros, entonces era eh bien (1.) bien difícil. O sea, para mí fue bien impactante esa situación (1.) de que en el pueblo se muevan las cosas así de esa manera. Siendo que yo nunca había mirado a alguien como por ejemplo a una persona así, tan de frente. Y llegaban armados, llegaban descargaban el fusil al lado de la mesa y se sentaban al lado nuestro. Entonces ese contexto tan difícil, tan duro, eh:: me impactó.

[…] lo impactante también allí es en las primeras semanas de clases en ese colegio fue haberme encontrado con muchachos tan sensibles porque parece ser que antes de mi llegada no tenían un profesor de inglés, eh:: o sea formado en inglés, sino que cualquier otro profesor les dictaba inglés y ahí era solamente columna de palabras descontextualizadas en el tablero y a buscar en el diccionario y a traducir, o sea vocabulario suelto, descontextualizado y bueno, cuando llegué yo, les impactó bastante porque empezamos a trabajar o sea (1.) pues como hace uno como profesor de inglés, a trabajarles un inglés contextualizado:: me preocupé mucho por *el personal information* para que ellos sepan dar sus datos en inglés, que es lo básico. Y:: bueno, se hicieron muy buen amigos míos (1.) y cuando de pronto se acerca un muchacho me dice "profe, quiero hablar con usted." Bueno, habla conmigo se desahoga me comenta situaciones o sea, me comentó que hace poco se la mataron a la mamá en presencia de él, que la sacaron por la noche, tipo 8 de la noche (1.) llegó la guerrilla, la sacó del cabello, la arrastró en presencia de él, la llevó a la plaza y la fusiló en presencia de él.

Entonces son contextos BIEN difíciles, entonces dije yo "¿cómo hago yo para venir a enseñar inglés si esta situación está tan, tan difícil, tan dura? Los muchachos tienen la mente en otro lado. Y los muchachos mandaban a traer radios […] y escuchaban una emisora de la guerrilla (1.) donde se trataban de camaradas y de todo eso. Y donde se hablaba mucho de la filosofía del Che Guevara, y eso mirando videos de bombardeos, miraban videos de ataques, o sea era muy violenta la mentalidad de los muchachos, no era que ellos eran violentos, sino que ese era el contexto y yo decía "y bueno, y entonces inglés qué? O cualquier otra asignatura qué?"

Y:: unos muchachos decían "¿profe, usted cuánto gana?" entonces le digo "pues lo que gana un profesor". En ese entonces yo estaba en la categoría 2A eh soy del nuevo escalafón. Entonces dice "hm: profe, yendo a:: a trabajar al Chongo el fin de semana, te pagan casi un millón de pesos." Entonces les digo "¿y qué es el Chongo?" Entonces me dicen "no es que el Chongo es donde tú vas y:: y te pagan por cortar a eh:: los capullos de amapola y sacar esa lechecita blanca y empacarle en frasquitos y, y la echas allí y eso te, te pagan el fin de semana lo que recojas." Entonces llegaban los muchachos con los dedos cortados, las manos súper hinchadas.

Y:: pues era difícil, ese contexto muy, muy duro, bueno que yo decía "si hubiera sido un contexto rural (1.) normal, de pronto hasta uno contextualiza el inglés que vean el campo, que vamos y observemos las flores, que miremos las montañas y hagamos descripciones en inglés, alguna cosa, pero era difícil porque hasta de pronto el campo estaba minado @@ eso fue duro.

De todas maneras, siguiendo con, con mi tarea pues aparte de uno como profesor es un amigo y más que todo uno como mujer y como mamá siente –tiene ese sentimiento hacia los estudiantes de

quererlos como proteger un poco pero igual uno sabe, en su campo profesional llegas a cierto límite y uno no puede hacer más de lo que se pueda hacer para solucionar la situación de ellos.

Les llevé canciones, baladas románticas en inglés, les hice esa propuesta de:: irnos aprendiendo vocabulario a través de canciones y les gustó bastante, les gusto tanto que:: eh los fines de semana sacaban los parlantes en alguna de las casitas y colocaban por ejemplo la canción de Celine Dion ¿del Titanic?, y se reunían los muchachitos en la esquina y a cantaban en inglés. Entonces yo decía "bueno, por allí por lo menos les calma el alma y hacen ese esfuerzo de:: de aprender a pronunciar un idioma nuevo." Que para ellos sí era nuevo, aunque estaban en grado once, era nuevo porque como le digo profe, los anteriores profes de inglés no eran formados en inglés sino que:: les asignaban eh esa:: tarea y ellos era vocabulario suelto, descontextualizado, nunca hubo un cuestionario o sea lo que es eh:: eh:: el idioma, comunicarse, comunicarse, transmitir comunicación.

Entonces esa fue la experiencia con los muchachos de cuando yo fui por primera vez en el año 2005, esa fue mi primera experiencia. En el 2006 las cosas se empezaron a calmar un poco en cuanto al orden público. Aunque calmado entre comillas porque empezaron los enfrentamiento. Empezaron las experiencias de que eh el gobierno mandó al ejército, porque allá no había eh no había:: estación de policía. Cuando de pronto hm más o menos sí finalizando 2006 van llegando helicópteros, van llegando tanquetas, van llegando pero todo un ejército ya, a posesionarse allá. Se posesionaron, la guerrilla salió del pueblo y entonces ya vino otro contexto, ya vino el contexto ya fue de enfrentamientos. Estábamos en clase, estábamos en clase y cuando de pronto (frun) el hueco de la bala encima del tablero (2.) porque así era.

Detrás del salón había un maizal grandísimo, grandísimo y por allá iban los guerrilleros y se enfrentaban y los policías o los soldados se ponían en el techo del colegio y desde allá empezaban a responder y nos dejaban en medio del:: del fuego (ajay) @@@ Y así enseñando inglés @@, es una situación difícil.

Como allí ya sabíamos manejar por lo menos los *commands* en inglés, los muchachos eran *down* abajo, al piso, *on the floor*, ya sabíamos más o menos lo que yo les decía en inglés. Yo decía "*on the floor, on the floor*" y ellos ya sabían y a veces nos tocaba permanecer hasta hora y media dos horas y, y comentando o cantando de pronto las canciones que ellos se sabían ahí tarareando en inglés pero en el piso [...]

Entonces son cosas que:: pues eh por más que se quiera o sea enseñar algo, por más que se quiera que los muchachos aprendan algo de buena manera como uno quisiera, el contexto es difícil, el contexto siempre les afecta.

Los muchachos siguen afectados por ese contexto, los muchachos, los muchachos siguen eh:: -uno como profesor es sensible a lo que ellos sienten, o sea yo como les podía exigir algo, sabiendo que la situación es tan difícil; pero sin embargo íbamos avanzando allí. Yo tenía material de hm:: algunos libros, me gustaba mucho manejar videos, películas me gustaba mucho manejar para que ellos como que se vayan contextualizando como con el idioma. Íbamos avanzando allí, y enseñándoles las conjugaciones verbales que para mí es importante que manejen verbos porque los verbos son la base para poder comunicarse, como yo les decía a los muchachos "ustedes van a un hotel y dicen dormir y ya:: por lo menos le entienden, si va a un restaurante y dice comer, por lo menos le entienden." Entonces hicimos énfasis en una listas especiales de verbos eh:: seguía yo insistiendo con el *personal information* para que ellos por lo menos sepan decir sus datos personales porque al muchacho le interesa aprender lo que es suyo, no lo que es ajeno. Entonces por lo menos yo les dije que aprendan a decir al menos yo me llamo, yo me llamo Ana, yo vivo en tal parte, mi dirección es esta, me gusta hacer esto, me gusta hacer lo otro, estoy en tal colegio, y mi aspiración es ser médico, doctor, bueno lo que sea, pero que partiendo de eso. Y:: le cuento profe que fue un poco difícil pero manejar la

personal information tanto para que ellos digan quienes son, presentarse y también para que ellos pregunten a otras personas. Y eso en <u>grado Once,</u> imagínese profe, esas cosas que deberían haberlas aprendido años atrás.

Pero bueno ahora ya gracias a Dios no pasa, no pasan esas cosas, está controlado. 2009, 2010 (1.) ya hubo como esa calma eh: y entonces allí sí como que hubo más ánimo y más disposición de los muchachos para trabajar (2.) por ese mismo contexto era que los distensionaba con el juego y ellos eran felices. Felices con el juego, felices con las canciones, felices con:: eh poesías también, les gustaba bastante, aunque algunas las mecanizaban y no sabían qué decían, pero las mecanizaban para pronunciación. Pero bueno "algo es algo" decía yo. Y como le digo profe algunos otros sí, sí aprendieron y, y yo creo que es la cuestión, la cuestión de que uno se interese por ese ser humano ¿no? Por el ser humano que uno tiene acá porque si no hubiera sido así, pues yo hubiera hecho lo mismo, o sea si no me hubiera sensibilizado con los muchachos les hubiera colocado cualquier cosa al tablero allí que la traduzcan como ellos estaban acostumbrados, que la clase de inglés era el diccionario de Universidad de Chicago y la lista de palabras en el tablero.

Cuando llegué yo, ya no era tanto el diccionario, sí era un requisito manejar el diccionario pero de otra manera, de otra manera. Y pues a ver algo que les gusto a ellos, hacemos mucho crucigramas, hacíamos sopas de letras y:: marcamos el colegio con la ruta, <u>todo</u>, sala de profesores, baño, biblioteca, todo lo marcamos en inglés. Y eso también les gustó, ujú.

Y:: como ya no había tanto peligro entonces yo los sacaba al pueblo en grupitos pequeños y hacíamos un tour. Yo les decía "vamos a hacer un tour en inglés (1.) enseñando los sitios" lo que es iglesia, parque, aunque no había un bonito parque, pero había parque donde jugaban básquet y fútbol los chicos, la estación de policía, la comisaría, la parroquia, la oficina. Eh había otro colegio también y nos dábamos la vueltica y nos paseábamos y:: y –pero hablándoles en inglés y la gente del pueblo se amontonaba y decían "¿qué será que hace esa profesora? qué es lo que dice? qué es lo que hace?" y yo les preguntaba a los muchachitos y:: y ellos contestaban, entonces eso era como una novedad. (Ana:INT1)

[ii] Mis expectativas antes, cuando terminé la universidad era trabajar en un pueblo o en una ciudad, no me miraba en el área rural (2.) pues porque me parecía le:jos, que de pronto no había muchos recur::sos, me imaginaba de pronto una escuela más feíta, no conocía, no tenía conocimiento de las escuelas rurales […] Y cuando llegué, me di cuenta que era un colegio muy bonito con infraestructura bonita, me gustó (Eva:INT1).

[iii] Yo soy del campo, […] me crié en el campo […] sin embargo cuando iba a empezar, a mí me parecía que ir a trabajar al campo era muy difícil y que de pronto trabajar con esos niños que no aprendían, o sea uno tiene un concepto de que como que no es para uno. Uno quiere como quedarse en la ciudad, como no ir al campo, no untarse allá de gente del campo, a pesar de que uno se crio en el campo y de que sabía cómo era el campo, pero pues ya uno profesional piensa diferente. Pero a la hora de realizar, de estar uno ya dentro de esa educación rural, la situación es muy diferente […] yo siempre hablo de los docentes, espectaculares. Los compañeros, una rectora bellísima persona y por lo tanto pues los estudiantes pues también. Los estudiantes muy buena gente, muchos entusiasmados por aprender, por salir adelante […] (Maria:INT1)

[iv] Yo tenía la concepción de que la pronunciación no la iban a poder hacer. Pero no, uno ya con la práctica, por ejemplo, les gusta mucho cantar en inglés, entonces uno está constantemente buscando canciones que les guste y realmente eso ha cambiado mucho, ha cambiado mi forma de pensar porque son capaces de eso. (Dora:INT1)

v […] las cosas digamos que diferencian a la ciudad con el campo, no en el sentido de que las personas del campo tengan menos capacidad que las de la ciudad. Yo me doy cuenta acá de que los chicos tienen mucha, mucha capacidad. Lo que pasa es que de pronto las tecnologías, las formas de acceder a la información son mínimas, pero los estudiantes tienen mucha, mucha capacidad acá (Jairo: INT1)

vi **Ana:**   En el 2011 yo quedé en el nivel B2 y estaban escogiendo docentes para viajar a San Andrés para el programa de inmersión y yo estaba en esa lista […] y mi rectora no confiaba mucho en mí porque como yo era recién llegada al colegio de Ipiales y es que ella dijo "¡ay es que viene de colegio rural, no!" dijo "viene de colegio rural ¡cómo!" dijo es que – entonces ella postulo a otro profesor allí del colegio [..]

Ferney: En esto último que dijo hubo algo que me llamó la atención y es que en el colegio, ¿el hecho de que fuera de un colegio rural, le genera algún tipo de imagen, no muy positiva? ¿cómo fue esto?

Ana: Sí:: […] cuando ya me trasladaron de La Victoria, llegué a un colegio de Ipiales […] y llegué:: y los salude y todo, ella [la rectora] estaba al frente de la mesa de trabajo con los profesores de inglés y cuando –me presenté y cuando miró mi:: mi acto administrativo, lo leyó y me quedo mirando y dijo ¿usted viene de zona rural?" dijo "¡ja!" dijo "hay que recibir lo que nos manda la Secretaría de Educación" ese fue mi recibimiento […] y mis compañeros de trabajo eran "Ana, ¿dónde dejaste las Botas?" "¿dónde está tu fusil?" […] yo decía "¿por qué tienen que discriminarme o decirme cosas porque yo vengo de [nombre del colegio], si es que allá también hay estudiantes y también seres humanos y de pronto un profesor que va alá tiene más mérito del que está acá.(Ana:INT1).

vii Cuando yo llegué, si le voy a ser sincero, con algo como de sustico (2.) por digamos todas esas cosas que uno ha escuchado y:: por el problema digamos social que viene azotando a Colombia. Entonces uno como que viene predispuesto a que ojalá no pase nada en ese sentido. Pero uno ya acá, ya conoce a las personas, o sea uno se da cuenta de que lo bonito en una zona rural es que al profesor lo estiman bastante. O sea le dan a uno la confianza, le dan a uno el cariño que de pronto en la ciudad, se olvida. Le dan la bienvenida, existe todavía ese respeto al docente, dándole al profesor ese valor real que uno tiene que de pronto en la ciudad se olvida, que es ese, el de formar a las personas, y los padres de familia son muy agradecidos en ese sentido. Entonces eso es como un punto en el cual uno (.1) se llena como de energías y decir, acá sí se pueden hacer muchas cosas ¿cierto? (Jairo:INT1).

viii Muy pocos van a la universidad además porque hay muchos padres de familia que se sienten muy orgullosos de que su hijo sea bachiller. Para ellos es un orgullo decir que el hijo es bachiller y nada más […] muy pocas familias se interesan porque el muchacho sigan siga sus estudios universitarios (Clara:INT1)

ix Yo les hago entender que el inglés es una lengua que se debe aprender porque cuando vayan a la universidad, los que van a la universidad, "allá en todas las materias se mira inglés" les digo. También les digo que el inglés es una lengua que "ustedes no saben las oportunidades que se pueden presentar" a ellos el hecho de ser indígenas tienen mucha prioridades, les dan becas. Entonces les digo "el inglés ahorita es fundamental para todo, para todo, entonces qué bueno que ustedes aprendan y se puedan

defender con una persona, por algo, se ganen una beca, los lleven a los estados unidos, por lo menos puedan pedir un baño o "buscar un hotel o una comida o dónde dormir" les digo yo. (Lily:INT1)

[x] Ellos acá en un día al sol y al agua trabajando la pala se ganan 14.000 pesos, 14000 pesos. Entonces yo les digo "miren yo me gano 70 mil pesos y solamente hasta la 1:00 trabajo, entonces estudien, estudien, traten de salir adelante, si sus papás no los apoyan, no sé, trabajen y estudien, pero salgan adelante, traten de –luchen" les digo "por ser alguien en la vida" unos dicen sí, sí, sí profe, sí […] Yo les trato de decir que por la mañana […] traten de desayunar bien, traten de comer lo que sea, sea papas o chócolo, lo que sea, yo les digo […] Y:: que sean las clases como más motivadas también. les hago reír, les cuento un chiste. (Lily:INT1)

[xi] […] llegaron las empresas petroleras. Hay un pozo de petróleo ahí y la gente trabaja es en las compañías y entonces por eso es que yo veo que los estudiantes no le dan la importancia al estudio como un medio para mejorar su situación social porque ellos realmente, un celador que trabaja en una compañía inclusive gana hasta tres veces lo que ganamos nosotros como docentes. Entonces ellos con un once y como son de la región ya se pueden enganchar a trabaje en una compañía y les va muy bien. Económicamente les va bien. Ahorita su fuerte es trabajar en la compañía en lo que les sale. Y lo que les sale son servicios […](Arturo:INT1)

[xii] Estos contextos nos obligan a estar pendiente de los chicos porque tenemos poquitos estudiantes y como muchos de ellos no les gusta el estudio y no tienen los recursos suficientes para estudiar, ellos deciden quedarse en sus casas. Entonces como profesora me veo obligada y hace parte de nuestro trabajo ir a la casa de los chico y preguntarles por qué no quieren estudiar o cuál es el problema. […] Muchos de ellos pues no tienen el dinero suficiente. Entonces nosotros como profesores recolectamos dinero y les compramos los útiles escolares y los zapatos, todo lo que necesiten […]. (Eva:INT2)

[xiii] En mi experiencia de profesora también he tenido que enfrentarme a situaciones en las que los estudiantes que han podido salir del país son muy retadores. En Villavicencio por ejemplo me paso que estudiantes que habían salido se fijaban mucho en mi pronunciación por ejemplo y eso hacia tensionante la clase, pues ellos habían salido y yo no. Trabajar en una zona rural significa también no tener que enfrentarse a ese tipo de estudiantes. (Eva:INT1)

[xiv] He querido viajar y mejorar el idioma y poder buscar otras oportunidades de trabajo, pues esto de la docencia con adolescentes cansa y como que no ve uno otros panoramas ni estilos de vida, me siento enclaustrada con mi vida y el hecho de no tener el dinero suficiente para volar, pues me mantengo sola y he querido hacer pero no veo salida. (Eva:TB)

Appendix L: *Original excerpts in Chapter 6*

[xv]Ferney: **Qué sabes de este programa?**

Clara: La verdad no he adentrado mucho en ese tema pero por lo que he podido saber, en la ley general de educación se habla sobre:: pues que se debe impartir a los estudiantes sobre la adquisición de una segunda lengua ¿sí? [...] y que ha habido algunos cursos de inmersión para algunos docentes en la isla de San Andrés y que ha habido también como algunos talleres regionales que entiendo yo son como cursos también de inglés [...]no ha llegado pues así al colegio información sobre eso, sobre el programa de bilingüismo, para nada.

Ferney: Y ¿cómo te enteraste de esto que existe?

Clara: Pues la verdad:: alguna vez sentí curiosidad de saber en qué consistía este programa de bilingüismo, entonces entré a esta página de Colombiaaprende y ahí pues leí, pero como te digo, no fue un estudio muy profundo, pero leí así en general en qué consistía, y eso fue.

Ferney: ¿Y esas cosas que mencionas de cursos e inmersiones, no has tenido la oportunidad de participar?

Clara: Pues la verdad yo creería que eso es como muy limitado y no ha tenido como mucha, como que no se ha hecho mucha propaganda por decirlo así, para que nos enteremos todos los profesores de inglés. Me enteré de lo de la isla de San Andrés por lo que leí en ese momento. Pero que haya sido de gran difusión que tales profesores asistir, pues no, no me he enterado la verdad.

Ferney: ¿E**n tu perspectiva, ¿qué impacto crees que ha tenido este programa en el colegio?**

Clara: Nada, para nada, no.

Ferney: ¿**Por qué?.**

Clara: Pues no ha llegado pues así al colegio información sobre eso, sobre el programa de bilingüismo, para nada. Lo que único que sí:: en agosto, en el mes de agosto, llegó una carta informándole al rector que en los próximos días iba a haber un examen para los profesores de inglés, examen para saber en qué nivel estamos los profesores de inglés. Llegó esa carta y dice que los profesores debemos estar pendientes de la página en colombiaaprende para saber en qué lugar nos tocaba el examen eh:: eh:: y finalmente estuvimos mirando con mis dos compañeras de inglés y no vimos nada sobre la fecha específica en la iba a ser ese examen, entonces eso quedó como así. Eso fue como lo único que haya llegad al colegio, pero así informaciones específicamente para profesores de inglés, no. (Clara:INT2)

[xvi] Este plan trata de incursionar a las instituciones por medio de la capacitación, directamente a los profesores de inglés [...] pero en sí:: acá en Pasto o a Nariño, no ha llegado, se ha llegado hasta la etapa del diagnóstico de los docentes de inglés para detectar en qué nivel según el marco común europeo, se encuentran ellos [...] (Ana:INT2)

[xvii] El rol que juega es muy importante, supremamente importante porque si vemos a todas las carreras les exigen el inglés, es más, dice que antes de hacerlos profesionales les hacen un examen de inglés donde si saben inglés los gradúan y si no saben inglés no los gradúan. (Maria:INT1)

xviii Ferney: **[…] desde su perspectiva ¿el inglés sí les [a los estudiantes] abre oportunidades?**

Arturo: Sí, realmente profe sí (.1) pues:: yo lo viví, sabía que el inglés era:: es fundamental en cualquier campo que se quiera desempeñar uno, no sólo como profesor sino en cualquier campo, en cualquier profesión hablar otro idioma abre muchas puertas y eso es lo que he tratado de concientizar a los estudiantes, además a partir de él, se pueden abrir muchas oportunidades de intercambio cultural, de, de, de estadía por allá en un país extranjero, es muy, muy enriquecedor para la persona y también es muy relevante en la presentación de una hoja de vida para adquirir un mejor trabajo en su futuro (Arturo:INT1)

xix Ferney: **¿cree que es importante enseñar inglés en las áreas rurales?**

Ana: No importante sino necesario, muy necesario. Mira profe que los estudiantes de allá de la Victoria que han tenido la oportunidad de salir e ir a la universidad lo primero que tienen que hacer es pagar un curso de inglés porque en toda carrera lo primero que ven es inglés (Ana: INT2)

Ferney: **Desde su perspectiva, qué tan importante sería que los estudiantes acá aprendieran inglés?**

Jairo: Es que yo creo que:: en este sentido se me viene a la cabeza esto del:: las llamadas tribus urbanas. Yo creo que no son ni tribus ni urbanas. Tribus porque en el contexto moderno en que estamos, no las podemos llamar tribus, ni urbanas porque aquí en el campo, ya vemos chicos que les gusta el Punk, que les gusta el *Heavy Metal*, que les gusta digamos extranjerismos, ese tipo de cositas. Entonces, yo les digo, si escuchan música, qué más chévere que entender lo que estamos escuchando […] y me paso un caso hace unas dos-tres semanas que un chico, yo lo encontré con unas guias, con las copias de una canción en inglés, cosa que yo nunca le deje de tarea, NADA.

Ferney: uju

Jairo: "¿Qué estás haciendo?" "no, es que estoy aquí:: ayúdeme a traducir por favor qué es lo que dice, o este título de esta canción" y:: ya como que empezaron a:: a esto – me parece importante porque el inglés como tal viene siendo parte ya de la modernidad en que vivimos ¿sí? Y ellos se están dando cuenta ya de eso. De que por ejemplo cambiemos el celular a inglés, "no:: es que no puedo" "cambiemos el celular a inglés, verás que es fácil". Un estudiante me dijo también por ahí "bueno y si yo me compro un televisor y solamente viene en inglés el instructivo" ¿sí? Entonces yo creo que ellos ya se van dando cuenta de que el inglés ya no es tanto como una materia sino que ya:: hay que usarlo

Ferney: uju.

Jairo: O sea el inglés no hay que solamente estudiar para el ICFES sino que hay que usarlo. Hay que usarlo para lo que me gusta y para lo que lo necesito. (Jairo:INT1)

xxiQue los chicos no les de miedo el inglés, no les de aburrimiento, no lo sientan como una materia más sino como un lenguaje vivo (Jairo:INT1)

xxii […] cuando yo llegué acá era hacerles entender a los chicos de que el inglés no es difícil ¿sí? ¡Claro! Hay ciertos temas que tienen cierta dificultad pero con nuestro trabajo acá la idea es didactizar el conocimiento y:: darles a ellos las maneras para poderlo entender. Entonces, mi primer problema que yo tuve fue ese; o sea hacerles entender a los chicos que esto no es imposible de poderlo entender ¿sí? […](Jairo:INT1)

xxiiiLa misión yo creo que es despertar el amor por un idioma extranjero, despertarles a los niños el amor por ese idioma. La necesidad –o sea si una persona ve que algo es necesario y algo es bonito, lo busca ¿sí? Entonces yo creo que parte del docente. Abrirle la puerta a un muchacho para que aprenda pero con cariño, con amor y que vea esa dedicación del profesor también. Mira que yo tengo estudiantes que estudian en la Universidad Mariana acá en pasto y me dicen "gracias por enseñarme a querer el inglés, a ver que el inglés no es difícil, que es posible aprenderlo" […] (Ana:INT2)

xxiv La misión es (.2) hacer que los estudiantes les guste el inglés. Lo que le digo, yo lo hice con el inglés, parece que ha funcionado. Con la canción, con coplas, con adivinanzas, por allí irse metiendo para que a ellos les guste el inglés, para que no haya apatía al inglés. (Lily:INT1)

xxv […] es satisfactorio saber que los chicos sacan un buen ICFES porque los colegios nos miden por el ICFES. Si sacan un buen ICFES es buen colegio y si no sacan buen ICFES es mal colegio. Entonces eso nos tiene retados acá, a todos los profesores, a todos en todas las áreas. No se ha conseguido un buen ICFES, acá no:: siempre llegan –sacan la mitad del puntaje, algunos obtienen 1, 0, entonces la misión también es tratar de que ellos hablen un poquito, se puedan comunicar y puedan entender a la persona que está hablando en inglés. (Eva:INT2)

xxvi Después de la inmersión en Aguazul, yo empecé a usar el inglés en mis clases, pues antes solamente yo les daba la estructura y practicábamos y ya, yo no creía que fuera posible hablarles en inglés. Pero como allá, ellos nos decían que le habláramos en inglés en los estudiantes y yo lo empecé a hacer y a los estudiantes les gustó. Ellos me felicitaban y me decían "uy profe se la fumo verde" @@@, pero a ellos les gustaba y algunos padres de familia también me felicitaron. Además me ha parecido bueno porque así yo también practico, porque lo he dejado de hablar y a uno se le va olvidando. Todavía lo sigo haciendo. (Eva INT1)

xxvii […] cuando me tocó hablar entonces un profesor me dijo "hola y usted porque dice que no sabe que no puede, mire todo eso que dijo de Boyacá, mire todas esas maravillas" es que yo puedo como tal hablar, lo que no puedo es comprender, de pronto sostener una conversación en inglés. Entonces quedaron fascinados con lo que les hablé de Boyacá, EN INGLÉS. (Maria:INT1)

xxviii Lo que más me gustó fue la inmersión, o sea el estar hablando, retomar de nuevo el inglés y compartir con los compañeros de otros colegios experiencias, expectativas, darse cuenta que uno a veces está errado sobre cómo enseña el inglés, de pronto no verlo como algo no tan rutinario sino algo más dinámico, más didáctico[…] (Arturo:INT1)

xxix Hay cosas que realmente las tenemos en cuenta, y hay otras que:: que digamos que –que como ya venían ya desde hace tiempo y nos parece que ha sido apropiado entonces las seguimos adoptando. (Clara:INT2)

xxx […] tuve que basarme en los estándares que son un poquito digamos complejos para este nivel, los estándares ya lo manda a uno a hablar y a hacer monólogos en inglés y eso, pero complicado hacerlo acá porque como no hablan como los va a mandar uno a hacer monólogos […] tuve en cuenta los estándares, las competencias sociolingüística, pragmática, comunicativa   para hacer mi plan de estudios y también lo que yo podía ver en cada chico hasta dónde alcanzan para no excederme, entonces los acomodé de una manera también viendo libros. (Eva:INT2)

xxxi Yo demoro un mes en una clase pero los chicos ya el otro año se les ha olvidado, entonces tengo que volver a hacer intervalos, o sea doy mi tema pero es un intervalo de clase o sea repetir otra vez […] pienso que rompo las reglas pero no es camisa de fuerza ¿no? De pronto nadie me ha ido a ver las clases, nadie se da cuenta de eso o si la rectora se da cuenta de eso, como la rectora es de inglés, pues no me pondría problema, no sería tan estricta como:: -hay colegios acá en Villanueva, grandes que el coordinador entra y debe estar con su parcelador según el plan de estudios. (Eva:INT2)

xxxii […]hace falta mucho es la comprensión lectora, como le digo porque a nosotros nos evalúan por la comprensión lectora en el ICFES, nos ataca por ese lado el gobierno. (Hilda:INT1)

xxxiii **Ferney: ¿Ha habido algún momento o incidente en que tú llegaste y dijiste bueno voy a implementar cambios por esto que sucedió?**

Clara**:**   Eh:: sí. Especialmente por las pruebas saber, por las pruebas del ICFES, en grado once. Porque digamos que antes yo me dedicaba a como a enseñarles gramática ¿no? El verbo, el sustantivo, el adjetivo, bueno, gramática y en oraciones sueltas ¿sí? Entonces pues sí me di cuenta -y obviamente ya mirando lo que se busca a través de las pruebas del ICFES es que los estudiantes interpreten textos no tanto, pues la gramática obviamente, pero más que eso es interpretar textos […] Entonces más o menos como hasta la mitad del periodo me dedico a darles algunas explicaciones de gramática y la segunda parte del periodo lo he llamado *reading comprehension* entonces ya incluyo textos y preguntas de comprensión de lectura […] y también me parece importante como que ellos memoricen, algunas partes de los textos, también para que practiquen pronunciación. Y eso es así como lo que ha cambiado en mi manera de enseñar (Clara:INT1)

xxxiv No se cuenta con una sala de informática como tal, donde haya un internet, porque en internet hay muchas cosas para ver en inglés y no existe ese recurso (María:INT1)

xxxv Pocas veces hay conectividad a internet y cuando hay, es realmente lento, a pesar de que estamos a 30 minutos de la ciudad de Bogotá (Clara:TB)

xxxvi Cuando llegué al colegio no había internet y ahora que hay es lento y es imposible de dar alguna clase con algún programa (EVA:TB)

xxxvii internet no les [a los estudiantes] llega muy bien entonces como que hay un poquito de retraso (Camilo: INT1)

[…] a veces agradecemos a Dios por ejemplo por los alimentos. Si estamos viendo los alimentos, yo meto oraciones agradeciendo a Dios por los alimentos. Si estamos viendo los miembros de la familia, también por los miembros de la familia, por mi abuelo, por mi abuela. Y así voy metiendo yo todo lo que vemos en vocabulario en experiencias que ellos tienen cotidianas […] eso les gusta y también les ayuda a aprender más fácil el inglés (Dora:INT2)

xxxix Siempre me ha gustado rezar en español, soy católica, me gusta rezar el rosario. En casa rezo. Y a los niños les gusta mucho esa parte de las oraciones y a ellos en inglés les llama mucho la atención aprender algo en inglés y dentro de lo que les gusta aprender están las oraciones religiosas y:: ya lo tengo como rutina, entonces en todos los grados inicio mi clase todos los días con la oración religiosa y todos se la aprenden muy bien y todos los días todos la rezan. (Maria:INT2)

xl **Ferney: ¿Cuál es la dificultad más frecuente que tiene que sortear con ellos a la hora de enseñar inglés?**

Lily: El hablar, el *speaking*, hablar inglés. Igual hemos implementado, tenemos en el proyecto de aula, usamos nosotros la ORACIÓN porque ellos como son muy católicos, acá siempre rezan con valores y todo. Entonces, siempre por la mañana les digo "hoy vamos a orar o a pedirle al señor por el valor de la amistad o por el valor de la responsabilidad o por diferentes valores" y hacemos una oración. Entonces cada periodo, me inventé una oración para rezarle a Dios y a la virgen María, al Ángel de la Guardia y al niño Jesús. Entonces, cada periodo me inventé una oración para la fluidez verbal. Porque también //tenemos la canción//

Ferney: //¿Y eso sí les gusta?//

Lily: Eso sí les gusta. Se la aprenden todos, TODOS. También tenemos la canción, pero con la canción ellos dicen "ah es que tengo una voz de tarro, yo no canto" @@@ eso, entonces por eso les da más pena cantar que rezar. Les gusta más rezar, les gusta más la oración. Entonces yo he implementado la oración […]. Por la mañana yo siempre a cualquier grado, a la hora que llegue, hacemos la oración. El Padrenuestro en el primer periodo, en el segundo periodo fue el Ángel de la Guarda […] (Lily:INT1)

xli **Ferney: ¿Qué particularidades ve que hay a la hora de enseñar inglés en una zona rural?**

Hilda: Hm:: a ver, lo que hace diferente:: a ver de pronto el conocimiento de afuera o sea del contexto rural […] y hay expresiones pues que los muchachos se quedan asombrados, pues ¿por qué? Porque ellos no conocen realmente el contexto de afuera, o sea están enmarcados pues (.1) dentro de su contexto. Ahí sería, por ejemplo en cuanto a enseñarles a ellos, yo por lo menos, yo me meto siempre en el contexto de ellos, lo que tienen ellos, por ejemplo los animalitos, por ejemplo que los animales domésticos, la naturaleza, lo que existe allá, y partes culturales entonces ellos me dice "mi profe ¿cómo se dice cedazo?" entonces me dicen cómo se dice eh:: términos que son de allá.

Ferney: Sí::

Hilda: El cuy por ejemplo, que hoy día no sé cómo le llaman, pero "el cuy, cuy" les digo, entonces es un nombre pero no tienen que cambiar porque no lo va a reconocer en ninguna otra parte.

Ferney: Ok

Hilda: Entonces ahí hay un choque con respecto a términos, pero la verdad, uno aplica lo que tienen ellos, o sea de lo que tienen ellos uno hace los eh:: las composiciones escritas. Para que ellos se comuniquen, tomamos los diálogos, le hago tomar algunos términos que ellos usan o expresiones de ellos mismos que es muy normal cuando se enojan por ejemplo en un dialogo dicen:: -no sé si haya escuchado este término que dicen "¡qué chimba!" entonces dentro del idioma inglés también lo usamos, o sea empleamos lo de ellos

Ferney: Aja

Hilda: Y lo del idioma inglés, o sea ahí hacemos una mezcla pero el todo es que:: es como con el fin de que ese dialogo, esa comunicación, ese dialogo para ellos tenga mayor sentido ¿sí me entiende?

Ferney: Ok, ¿entonces esas expresiones las usarían en español?

Hilda: Sí, son expresiones de ellos y palabras de ellos, no todo, todo, puro inglés pero aquí lo poco que se enseña inglés se da y se utiliza también.

Ferney: ¿Y cómo le ha funcionado esa estrategia profe?

Hilda: Bien, en cuanto a la expresión oral bien, sí porque ellos:: les gusta, se divierten o sea es una forma también de que ellos por el otro lado vayan interesándose en el otro idioma, que no se aparten totalmente de lo suyo y vayan absorbiendo poco a poco pues el idioma inglés, o sea la mezcla de los dos me parece ideal porque ahí digamos entre bromas se vuelve como más divertido y más interesante el aprendizaje de este idioma. (Hilda:INT1)

xlii   El móvil […]-es en la adquisición de vocabulario y pronunciación entonces como ayer vimos, les estaba enseñando verbos regulares en pasado […] primero hago los grupos de trabajo cada uno con su celular grupo, hacen la grabación de los verbos, luego ellos con esos verbos, porque los pronombres –el resto de temas ya los tenemos asimilado, ellos crean oraciones o textos en los cuales tienen que utilizar el vocabulario que grabamos. Entonces, realmente yo grabo, evalúo lo que ya se vio y la pronunciación del nuevo vocabulario o:: en grado noveno estamos haciendo transcripciones, leo un texto largo […] primero les doy el audio para que ellos asimilen la transcripción, la lectura con la escucha y luego paso yo por los grupos y sacan una hojita o ahí en el cuaderno y les hago un dictado y ahí me doy cuenta que ellos están aprendiendo a escribir y a escuchar […] y la otra, después de escuchar ese dictado, viene una evaluación oral en la cual yo no pronuncio nada en inglés sino pronuncio en español el significado, ellos pronuncian y escriben en inglés […] con noveno es lo que más me ha funcionado pues los chicos, el solo hecho de mandarles el archivo por *whatsapp* los motiva porque estamos utilizando el móvil. Ellos tienen afinidad con eso. Chicos me llegan al otro día "profe, ya me aprendí eso, ya sé todo el texto, ya estoy listo para el dictado." (Arturo:INT2)

xliii**Ferney: ¿Me podría comentar un poco sobre cómo surgió la idea del diseño del material que ahora está usando?**

Jairo: Cuando yo trabajaba en [nombre de colegio anterior], nosotros miramos ese problema de la ausencia de un texto hm:: ¿por qué? ¿por qué la ausencia de un texto? Porque los padres de familia no tenían los recursos económicos para adquirir un texto. Entonces […] en reunión con los profesores de inglés, decidimos hacer un texto adecuado pues a los estándares del Ministerio, adecuado también a la malla curricular de ese tiempo, nosotros entonces hicimos un trabajito y:: digitamos un texto para cada uno de los niveles, un texto para primaria y un texto para bachillerato. Entonces yo lo guardé. Yo dije "esto me va a servir, seguro que me va a servir" Y:: claro, cuando yo llegué aquí a nombre de colegio actual], encontré que hacía falta

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un texto, un libro, una guía que nos permita trabajar con los estudiantes en la parte de lectura, en la parte de reconocer las palabras. Entonces pues yo modifique el texto para que se adecuara a la malla curricular que tienen el colegio y a las necesidades que tienen los estudiantes.

Ferney: ¿Me había dicho que eso había sido producto de una investigación?

Jairo: Sí, […] la investigación consistía en que qué actividades le podíamos dar al chico dependiendo de la edad. Entonces dependiendo de la edad, dependiendo del nivel y si una actividad sirve para aumentar el vocabulario o para hacer una conversación […]

Ferney: ¿Y esa investigación fue iniciativa propia o fue que el colegio les propuso?

Jairo: […]la verdad la investigación como tal surge de la necesidad, de la necesidad en particular que yo también encontré acá de que los profesores no tenían un texto base, un texto guía para poder seguir procesos, entonces el texto está organizado para que los estudiantes adquieran un nivel que nosotros requeríamos para que pudiera pasar al otro grado ¿cierto? Entonces, la intención del texto en un principio fue la necesidad de resolver ese problema de que los padres de familia no podían adquirir un texto caro […] (Jairo:INT1)

xliv El año anterior brindé una capacitación para la enseñanza del inglés en básica primaria a los compañeros de mi institución a través de la creación de un material que recopilé con *TIPS* para enseñar canciones, poemas, oraciones y facilité algunos *links* para ello. Actualmente, y viendo la necesidad de buscar recursos innovadores y que sean del agrado de los niños, estoy realizando la Maestría en Tecnología Educativa. Mi propósito es motivar a través de recursos tecnológicos a los niños de básica primaria en el aprendizaje del inglés y a la vez brindar a mis compañeros docentes herramientas que faciliten su labor pedagógica. (Dora:TB)

Appendix M: *Original excerpts in chapter 7*

xlv Realmente he sentido que he hecho mi trabajo pues no hemos avanzado mucho pero lo básico, lo elemental ya lo manejan mis estudiantes. No podría decir profe que salen con un nivel C1 o B2 pero a los chicos les gusta mucho mis clases. Utilizo mucho las imágenes, las *flashcards*. Les realizo actividades, juegos. Inclusive con los de once, les trato como niños de […] les hago actividades de niños de primaria y ellos se sienten muy -inclusive me han dicho "profe con el único profe que sentimos que en verdad hay un proceso, es con Usted" son palabras dichas por mis estudiantes. Porque la verdad yo pienso que en la disciplina, la exigencia y una buena planeación está el éxito de las clases […] este año se me acerco un grupo de estudiantes y me dijeron "profe, es la primera vez que sentimos que aprendemos inglés con un profesor, realmente que estamos aprendiendo profe." (Arturo:INT1)

xlvi […] los muchachos con los que trabajé el año anterior, unos muchachos que:: les gustaba mucho la investigación. Cualquier palabra que no entendía, cualquier cosa que:: -yo les decía, "listo, se dice así" o buscaban en el diccionario o:: la miraban en un texto y me preguntaban, entonces había la motivación de ellos, y a esos muchachos les fue bien en inglés. Tuvieron un puntaje que:: -más altico que en años anteriores entonces es una satisfacción –y es un reconocimiento que me hizo la señora coordinadora, que ahora no está. Me dijo que era un agradecimiento porque había sacado un porcentaje más alto […] (Hilda:INT2)

xlvii En Armenia fue donde conseguí trabajo [por primera vez] en un colegio privado donde me gustó mucho y se me olvidó que había concursos […] allí ya se me olvidó porque como allí al final de año nos evaluaba el rector, la junta de padres de familia y los estudiantes para darnos el trabajo el año siguiente sino ya nos daban la carta de renuncia […] y a mí me fue ¡tan bien! Que a pesar de ser pastusa y con mi acento y todo porque cuando llegue a trabajar a Armenia, decían "ahí viene la gringa pastusa" […] entonces, a pesar de eso hmm pues mi trabajo fue valorado en ese colegio y siempre cada año me asignaban mi trabajo […] (Ana:INT1)

xlviii Con los chicos, eh:: hice una:: presentación en inglés sobre:: sobre Billy Wilkings, una historia de 2 vaqueros, cortica, yo hice la adaptación, la escribí yo, me inventé un poquito de líneas, hice un (inaudible) con temperas, participaron los niños, participaron ellos y nos inscribimos al campeonato municipal de bilingüismo, allí en competencia con 5-6 colegios más y en ese tiempo pues yo gané. Gané a los demás con esa presentación en inglés […] había jurados de –un profesor de Londres me decían […] unas profesoras especializadas en inglés también, pero eran de Armenia y ellos eran como jurados. Gané, gané, ganamos con los muchachos ese premio y el premio adicional era que nos daban el cupo para ir al campeonato de bilingüismo departamental. (Camilo:INT1)

xlix […] esto (la participación en la investigación) es una:: una experiencia nueva, yo no la había tenido y pues hablar con la persona que tiene más experiencia eh:: en inglés es pues –en el idioma, pues uno se siente contenta porque uno no tiene digamos a diario a una persona que conozca bien el inglés […] la presencia de otra persona a uno lo fortalece decir:: bueno, caramba, me siento importante porque me escogieron como profesora de inglés @@@ como profesora de inglés, eso es. (Hilda:INT2)

l […] cada año subíamos un poquitito, un poquitito iban subiendo desde que yo llegué pues afortunadamente siempre ha ido subiendo el área de inglés. Algunas veces ha subido bastante, otras veces ha subido muy poquitito, pero pues afortunadamente desde que estoy allí nunca ha bajado […]

Y precisamente por eso, por algún temor a que baje, a que baje el porcentaje del colegio, entonces por eso he visto como la necesidad de concentrarme en la comprensión de lectura en inglés. (Clara:INT1)

li […] como docente y con una misión tan grande que uno va, Dios me ha bendecido tanto […] como docente he crecido, espiritualmente he crecido y admiro mucho a la gente donde he ido y la gente que dentro más lejos he ido, la gente a uno lo ha apreciado mucho porque más bien se dan cuenta que uno no va tanto por conseguir el eh:: el dinero, no. Es con ese gusto con ese placer de llegar a donde ellos pese a las dificultades. (Hilda:INT1)

lii Yo quería seguir trabajando allá, o sea para aprovechar mi –el don que nos da Dios como docentes porque eso yo creo que es un don ¿no? Ser un docente es algo que no lo es cualquiera y el docente maneja humanos. Entonces yo decía "quisiera dejar mi granito de arena en estos seres humanos a través de la enseñanza del inglés" (Ana:INT1)

liiiA ellos los describo como personas que no:: no saben el potencial que tienen. Eso es algo triste tal vez porque hay un potencial tan, tan, tan grande y a veces por las necesidades que hay, no, ellos no (.2) no miran lo que pueden hacer. Yo creo que aquí en el colegio los chicos tienen un potencial muy grande que me da tristeza pero a veces el alcance del gobierno y eso trunca el potencial de personas que pueden llegar a tener caminos muy exitosos […] Si yo los describiera a ellos, los describiría como personas muy, muy valiosas, como diamantes en bruto, que solamente hace falta un empujoncito, un no sé un:: un pequeño estimulo de parte de las autoridades, del gobierno […] (Jairo:INT1)

liv […] en un municipio me dijo un niño "ay profe y yo ¿para qué quiero aprender inglés si yo me voy a quedar cuidando las vacas en el campo? Yo no necesito para irle a hablar a las vacas" y yo le dije "ah pero usted podría cuidar las vacas y estudiar, o ¿no le gustaría (como le dije en el escrito uno a veces hace lo posible para motivar al estudiante), entonces yo le dije "ah claro, usted puede cuidar las vacas, a las vacas no hay que hablarle en inglés pero usted puede estudiar Veterinaria, puede estudiar Agronomía, puede estudiar una carrera donde usted pueda cuidar las vacas y que le digan DOCTOR, que le digan: uy usted es muy importante aquí en la vereda, usted cómo sabe, ¿no le gustaría tener su finca, su granja bien apropiada, bien adecuada, bien bonita? ¿no le gustaría?" Y a veces los niños como que recapacitan. (Maria:INT1)

lv Creo que mis estudiantes me ven como:: como un ejemplo, como un líder porque siempre he tratado de motivarlos, he tratado de:: explicarles que a través de la educación se puede mejorar los estilos de vida, pues yo mismo soy un ejemplo de ello. Yo también crecí en las zonas rurales y siempre estuve motivado a estudiar y mis padres siempre me apoyaron y gracias al apoyo de ellos y al saber que a través del estudio podía mejorar mi calidad de vida fue que::- estoy – que soy lo que soy, entonces es un gran aliciente para mí y trato de a través de mi ejemplo mostrarles a ellos. (Arturo:INT1)

lvi Yo creo que eso es un precio que uno como misionero, porque uno cuando se va por allá es como si fuera un misionero (1.) paga. La desestabilización del hogar. (Ana:INT1)

lviiFerney:¿tú cómo crees que ellos te ven a ti?

Clara: Pues @@@ en general creería que me admiran porque cuando trato de hablarles en inglés, hay algunos que me dicen "profe, yo quisiera hablar así como habla usted, chévere, y dónde aprendió? Cómo hizo ara aprender?" entonces, sin ser petulante ¿no? Pero hay algunos que puedo percibir eso, que me admiran de cierta manera, aunque no me lo merezco mucho @@@ (Clara:INT2)

[lviii] […] tengo que actualizarme mucho más […] yo tengo también que cuidar lo mío que es el inglés por eso estoy [haciendo cursos] en el SENA, estoy repasando mi inglés con eso […] unos niveles de inglés que los ofrece el SENA gratuitos ya tengo dos diplomas @@@. Y mis hijos me dicen "mami si tú eres licenciada en idiomas para que se mete?" Yo digo "no yo tengo que actualizarme," tengo que estar repasando y también estoy preparándome para un:: curso de suficiencia en in inglés. A finales de enero lo presento ¿por qué? Porque me interesa mucho cuidar mi profesión, sí. (Ana:INT2)

[lix] Quiero seguir estudiando o sea, primero, pues para mejorar eh, actualizarme digámoslo así […] Actualizarme y de pronto conocer otras maneras de enseñar el inglés porque muchas veces eh, siento que me quede como en el método tradicional y sí quisiera como conocer nuevas maneras de enseñar el inglés. Y, obviamente pues mejorar mi nivel de inglés. (Clara:INT1)

[lx] Pero sí tengo algo planeado que no sé, a mi edad, a estas alturas sí quiero es mejorar mi nivel de inglés a costa de no sé qué pero quiero mejorar mi nivel de inglés, es mi meta que tengo diría, no sé si próximamente o el año entrante pero es mi nivel de inglés. (Maria:INT1)