Taking Stock of Research about Initial English Language Teacher Education in Colombia

Balance de la investigación sobre la formación inicial del profesorado de inglés en Colombia

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Abstract

This article presents a literature review based on research related to pre-service English language teachers (PELT) in Colombia that have been published in specialized Colombian journals during 2010-2020. The result was a corpus of 41 articles, of which I analyzed who wrote them, the research design used in each one, and the main topics covered in the research or pedagogical experiences. The results show a growing interest in research on PELTs from different epistemologies and research areas. Furthermore, researchers are increasingly conducting their research from narrative research under a critical or decolonial position. Finally, although many of the central themes revolve around teachers' linguistic competencies and abilities in training, other issues have increased in recent years, such as teacher identity from different angles, critical pedagogies, and reflection of teaching processes.

Key words: English as a foreign language, initial English language teacher education, pre-service English language teachers

Resumen

Este artículo presenta una revisión de la literatura basada en investigaciones relacionadas con profesores de inglés en formación en Colombia y publicada en revistas especializadas colombianas durante 2010-2020. El resultado fue un corpus de 41 artículos, de los cuales se analizó quién los redactó, el diseño de investigación utilizado en cada uno de ellos y los principales temas tratados en la investigación o experiencias pedagógicas. Los resultados muestran que existe un creciente interés por la investigación sobre los profesores de inglés en formación desde diferentes posturas epistemológicas yáreas de investigación. Además, es evidente que los investigadores están llevando a cabo cada vez más su investigación desde la investigación narrativa bajo una posición crítica o descolonial. Finalmente, si bien muchos de los temas centrales giran en torno a las competencias y habilidades lingüísticas de los docentes en formación, en los últimos años se han ido incrementando otras cuestiones, como la identidad del docente desde diferentes ángulos, las pedagogías críticas y la reflexión de los procesos de enseñanza.

Palabras clave: Inglés como lengua extranjera, formación inicial de profesores de inglés, revisión de literatura, profesores de inglés en formación.

Introduction

Initial language teacher education in Colombia officially started during the 1960s in some public universities. Up until now, about 25 university programs, most of which are classified as being high-quality accredited programs, offer a major in languages, English, Spanish, and English or Spanish and other languages (Consejo Nacional de Acreditación, 2019). One of the requirements for obtaining high-quality accreditation is to promote research and publication on issues related to the program's area, which in this case is ELT (English Language Teaching) (Consejo Nacional de Acreditación, 2013). Additionally, as Ramos-Holguín and Peñaloza (2020) pointed out that other factors like "institutional requirements, hiring requirements, teacher categorization and academic visibility" (p. 34) have contributed to the expansion of interest in publishing scientific articles in indexed journals. Therefore, the number of academic articles published in refereed journals reporting on research projects or pedagogical experiences developed by scholars and pre-service teachers has increased recently. These articles have different objectives. Some of them are related to language development or pedagogical skills in ELT classes in different

contexts. Other journal articles report teachers' successful experiences, while others account for the analysis of pedagogical strategies addressing various classroom problems. However, the main emphasis of this analysis lies in those articles that focused or involved pre-service English language teachers (henceforth PELT) in the process or/and in the results since PELTs play an essential role in the language teacher education field, and they deserve recognition (Castañeda-Trujillo, 2018).

Hence, in this review, I intend to take stock of academic articles focused on describing, interpreting, and analyzing phenomena related to initial English language teacher education (IELTE) in Colombia over the past decade (2010-2020). To do this, I used some guiding questions adapted from Porter et al. (2002) to organize the information in bigger blocks. The questions were:

- *Who publishes about initial language teacher education?*
- *What research designs did scholars use for collecting and analyzing the data?*
- *What are the central researched issues related to IELTE and PELT?*

By answering these questions, I expect to trace Colombian academic communities interested in developing initial language teacher education in the country. In the first part of the article, readers will find general aspects of the procedures taken into account to do the analysis. In the second part, I will show *who* is investigating IELTE and PELT in Colombia. In the third part, I will review the articles to illustrate the central epistemological and ontological position in research in this field. In the fourth part, I will describe the main trending issues in IELTE. Afterward, I will discuss the findings based on a critical standpoint towards PELT and IELTE in Colombia. In the end, I will state some conclusions.

Procedure

The main objective of this paper was to review studies in initial English language teacher education focused on PELT. The primary sources considered were five refereed Colombian journals that specialize in publishing articles written by English language teachers and teacher educators. Furthermore, I also explored two other journals that publish education and pedagogy topic and, therefore, accept articles about ELT issues. Another criterion for choosing these journals is the Colombian indexing system supervised by Minciencias (Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación – Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation) through Publindex (service in charge of scientific journal indexation and homologation). This system guarantees the journals meet scientific and editorial quality standards through a refereeing system, visibility, and periodicity (Publindex, 2019). Table 1 presents an overview of the reviewed journals.

Table 1

Characterization of Selected Journals for the Review

Name of the Journal	Sponsoring Institution	Minciencias Indexation	Webpage
Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal	College of Sciences and Education, Master's Program in Applied Linguistics of Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas in Bogotá	B	http://revistas.udistrital.edu.co/ojs/index.php/calj/index
Folios	Universidad Pedagógica Nacional	B	https://revistas.pedagogica.edu.co/index.php/RF
GIST, Education and Learning Research Journal	Institución Universitaria Colombo Americana	B	https://gistjournal.unica.edu.co/index.php/gist/index
How Journal	ASOCOPI, the Colombian Association of Teachers of English	C	https://www.howjournalcolombia.org/index.php/how
Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura	Escuela de Idiomas at Universidad de Antioquia	B	http://aprendeenlinea.udea.edu.co/revistas/index.php/ikala/index
PROFILE Issues in Teachers' Professional Development	Departamento de Lenguas Extranjera - Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá campus	B	http://revistas.unal.edu.co/index.php/profile)
Signo y Pensamiento	Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá	B	http://www.javeriana.edu.co/signoyp/coleccion.htm

I used each journal website's "Search Option" to gather the articles for this review. The keywords for the search were "teacher education," "initial teacher education," "pre-service teacher," and "English teaching." I decided to exclude articles that did not report the results of a research study or a pedagogical experience or had limitations in providing accurate information about data collection, data analysis, participants, or other essential components of the research process. This study's final corpus was composed of 41 empirical studies that met the previously established requirements (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Distribution of Articles Selected

I used ATLAS.ti[1] as a tool to do the qualitative analysis for this study. I read all the articles and established open codes related to the objectives, methodology, data collection instruments, findings, and conclusions. This coding helped me identify the nature of the research in initial ELT in Colombia and draw a broader perspective of

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[1] ATLAS.ti is a sophisticated tool used to arrange, reassemble, and manage information in a creative and systematic way. ATLAS.ti contributes to getting to know the material in tremendous depth, coding systematically, and developing a system of meaning that unlocks the specific research subject. This tool helps to discover the intricate hidden "texture" of the data, which is its interwoven meanings (ATLAS.ti, n.d.).

the researchers and fields interconnected with ELT and PELT.

The following sections are devoted to explaining the main findings starting with a brief characterization of Colombian scholars, followed by an analysis of the methodologies used by researchers in their papers and finishing with the primary inquiry areas identified from the 41 research articles explored.

Colombian Scholars Looking into Initial English Language Teacher Education

This section presents data on the Colombian scholars that have published about initial English language teacher education and their institutional affiliation. As part of the analysis procedure, I read the 76 authors' biodata printed in each article and highlighted some aspects of their background.

First, the Colombian scholars' biodata shows that 63% hold a master's degree, 26% a bachelor's degree, and 11% a Ph.D. degree (see Figure 2). The former indicates that scholars with some English Language Teacher Education experience show the most interest in researching or at least publishing about PELT, possibly because they work in these education programs. However, the number of undergraduate students investigating in this field is also significant (26%). The increasing number of PELTs as authors shows how the provision of knowledge in language teacher education does not come exclusively from those who are professionals in IELTE. On the contrary, it is evident how IELTE programs have become open spaces for their PELTs to strengthen their research competencies and write their contribution in academic articles (Johnston, 2004).

Second, 75% of Colombian scholars are affiliated with public universities (see Figure 3), with the Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas having the most researchers in the field (see Figure 4). Meanwhile, 25% of the authors work with private universities. The University of La Salle is the one with the most researchers interested in investigating IELTE. Figure 4 also shows that researchers investigating PELT belong to different institutions in different cities and regions, which means that the interest in this research field is almost national.

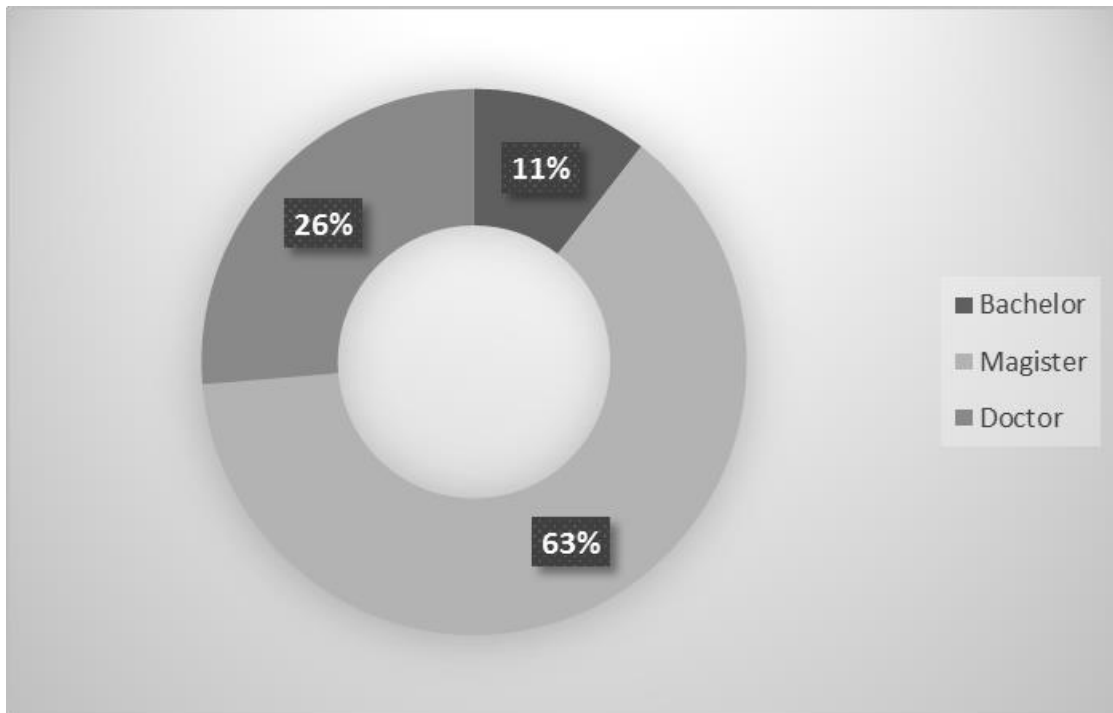**Figure 2**

Level of Education of Researchers

Figure 3

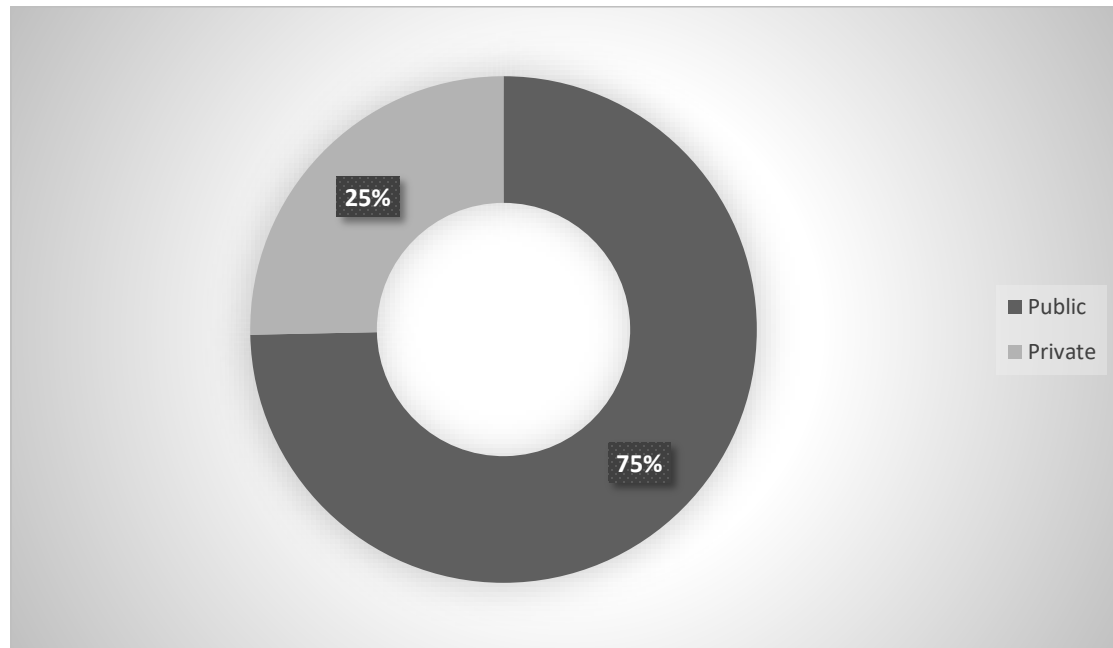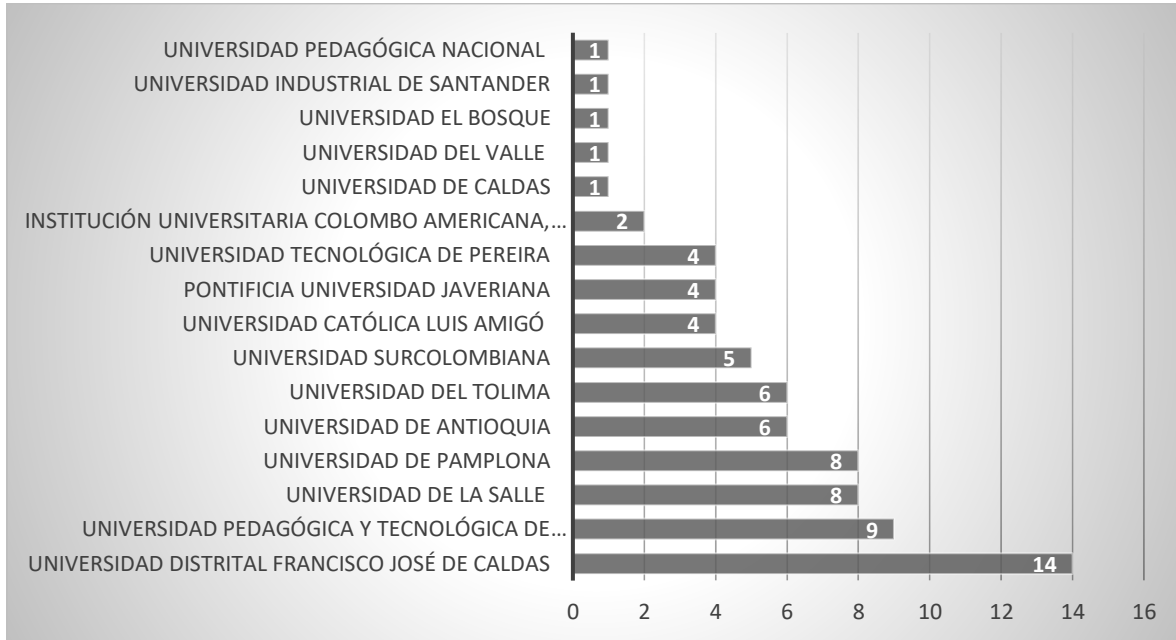*Type of Institution Where Researchers Work*

Figure 4

Relation Between Institution and Researcher

Two articles show the collaboration of scholars from more than one institution. The first one is Castañeda-Peña et al. (2016), which was written by three scholars from the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana and one from the Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas The second article was Macias and Sanchez (2015) that was written by scholars in Universidad Surcolombiana and the Miller Elementary, Fayetteville, USA, respectively. Conversely, two facts related to the institution-researcher relation are relevant for this analysis. The first one is that there seem to be no networking practices among academics in the field, rather just those from the same institution. This fact produces fragmentation within the scholars' work; thus, it makes it more challenging to establish a community of practice (Wenger, 1998), as well as willingness to interact and state common goals regarding local knowledge production.

The second fact related to the institution-researcher relation is that lack of significant participation of scholars from regions other than large cities. One reason may be that most of these specialized journals belong to universities or associations located or centralized in a few main cities: Bogotá, Medellin, and Cali. Another reason could be that some teacher educators or scholars

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belonging to different regions do not have the confidence or skills to write academic articles about their experiences or research.

Then, it is necessary to continue working on the formulation of communication mechanisms that appeal to inclusion. In this fashion, teacher educators from the region will feel empowered and free to celebrate the valuable knowledge they produce in their contexts by writing journal articles (Castañeda-Trujillo, 2018; Gonzalez, 2007).

Epistemological and Ontological Positioning in Research on IELTE and PELT

Regarding the epistemological and ontological positioning of scholars in research papers, the review shows that most of the authors were explicit in saying that their research was carried out within the qualitative approach (e.g., Aguirre, 2014; Camacho et al., 2012; Castro & López, 2014; Olaya & Gómez Rodríguez, 2013; Quintero Polo, 2019; Viafara, 2011), while other authors led the reader to infer it (e.g., Abad & Pineda, 2018; Aguirre & Ramos, 2011; Castañeda-Trujillo & Aguirre Hernández, 2018; Castellanos, 2013; Clavijo & Quintero, 2012; Díaz Benavides, 2013; Lucero & Roncancio-Castellanos, 2019; Pinzón

Capador & Guerrero Nieto, 2018; Posada-Ortíz & Garzón - Duarte, 2019). Most of the research papers can be positioned in the interpretative paradigm. In other words, researchers are more interested in "understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 5). Within the participants' social world, the researcher can reveal and interpret (not discover) the characteristics of the phenomena and interrelated characteristics among them to uncover emerging themes, patterns, concepts, insights, and understandings (Nunan, 1992, as cited in Viafara 2011; Merriam, 2002, as cited in Morales, 2016; Suter, 2012, as cited in Correa & Echeverri, 2017; Norton & McKinney, 2010, as cited in Torres-Cepeda & Ramos-Holguín, 2019).

From this interpretative paradigm, the reality or interpretation of an event is multiple. This reality is not found but constructed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). An interpretative positionality means that the researcher uses different ways of analyzing the phenomenon. An example of these

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positionalities can be found in a study conducted by Fajardo Castañeda & Miranda Montenegro (2015), which intended to interpret PELTs'experiences during their practicum and establish a relationship with their sense of affinity to the teaching profession. The authors assured that all the experiences were not the same. Still, they have common patterns that contribute to arriving at the conclusions about the participants and their context during the study. Another study positioned in interpretive research was carried out by Castañeda-Peña et al. (2016). In this study, the researchers explored, from a sociocultural perspective, narrative events drawn from the PELTs' self-assessment reflection papers. The PELTs wrote these papers at the end of their pedagogical practice. Although the conclusions framed common situations found in the data, the results are presented as context-situated. Moreover, the researchers did not intend to generalize IELTE contexts.

On the other hand, Lastra, Durán, and Acosta (2018) answered how PELTs realized their role as social agents in the community using critical and community-based pedagogies. In this interpretative and descriptive study, the researchers aimed not only at gathering data from PELTs but

illustrating how they became more critical by interacting with the community and reflecting on their practices. Similarly, Quintero Polo (2019) proposed a critical pedagogical intervention to lead PELTs to interact with themselves and understand their transformations while becoming English language teachers. In this study, the PELTs created meaning from the constant interaction between them and the teacher-researcher and obtained an awareness of their beings as future language teachers.

In contrast to the above, Giraldo and Murcia (2018) proposed a study that combined qualitative and quantitative data to identify the impact of a language assessment course for in-service teachers in a language teaching program. It is clear from the proposed objective that the researchers' position in this particular study was more positivist since they assumed reality as observable and measurable (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

In addition to their philosophical position, the researchers recured to different research methods. The most common are case study, narrative research, action research, and phenomenological research. Some researchers saw case study as an alternative to "explore and understand

aspects related to the phenomenon that [the author] had only partial insight into" (McNulty Ferri, 2010, p. 213; Fajardo, 2013). For example, some scholars used an exploratory case study, as they noted little information on the subject. This is Gutiérrez's (2015) case, who analyzed the beliefs, attitudes, and reflections of PELTs to explore critical literacy theories and design and implement critical lessons. Meanshile, Cote (2012) examined how a reflective process helps teach PELTs to improve their practice.

On the other hand, Aguirre (2014) and Díaz Benavides (2013) established a descriptive case study focused on particular groups to describe the phenomenon in-depth. Aguirre (2014) described the beliefs of a group of PELTs regarding their role as teachers in terms of pedagogical and emotional aspects of their primary school students inside the classroom. Díaz Benavides (2013) aimed to describe how some PELTs constructed their identity from their school experiences. Finally, Suárez Flórez and Basto Basto (2017) resorted to an intrinsic case study since they were uninterested in establishing generalizations but particularizing PELTs' beliefs about teaching English as a foreign language and

tracking their possible changes throughout the teaching practice.

Narrative research was another way that scholars understood different topics related to PELT in IELTE from the participants' stories. For example, intending to have a more humanized understanding of the stories of the participants, Torres-Cepeda and Ramos-Holguín (2019) decided to use narratives and in-depth interviews to delve into the process of identity construction. The article written by Posada and Garzón (2014) is another example of using narratives as a means of researching. Here, the authors used autobiographies to depict PELTs' experiences, feelings, and insights while they were English language learners. In the same fashion, Durán Narváez, Lastra Ramírez, and Morales Vasco (2013) used autobiographies to do an extensive examination of PELTs' beliefs in an ELTE program. Lucero and Roncancio-Castellanos (2019) wrote about a pedagogical experience; they decided to create narratives to highlight the PELTs' reflections and perceptions on how they experienced their pedagogical practicum. Lastly, Quintero Polo (2016) and Pinzón Capador and Guerrero Nieto (2018) resorted to introspective narratives as an opportunity to understand others' processes of becoming

English Language teachers (in the case of Quintero) or themselves (in the case of Pinzón and Guerrero).

Finally, Cardenas and Suarez (2009) articulated a phenomenological study in which they did a retrospective description of PELTs' knowledge base needed to become English language teachers. Giraldo and Murcia (2018) carried out an action-research project. They included a quantitative and qualitative approach to collect data and identify the impact of a language assessment course for pre-service teachers in a language teaching program in a state university in Colombia.

So far, I noticed that all the articles mentioned in this section are intended to show the realities in IELTE programs, some from an interpretative perspective and others from a critical perspective. Regarding the PELTs' role in research, some are seen as informants, others are participants, and few are co-researchers. According to Mendez (2012), the subject's question allows for a track of modeling and alignment of identity that make knowledge and power relationships evident. By analyzing the articles related to IELTE and PELT's research in Colombia, I could see how some researchers use vertical relationships within

their study, making the subjects within them into informants. This can be common in traditional education in Colombia (Castañeda-Trujillo, 2020). On the other hand, I could also see some attempts to decrease the tensions caused by power relationships by establishing more horizontal relationships, in which the subject is integrates as a participant. From a more critical and even decolonial perspective, some researchers involve research subjects so much that they become researchers themselves, causing the tensions stemming from power relations to dissolve.

As stated by Foucault (1982, p. 781), "there are two meanings of the word 'subject': subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience of self-knowledge." In certain articles, the subject is dependent and controlled by others. An example of this could be in the article by Lopéz Velásquez and Giraldo (2011), in which the authors took two students and described the kind of strategies they used in reading activities. In this article, it is clear that two different power sources control the students. The first one is the teachers/researchers, who have cataloged or classified them (one is good, the other is bad); the second was the regulations, policies,

and documents that determined the requirements to belong to a certain proficiency level. Thus, PELTs, as subjects, are reified. This reification leads to neglect of some aspects of the PELT's being. PELTs are treated as objects who need to be trained or modeled to achieve the expected results. This objectification is due, in part, to the fact that there are regulatory agencies that determine what must be and what is known within a study area, in this case, languages. These agencies promote their view about power relations between the teacher educator, who dominates that knowledge, and the PELT, who needs to be instructed and conditioned to those ways of being and knowing (Jiménez Becerra, 2011).

According to Granados-Beltran (2018), there is a need for a constant review, analysis, and reevaluation of IELTE and PELT research from different epistemological perspectives, including the critical and decolonial ones. In this way, researchers (teacher educators or PELT) would be able to contribute to the dismantling of homogenization practices within research, which would weigh in reversing the ideological hegemony installed in our "common sense" (Kincheloe, et al., 2011). In this same way, researchers can make the research process a space to rescue and strengthen local knowledge. This last topic goes hand in hand with the areas to explore within the IELTE field, which is the next section's primary concern.

Research Areas Related to IELTE and PELT in Colombia

This section looks at the data in light of the central researched issues about IELT and PELTs. It describes four research areas identified in the analysis: *PELTs' communicative competencies and linguistic skills, PELTs' teaching competencies and skills, PELTs' language teacher identities*, and o*ther issues in IELTE related to PELTs.*

PELTs' Communicative Competencies and Skills

According to Macías and Buendía (2019), teachers' language proficiency is one of the most common research topics. This interest in describing and explaining how teachers use or improve their language skills is also evident in the research papers about PELTs and IELTE. For example, Castro and López (2014) revealed that the communication strategies used by PELTs facilitate or obstruct the development of communicative skills. For the study, the

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researchers selected four PELTs with A2 and B2 levels of language proficiency. Along the same line, López and Giraldo (2011) focused their research on reading comprehension strategies. They also selected two participants from different levels, a successful reader and a less successful reader. The results of the two papers showed differences in reading comprehension strategies due to the students' level. Less qualified PELTs use basic strategies that did not allow them to have a high communication or reading level. In contrast, more qualified PELTs use strategies that would enable them to communicate or understand texts more efficiently.

Viafara (2011) and Correa and Echeverri (2017) focused on their students' language skills; however, they decided to go in a different direction. The authors did not intend to determine the proficiency of PELTs but rather to analyze what happens when PELTs use these language skills in educational settings. Viafara (2011) explained the challenges PELTs have when deciding to use English to communicate with their students in the English language class. Correa and Echeverri (2017) explored the gains and challenges encountered by two groups of foreign language pre-service teachers from a public university in Medellin,

Colombia, developing a situated view of academic writing through a systemic functional genre-based instructional unit.

PELTs' Language Teaching Competencies and Pedagogical Knowledge

The globalization of English has brought several changes to teacher education programs. These changes have made future teachers face new challenges from the modern world (Jhonson & Golombeck, 2018). Furthermore, colonial ideologies related to ELT have settled in the "common sense" of some teacher educators, causing the perpetuation of decontextualized methodologies and strategies in the ELT practices. Consequently, the need to inquire about local English language teachers' knowledge production becomes more relevant than ever (Castañeda-Londoño, 2019; Castañeda-Trujillo, 2018). The former situation directly affects PELTs, who learn from experiences and their mentors. Some researchers have focused on observing how PELTs acquire or develop competencies and skills for language teaching and how PELTs have reflected and understood their own pedagogical knowledge construction process.

On the one hand, Ramos and Aguirre (2011), Quintero Polo (2019), and Ramos

(2019) showed how PELTs go beyond the replication of traditional methods to teach foreign languages. In the three experiences, the researchers implemented pedagogical strategies in order for students to reflect upon their own practices and analyze the different aspects of their *selves* as teachers. In this way, they expected PELTs to assume their role as language teachers based not only on the theory about language teaching and learning but on a critical analysis of each educational context's realities.

The study conducted by Aguirre and Ramos (2011) intended to promote critical discussions about being teachers and, in this way, guide PELTs to acquire skills to become critical educators. The two professors involved in this study used movies as triggers for critical reflections and discussions. The films were selected carefully, and all of them had a teacher as the main character. The strategy involved in the critical analysis and conversations in the classroom showed that PELTs change how they understood language teaching. They moved from a methodology-centered understanding of language teaching to a more critical and contextualized one.

Quintero Polo (2019) proposed the use of pedagogical and research agendas, which, in his words, "were alternatives that led participants to perform as teachers without using infallible recipes, typical of traditional models" (p. 38). This strategy promoted the critical review of PELTs' beliefs about language, teaching, and learning. Also, the strategy led PELT to become aware of the socially associated problems in language education. Quintero Polo found that this critical reflection process leads to a *trans-formation* of the pedagogical knowledge in ELT education. Likewise, Ramos (2013) had a critical perspective while implementing a strategy that intended to "foster global cultural consciousness" (p. 212). Ramos worked with a group of PELTs who were doing the teaching practicum in rural area schools. Ramos implemented a series of workshops, class discussions, and constant reflection exercises. In this process, PELTs were able to compare their culture of origin with the target culture, avoid prejudices and stereotypes, and focus on facts that demonstrated how they could recognize strengths and problems of the other culture and theirs. This paper shows the importance of creating spaces where PELTs can co-construct intercultural consciousness by means of being "critical and reflective observers in their culture and in the other

cultures" (p. 220). The previous led PELTs to think of teaching beyond linguistic aspects and foster intercultural elements in their teaching practices.

On the other hand, Macías and Sánchez (2015), Clavijo and Quintero (2012), Giraldo and Murcia (2018), and Cardenas and Suarez (2009) were interested in examining PELTs' development and improvement in their performance during their classes in different aspects. Macías and Sánchez (2015) focused on classroom management skills. They wanted to analyze what was happening in the PELT classroom, how they dealt with classroom management, and what alternatives could be provided to improve PELTs' classroom management skills. Researchers in this study found that PELTs see classroom management as a severe problem in their teaching practice. To address it, they resorted to two main approaches. The most dominant is maintaining control by setting rules and reinforcing the consequences of negative behavior. The second is to seek students' participation and cultivate students' positive dispositions towards the class. Clavijo and Quintero (2012) worked with 34 PELTs from an IELTE program in a public university in Bogotá. They intended to show central

aspects of the pedagogy used to work on a virtual platform by promoting digital literacy and language competencies. This research demonstrated that including various communication media transformed the curriculum into a more participative one, and it became a meaningful experience for PELTs. Abad and Pineda (2018) explored a PELT's experiences while becoming a language teacher and researcher in the same line. One of the authors was the research mentor, and the other was the research mentee. Hence, the paper explores the two sides of the process, showing a constant contribution to their professional development and understanding of such development. The authors also highlighted the importance of having well-prepared research mentors in IELTE programs to maximize PELTs' research experiences.

Other research articles focused on exploring PELTs' beliefs about their English teaching strategies (Durán, Lastra, & Morales, 2017) to understand how they propose their action research projects (McNulty, 2010), or to explore the relationship between pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical practice (Fajardo, 2013). The three studies are framed in the case study and make use of semi-structured interviews

and other techniques such as autobiographical writings (Durán, Lastra, & Morales, 2017), questionnaires (McNulty, 2010), and classroom observations (Fajardo, 2013) for data collection. All three studies examined PELTs' experiences and relied on them to establish their belief systems regarding the particular objective of each investigation. The most relevant of these studies looked at how life experiences within academic settings significantly contribute to constructing their own ELT teaching and research visions.

PELTs' Language Teacher Identities

According to Block (2009), one of the most common approaches to identity is poststructuralism. In this approach, identity is seen as fluid and dynamic, which in turn uses the plural "identities" to refer to the different identarian perspectives an individual may have (Clark, 2008, as cited in De Costa & Norton, 2016). Research on identity has focused mainly on in-service teachers rather than pre-service teachers (Torres-Cepeda & Ramos-Holguín, 2019). Some Colombian scholars have written articles that show their analysis of the construction or reconstruction of PELTs' identities from their experiences and different angles. In the first place, some

scholars have inquired about the construction of PELT identities while they experience the teaching practice (Buendía-Arias et al., 2020; Diaz Benavidez, 2013; Montoya López et al., 2020; Torres-Cepeda & Ramos-Holguín, 2019). In second place, the study about identities includes intersectional topics or areas that contribute the understanding of particularities among PELTs (Ubaque-Casallas & Castañeda-Peña, 2020; Ubaque-Casallas & Aguirre-Garzón, 2020).

The exploration of identity included PELTs' reflections that led them to understand their construction or reconstruction processes while they lived experiences in their teaching practicum. For example, Díaz Benavides (2013) examined the construction of ten PELTs' identities using a reflection-oriented strategy that he called DOES (Describe the objective situation, Outline the main aspects, Evaluation of the situation, and Search for possible alternatives to future challenges). As the research focused on identity as a socially constructed process, the researcher explained that some PELTs experience a transformation in their teaching identities more independently than others; the less independent PELTs based their decision on the actions of the more independent ones. In any case, all the independent actions that the

PELTs took during their teaching practice process were adjusted by top-down instructions given by the school. Díaz Benavides (2013) highlighted that this reflection process is necessary for PELTs to understand the realities of schools and their construction as English teachers.

In a similar direction, Torres-Cepeda and Ramos-Holguín (2019) conducted a narrative study to describe the process of identity construction among 13 PELTs while connecting their experiences as learners with their becoming future English as foreign language teachers. The researchers concluded that PELTs construct and reconstruct their perspectives and beliefs of what it means to be a teacher based on their experiences in the teaching practice and those lived as learners. One of the most significant findings is related to the human aspect that teachers intend to put into play in their future practice and their professional capacities that emerge from their reflections as learners and during their teaching practicum. Additionally, the researchers highlight the role teachers and professors have in PELTs' decision-making as future teachers.

Another study related to the construction of PELT identities during the teaching practicum was carried out by Montoya López et al., 2020. In this work, the researchers analyzed the narratives of five PELTs that connect their teaching practice with the national and institutional policies they addressed during this teaching practicum experience. The researchers found that the PELTs lacked the micropolitical agency to negotiate during different events in their teaching practicum that involved institutional or national policies. This lack is attributed to the university, which must provide more academic spaces to consolidate the micropolitical agency of the PELTs. Another finding was related to PELTs' feelings, which "shows the high moral responsibility teachers present to them" (p. 68). The results revealed that this human aspect related to feelings could also be strengthened during the teaching program to build the capacity of the PELTs to take risks and propose ideas to other policy leaders.

Buendía-Arias et al. (2020) studied eight PELT experiences reported through diaries, interviews, and drawings to establish those factors that contribute to constructing their teaching identity during the teaching practice stage. The most common factors identified were the value and belief system, personality traits, pedagogical decisions, context, reflective practice, and critical

incidents. The researchers concluded that while the factors they identified were crucial for constructing PELTs' teacher identity, teacher education programs must reconfigure their structure to allow the identity formation process to be connected to social or institutional contexts. The researchers suggest that teacher education programs must integrate PELT knowledge, value systems, and beliefs as an important part of the curriculum for this to happen.

In addition to the above, research on identity has also been carried out from gender and personal epistemologies. Ubaque-Casallas and Castañeda-Peña (2020) showed the implications of being a transgender PELT from queer theory. Aspects such as the normative and the non-normative, corporeity, alterity, and "must be" discourses are discussed with the PELT narrative. The findings show the value of this research to the extent that it gives voice to what has been canonically overlooked. As in the investigations above, the fact that construction is an individual and collective process so that accommodations or resistances are produced permeates the self and leads it to respond to canonical and structured discourses.

Similarly, Ubaque-Casallas and Aguirre-Garzón conducted a narrative study with two PELTs aimed at "exploring the possible forms of professional yet personal-local knowledge" (p. 131). They concluded that PELTs resist colonial discourse with the decision they made where their main goal was to benefit their pupils. They also observed that this process of identity construction, aligned with personal epistemologies and connected to their lesson planning practice, unveiled some forms of awareness regarding their role in the schools. Finally, researchers found that PELTs could "claim ownership of their teaching practices to delink from fixed, universal and Cartesian notions of conceiving teaching and being a teacher" (p. 140).

Other Issues in IELTE Related to PELTs

Along with the main topics described above, there are other equally essential topics that intersect with various issues. Nevertheless, they are not less relevant than the ones mentioned above. For example, some investigations focused on the pedagogical practicum as such. The articles included in this study derived their main objectives from an analysis of what happened or had happened in the pedagogical

practicum (Aguirre, 2014; Castañeda-Peña et al., 2016; Chavez Varón, 2008; Fajardo Castañeda & Miranda Montenegro, 2015; Morales, 2016; Viafara, 2011; Viafara, 2014). Furthermore, there is an interest in investigating the intersection or connection between theory and practice by analyzing institutional documents or implementing and evaluating a curriculum (Mendez & Bonilla, 2016; Posada & Garzón, 2014).

Equally important are the articles whose research objectives were oriented toward implementing reflection activities to understand different aspects of the PELT. I found that the primary purpose of implementing these reflection activities was to make PELTs aware of the implication of their future as language teachers (Aguirre & Ramos, 2011; Fajardo Castañeda & Miranda Montenegro, 2015). Additionally, there was a strong interest in analyzing the processes of reflection in PELT to see the impact this activity has on other aspects, such as improving in their teaching practicum or become more critical educators (Aguirre & Ramos, 2011; Camacho et al., 2012; Castellanos, 2013; 2016; Viafara, 2016). Finally, Samaca's article is a self-reflection of what a teacher educator could do to foster ELTPs' reflections about teaching and learning in the context they are involved in and rethink the pedagogical experience for social transformation (Samacá, 2012).

Conclusions

The research studies in Colombia show that PELT education mainly focused on solving the problem of improving language proficiency and teaching skills, reproducing models that have been successful in other contexts with another kind of population. They also show how the educational system has tried to mold PELTs while not listening to their voices and forgetting that they have many things to say and contribute to ELT. Through hearing PELTs' voices, it is possible to make valuable knowledges visible that could help improve language education (De Sousa Santos, 2010) and the production of pedagogical knowledge, which is only possible through discursive practices. These discursive practices provide meaning and sense to the teaching profession (Tezanos, 2007).

I consider that it is necessary to revisit the PELT as a subject in the literature to bring visibility to the topic. It is time to give them the place they deserve in ELT education. From my perspective, it is essential to analyze how the different faculties of

education perceive education and pedagogy. In that way, we can look for spaces to start implementing local knowledges based on local practices. Talking about PELTs and teaching practicum is not a novelty, but it is a topic that has not been explored enough. From experience, I can also say that studies fail to be meaningful for PELTs. From this idea, I extracted, thus far, three main understandings. The first one is related to who the PELT in research is. The second one is that most of the research look for improving or strengthening skills and competencies in PELT. And the third one, as a consequence of the first two, is an objectification of the teaching profession.

Firstly, there is a blurred image of the PELT as a subject. Most of the research presents the PELTs as a colonized subject who has to align to the dominant discourses that dictate what has to be taught and how they have to do it. This fact is a clear demonstration of how the north's hegemony has taken over the field of language pedagogy through the internationalization of the vision of language, learning, and teaching (Phillipson, 1992). Reflection is an essential aspect of teaching development processes; however, little evidence exists showing PELTs use reflection as a referent to improve

their practices. Although some of the research considered PELTs as informants, they were not thought of as subjects that could contribute to teacher education programs.

Additionally, right now, there is a need to consolidate networks among institutions and researchers (professors or PELTs), not only local but also globally. It is urgent to commence looking into what really happens in the class and listen to PELTs' experiences that give an account of their pedagogical knowledge. In this way, PELTs can contribute to ELT education. I confirmed that there is no networking in this field even though some of the research studies mentioned in this chapter were done in the same institution. Moreover, it is essential to decentralize research and bring it to the smaller regions and cities with ELT programs that can help conduct meaningful research. This action would imply the consolidation of academic networks in which universities in large cities support smaller institutions to promote research and advances in PELT education. In this way, the research scope could be broadened, and the voices of PELTs found in rural areas or small towns would be taken into account.

Secondly, most of the research is focused on aspects related to developing or improving skills and competencies responding to international and national demands based on neoliberal policies. Historically speaking, we live in a moment in which the world wants to be connected for many political, economic, social, or even academic reasons. Neoliberal thinking has permeated the educational system. The ideologies developed and disseminated by the few in power dictate what is or is not correct in terms of what, how, when, and whom to teach. So, these power devices have created dependent and controlled subjects who tend to replicate discourse and assume that there is no other truth (Jiménez Becerra, 2011). It is necessary to clarify that power devices, human actions, and submission to these devices do not emerge from a predetermination of knowledge and power as such; they are products of the changes produced in defined historical moments that can affect the pooled sensitivity (Foucault, 1975).

The aforementioned leads to the instrumentalization and objectification of language teaching (Magrini, 2014) since it is not seen as a profession (Guerrero, 2010). The teaching of languages as an occupation attenuates pedagogical knowledge and blurs, or even makes invisible, any possible contribution that the PELTs may make to ELT derived from their own experience in the pedagogical practice. In this sense, I would like to highlight that when researchers align themselves with hegemonic discourses, they can lose their perspective and real meaning of education, thus focusing on training as a standardized practice that must be transmitted to a future generation of English language teachers.

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