

Public school English teachers' language proficiency unfolded: A narrative inquiry

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Abstract

This research study explored and investigated how language proficiency unfolds in public-school English teaching based on a group of four English teachers in a public school in Cucuta-Colombia. The study was carried out through the exploratory qualitative research method with a narrative approach with the purpose of exploring English teachers' proficiency and this skill's role within their careers in the public sector. Also, this research described teachers' language proficiency level by deepening into their insights and the extent to which these have been influenced while working in the public school. The results demonstrated that teachers are struggling in developing their language proficiency while working in the public sector and the vast regulatory gap regarding English teachers' linguistic policies in Colombia.

Key words: Language proficiency; Language teaching; Teachers' beliefs; Linguistic policies.

Resumen

Este estudio de investigación exploró e investigó cómo se desarrolla el dominio del idioma en la enseñanza del inglés en escuelas públicas basado en un grupo de cuatro profesores de inglés en una escuela pública en Cúcuta-Colombia. El estudio se llevó a cabo a través del método de investigación exploratoria cualitativa con enfoque narrativo con el propósito de explorar la competencia de los profesores de inglés y el rol de esta habilidad dentro de sus carreras en el sector público. Esta investigación también describió el nivel de competencia lingüística de los profesores al profundizar en sus conocimientos y la medida en que estos han sido influenciados mientras trabajaban en la escuela pública. Los resultados demostraron que los profesores están luchando para desarrollar su dominio del idioma mientras trabajan en el sector público y la gran brecha regulatoria con respecto a las políticas lingüísticas de los profesores de inglés en Colombia.

Palabras claves: Dominio del idioma; Enseñanza de idiomas; Creencias de los profesores; Políticas lingüísticas.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the study

In English language teaching (ELT), language proficiency has been highlighted as the most relevant source of effectiveness when teaching a foreign language, and a critical source that determines success in second language learning (Bachman, 1990; S. H. O. Kim & Elder, 2008). In Colombia, where English language instruction has become a common core subject in the school (Bonilla & Tejada, 2016), the educational efforts to enhance language proficiency have increased recently. One example is The National Program of Bilingualism that intends to reach a B2 level, according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), for all English language teachers in the country (Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN), 2015). However, several studies show a completely different outlook. In Cali, for example, almost 60% of tested teachers in public schools reached the levels A2 and B1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (Cárdenas Ramos & Chaves Varón, 2013). This city is the third largest in the country; thus, the situation in other cities in the country could be more uncertain. For instance, the setting of this study took place in a public school in Cucuta-Colombia on the border with Venezuela. A school with English teachers that have students from middle- and lower-class families and with a very different social background from other capital cities. This study can then expand the outlook of ELT in this region and the perception of teachers' language proficiency in the country itself.

Without advanced language proficiency, teachers are not able to provide an acceptable input for their learners (Ellis, 1997). Without adequate input for learners, meaningful English learning struggles happen, affecting not only school quality but also the competitiveness in the global markets that the Colombian government has been striving to achieve (Mejía-Mejía, 2016).

Hence, this research study discovered four actual English teachers' insights about how important language proficiency is for them and to what extent this proficiency has been affected along their teaching career in the public school. Also, it explored why the English education policies have not listened to teachers' voices (Olaya, 2018) and opinions towards the role of English language proficiency in public-school ELT. Thus, knowing these experiences could amplify the vision of English teachers' issues in the public-school classroom, comprehend the English teachers' language proficiency situation nowadays, understand the factors that influence their linguistic skills, and finally enrich the public-school English teacher perception.

1.2 Justification of the problem significance

This research study intends to provide substantial findings on the role of English language proficiency in the ELT career within public-school classrooms. These findings were obtained through a purposive sample of four English teachers in a public school. By using a narrative research approach, this study gave the teachers a voice regarding the role of English language proficiency in their professional careers. English teachers are also educators, and in the public-school setting, they must do more than teaching a school subject. The teachers' narratives found in this study not only allowed the researcher to obtain a close testimony about the role of English language proficiency for English teachers in public schools but also gave a deeper understanding of what teachers must go through in their settings.

The reason why language proficiency is the central topic of this study comes from the National Bilingualism Program (NBP) that has been carried out by the Colombian Government since 2004 (Fandiño et al., 2012). Based on an optional-diagnosed test applied to middle and high-school English teachers, the latest version of the NPB called *Colombia Very Well* stated that by 2015, between 63% and 86% of Colombian English teachers do not have a B2 level of

language proficiency according to the CEFR (Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN), 2015). However, the document itself states that the real situation is unknown and assumes that teachers who denied taking the test must have an A1 level (2015, p. 7). In this manner, the knowledge about English teachers' language proficiency is blurred regarding many teachers might not be willing to be evaluated in their language skills, and the others cannot fulfill the linguistic requirement. As Gonzales and Quinchia (2003) argue, improving language proficiency is one of the challenges that current and future English teachers must face, but evaluating them without considering their situation cannot be the way to solve the problem. Teachers cannot be simply "asked" to increase their language proficiency level, and they will immediately do it. It is complicated to wonder how a teacher can rehearse or practice the language when this is taught only one hour in primary school and a maximum of four hours in secondary (Sánchez & Obando, 2008). Therefore, this study discovered answers that can give a response to this issue by acknowledging teachers' narratives as a primary source of information. These stories, as social artifacts, could represent either the society as well as the people's culture and manners within (M. Blanco, 2011). Therefore, these teachers' narratives exposed teachers' thoughts and feelings about not only the language proficiency role in public schools but also about the whole environment that affects their English language proficiency itself.

1.3 Research question(s) and objective(s)

This study addressed the following research question:

In what ways does English teachers' language proficiency unfold when teachers work at public institutions in an urban setting in Colombia?

The objectives to achieve in this research were:

- To explore English teachers' beliefs and perceptions about their development of language proficiency while working at public institutions in Cucuta.
- To describe English teachers' beliefs and perceptions about their development of language proficiency while working at public institutions in Cucuta.
- To determine the factors that have affected English teachers' language proficiency development while working at public institutions in Cucuta.

1.4 Conclusion

Researchers and readers of this exploratory study would find the importance of English teachers' voices towards the role of language proficiency in professional development. Inquiring into their stories, their social background, and their reflections could open the door to understanding English teachers' situation in a region of Colombia. The knowledge and results of this study may not lead to generalizations or certainties but more to wondering and imagining possibilities (Clandinin & Murphy, 2007). Therefore, this study did not intend to judge or qualify teachers for their work but to create awareness, reflections, and wonderings in ELT about the role of language proficiency in public-school teachers' professional development.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The second chapter presents a theoretical review of the primary constructs of this paper. It regards theories to explain concepts such as language, language proficiency, and language teaching. These constructs supported the research question for this study and provided an analytical view about the role of English language proficiency for teachers within a public-school setting.

2.2 Theoretical framework

2.2.1 *Language teaching*

Stern (1983) introduces language teaching as the activities which are intended to bring about language learning. These activities are presented as a set of useful methods and approaches for the language classroom (Kumaravadivelu, 1994). In this way, teachers follow these methods and procedures to determine how successful their learners are to acquire and use a language. Chang (2011), for example, notes that through grammar structures explanation and exercises, students produce accurate output enabling them to speak in less controlled activities. Mart (2013) presents the audiolingual method as a way to encourage the formation of correct speaking habits and to foster language habits focusing all learning in the output. Krashen (1981) argues that there is no better way to teach a language than the natural approach, in which the person acquires the language naturally, just like the person did in the early years. The list can extend more with a bunch of pedagogical approaches and methods, but in the end, stakeholders choose the ones they consider more suitable for the students and make language teachers follow every single aspect of these methods and approaches to teach the language in their classrooms.

On the other hand, theorists, as Larsen-Freeman (1991) observe that the complexity of language teaching with different theories and methods have provoked language teachers to change their perception. In other words, no single explanation or theory can solve the particular situations that teachers have to grapple daily. Kumaravadivelu (1994) claims that even though these approaches and methods present a set of useful procedures for the language classroom, learners are now living in a post-method era in which the language learning setting surpasses theories to focus on developing critical thinking. Thus, teachers need to have self-awareness and a critical point view regarding the language setting they face. It can be quite complicated to

apply methods and approaches that will not involve or engage learners because of the lack of contextualization. Besides, in a traditional education environment like the Colombian public school (OECD, 2016), it is difficult to wonder about a post-method era in the English classroom. There are specific skills that can help teachers overcome the methods and delimit a benchmark to capture learners' attention (Mayahi & Mayahi, 2014). If teachers are not able to innovate or apply new strategies, the public-school classroom becomes a space of translating sentences and explaining language structures in the mother tongue.

2.2.2 Language teacher's skills

The list of skills varies according to the theorist and the pedagogical point of view towards language learning. Richards (2010), for instance, reveals ten core dimension skills that outline the teaching process: Language proficiency, content knowledge, teaching skills, contextual knowledge, language teacher identity, learner-focused teaching, specialized cognitive skills, theorizing from practice, joining a community of practice, and professionalism. Others, like Anca (2013), group these core skills into three key dimensions: (1) Cognitive, concerning knowledge of the target language and culture (See Borg, 2006) (2) Affective, representing culture, and (3) Pragmatic, drawing upon communication. These dimensions, in turn, are expressed through linguistic skills (language proficiency), pedagogical and methodological skills (methods and approaches), and meta-teaching skills or reflective practice (teaching awareness). Hence, the purpose of these skills is to become a tool for reflection, observation, and assessment (Borg, 2006), and in English teachers' case, for self-assessment. A self-assessment about their current practices and the time they are investing in their learning, for instance in the evolution of their English language proficiency throughout these years, and how helpful is to become a high-proficient language educator.

2.2.3 *Language proficiency*

Proficiency refers to a person's ability to use language with communication purposes; thus, proficient users can understand the language without difficulty, and interact with other speakers comfortably (Renandya et al., 2018). In other words, language proficiency reflects how skilled a person is to communicate effectively in a foreign language, in this case, English.

However, the perception for English language proficiency has changed along linguistics and language acquisition theories evolution displaying several approaches and viewpoints for this concept. For instance, Hymes (1972), presented it as the ability to use the language appropriately in a given speech community. Others, more conservative, claimed this proficiency proceeded from grammatical competence (Oller, 1976), enclosing language proficiency to a structural and systemic vision of language.

Nonetheless, the contemporary theory has demonstrated that language proficiency goes beyond syntax (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Renandya, Hamied & Joko (2018) argue, for instance, that language proficiency is determined by the capacity of understanding and speaking with others comfortably. Thus, grammar and vocabulary play an essential role within language, but communication and interaction reflect how proficient a user can be. Within this vision, a person who learned a different language should have the ability to use it appropriately (Thirakunkovit, 2018). In this manner, defining language proficiency implies establishing how a foreign language should be learned and how to put that knowledge into practice.

Regarding people's interest in learning foreign languages, English, for example, several studies have strived to classify linguistic competence. The Common European Framework for languages (CEFR) can be considered as one of the most relevant cases, which since its creation in 2001, has become an essential tool to describe foreign language proficiency in Europe and the

world (Wisniewski, 2017). This framework includes six reference levels that trace out language learners' abilities in terms of reading, speaking, writing, and listening. Each level is represented by a letter (A, B, and C) and a number (1,2) that label the corresponding level of proficiency (Council of Europe, 2001; Heyworth, 2006). Hence, the levels B2, C1, and C2, represent what the CEFR calls independent and proficient users. These foreign language users can use language flexibly with a high degree of fluency and spontaneity, general requirements for those who want to be proficient in a foreign language.

Given that English has become the language of international communication or Lingua Franca (ELF), more and more people are starting to prioritize the learning of this language to communicate with the world (Crystal, 1997; Kirkpatrick, 2007; Sanchez, 2013). In fact, ELF has become a highly complex phenomenon that is making people from different language backgrounds get involved in intercultural communication using English as one of their mediums of interaction (Jenkins, 2015). Therefore, the importance of language proficiency has naturally increased for all kinds of professionals, including language teachers, who have the responsibility of mastering their subject knowledge. As mentioned above, language proficiency and language teaching get together to give learners the best source of learning, providing a better quality of education and enhancing teachers' professional development.

2.2.4 Language proficiency and language testing in ELT

Language proficiency has been considered as a critical instrument for a successful language input in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom (Ellis, 1997). This necessity of providing high-quality information can challenge some language teachers to become not only excellent communicators but also language specialists. Choi and Lee (2016) support the latter argument by arguing that stakeholders of foreign language education, such as students,

administrators, and policymakers consider language proficiency as an essential quality for a language teacher. Thus, the final objective for language classes is to provide their learners with the ability to communicate efficiently in the new language they are acquiring (Saz et al., 2010). Therefore, communication and proficiency constitute an essential role in English language classes providing a rich input for learners and enabling teachers to “respond spontaneously and knowledgeably”(Conway et al., 2013, p. 242). Hence, language proficiency paves the path for an EFL teacher to develop their professional skills and become a knowledgeable educator who can provide high-quality education for their students.

On the other hand, language testing comes up as one alternative to determine how proficient a teacher is and to determine teachers’ competence in terms of their linguistic skills. Hyltenstam (2016) highlights the importance of this language testing to certify levels of achievement, which can identify strengths and weaknesses as a basis for continued educational planning or training. Thirakunkovit (2018) observes in turn that several test items are required for learners to demonstrate a full range of language abilities, making the results of the test scores challenging to be generalized to a different test context. Hence, when it comes to ELT, language proficiency testing becomes a pivotal aspect of demonstrating teachers’ knowledge and literacy since it measures the use of language and subject knowledge that they have acquired (Spolsky, 1989). Nevertheless, this language assessment could also mean pressure for teacher’s professional development and affect their image as an educator, such testing influences the attitude, behavior and motivation for language teachers (Razmjoo, 2011) . Dev and Qiqieh (2016) argue that language teachers can get to feel more confident and more belonging because of their achievement and proficiency leading them to be more involved in society. In this regard,

language proficiency tests can become not only the foundation of teachers' confidence (Murdoch, 1994) but also the main objective in their professional career.

In rough outlines, when language teachers are proficient, there is a sense of responsibility with their students who need to receive a comprehensible input (Ellis, 2005). Indeed, Kim and Elder (2008) present language teachers as a critical source of input determining the success of second language learning. In this manner, teachers with limited subject knowledge can develop routinized student's input, which can result in a lack of authentic interaction with the target language (TL) (Tsui, 2003). Thus, the role of language proficiency is mainly crucial for teacher's professional development and successful English language learning even though nowadays the former must be developed through an international examination or tests (Brandt, 2006)

Developing measures of language abilities and testing complement language teaching proficiency and can be used as a source of information to evaluate the effectiveness in language teaching (Bachman, 1990). Both learning and testing develop such a close relationship that it is unimaginable to work in one of them without considering the other (Hughes, 2002). By and large, in English language teaching (ELT), language proficiency tests are just as necessary as language knowledge. They display teacher's abilities and enhance language teachers' professional development preparing them for the globalized challenges of the contemporary society.

2.3 State of the art

2.3.1 Introduction

In English language teaching (ELT), language proficiency has been highlighted as the most relevant source of effectiveness when teaching a foreign language, and a critical source that determines success in second language learning (Bachman, 1990; S. H. O. Kim & Elder, 2008).

The methods, approaches, and many other perceptions stated above have demonstrated that no matter the point of view, using the foreign language in the classroom constitutes one of the primary goals. Freeman, Katz, Gomez, and Burns (2015) argue that many teachers are not employing this principle because of multiple reasons: “lack of specific language knowledge or confidence, doubt that their students will understand, perceptions of pressure to meet curricular and assessment goals” (Freeman et al., 2015, p. 130). However, they also observe the fact that in the public discourse and the stakeholders’ policies, the problem of using the language stems from the lack of language proficiency from teachers. These two perceptions lead to disagreement from both sides, teachers who claim for resources and better education policies, and stakeholders that demand teachers’ high-quality linguistic knowledge. This study represents that teachers’ side, in which they are perceived as the closest people to the education system and the experienced professionals who have dealt with lots of learners year by year.

2.3.2 Studies involved in ELT and language proficiency

Given that English has become the language of international communication or Lingua Franca, more and more people are starting to prioritize the learning of this language to communicate with the world (Crystal, 1997; Kirkpatrick, 2007; Sanchez, 2013). The importance of language proficiency has naturally increased for all kinds of professionals, including language teachers, who have the responsibility of mastering their subject knowledge. Huimin (2003), annotates, for example, that language proficiency constitutes a big challenge for ELT in a fast-growing economy like China. Factors like the workload, the high number of students, and the lack of familiarity with the language have led the teachers to “(...) follow the banal traditional teaching method without considering developing the students’ communicative competence” (Huimin, 2003, p. 39). Therefore, English teachers are placed between their comfort by using the

traditional strategies they are used to or their willingness to evolve by learning and improving their professional skills.

Subject knowledge and pedagogical skills that meet international qualification standards is another concern surrounding English teachers' language proficiency. Hong Kong, in the 1990's for example, was not fulfilling language teacher's standards since they had insufficient language proficiency (Lin, 1997), indeed, less than 20% of English teachers were highly trained to teach the language (Tsui et al., 1994). In this manner, the government started implementing programs like the Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers of English (LPATE) to enhance in and/or pre-service teachers' English language proficiency. Within this program, although tasks are mainly focused on measuring language proficiency, the LPATE considers other aspects like classroom language use, pedagogical skills and subject matter knowledge (Coniam et al., 2017). For the scholars that have worked on the LPATE, ELT is a profession that requires specialized knowledge (Richards, 2010) that overcomes the reading, listening, speaking and writing skills. Thus, the English teachers are expected to have linguistic knowledge i.e. syntax, discourse, and pragmatics as well as pedagogical knowledge (Mann, 2005). Therefore, this program comes up as a complete built-in strategy that values not only teachers' knowledge of the language but also the impact that both excellent teacher strategies and high language proficiency can make in the classroom.

Thailand is another case that demonstrates how language proficiency plays a crucial role in the English teachers' professional development. Kanoksilapatham (2007) exposes that success in ELT does not come from excellent materials or textbooks, but how teachers implement those resources in terms of language skills, contextualized situations, and personal lives. Nevertheless, although "(...) teachers' inadequate preparation and command of English are partly responsible

for the failure of ELT”, they are the persons who work more closely with learners” (Kanoksilapatham, 2007, p. 9). In this manner, English teachers can be likely to fail when it comes to using the language proficiently, but they are also the ones who have the highest expertise about classroom and learners’ management. The challenge for teachers relies on deciding between following the demands of a school curriculum or engage their students with meaningful language use in the classroom (Ushioda, 2013). Lacking language proficiency does not imply a failure in the ELT career because teachers do more than teaching a foreign language in the classroom. Not accepting their needs and issues to improve their subject knowledge constitutes the real problem.

Considering the widespread expansion of English and globalization (Crystal, 1997), Latin America has started to put their efforts into improving the quality of ELT. In Chile, the “English Open Doors Program” (EODP) has been implementing policies to enhance the study of English as a foreign language in the country since 2004. Indeed, one of the greatest challenges is training teachers with an excellent language level that can meet the standards established for the students (Matear, 2008). A diagnostic test developed by the Chilean Ministry of Education confirmed that learners’ performance increased in line with the teachers’ level of study (Ministerio de Educacion, 2004). Therefore, the EODP has developed strategies to train but also encourage teachers to enhance their English level. Measures like foreign teaching assistants, study trips to English-speaking countries or total immersion programs for teachers are some of the strategies. Nevertheless, the time lag between training teachers’ language level and the impact on the student learning has become quite evident. Teaching and content knowledge play a role in the knowledge base that every teacher needs (Shulman, 1987), thus proficient English teachers are implied to develop and learn effective strategies to transmit that high level to their students. In

this manner, from 2006 onwards, English was included within the assessment of teacher's performance in the country (2008, p. 138), bringing about salary compensations for the high scores. Teachers have taken up these policies responsibly, however the contact time with the students remains rather short affecting the language learning, especially in public schools. Students should have enough opportunities to achieve the English levels of competence (Walker, 2003), but classes with up to 45 students make the teacher's duty a titanic challenge to teach a foreign language. A problem that not only affects Chile but several countries in the Latin American region, Colombia is one example.

English is a synonym of competitiveness (Mejía-Mejía, 2016), meaning that citizens must be able to communicate globally to obtain worldwide attractiveness in terms of economy and investment. In this sense, Colombia's National Ministry of Education (MEN) has designed policies for developing English language proficiency in the country, for instance, the National Plan of Bilingualism or (as known by its Spanish-language initial) PNB (Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN), 2015). This plan has aimed at three critical pillars for ELT in Colombia: Educational materials, curriculum design, and professional development (Olaya, 2018). For the PNB, teachers are expected to have B2 level, according to the CEFR, and students are expected to finish school at B1 level. Unfortunately, the results have not been satisfactory, and Colombia continues to be in the 60th place for English language proficiency (Education First (EF), 2018). The situation in public schools is even more disheartening with absent participation within the 100-best Colombian schools in English as a school subject (Sapiens Research, 2019). This discouraging overview demonstrates inefficacy in the PNB and the necessity to dig into the source of the problem and analyze the possible factors that are provoking these low rates.

English teachers' proficiency in Colombia has not been properly assessed in the last decade. Actually, a diagnostic test applied with public-school teachers, exposed that only 25% reached an upper-intermediate level (Sanchez, 2013). This lack of assessment has an effect on students' academic performance (Galvis & Bonilla, 2012) and the PNB cannot intend to have knowledgeable students in English with low subject-knowledge educators. Several studies have been developed to address this issue in Colombian public education, Fandiño (2014), for instance, has found out strategies and proposed alternatives to enhance English language teachers' proficiency in public schools. He has looked at the challenges around the PNB and come up with ideas to redesign the curriculum, including the attention to English teachers' training. Mejia- Mejia (2016) has researched factors that explain differences in English language levels among different social groups, including regional strategies that allow people, from many places of Colombia, to become more competitive through language proficiency. However, the breach between high and low quality in English language teaching in Colombian education has not been identified or the existent literature is not enough to present a verifiable argument that explains why language teachers' proficiency decreases in Colombian public schools.

The factors that affect English language learning in Colombian public education are very numerous. The PNB, for example, emphasizes the importance of ICT and innovation, bringing down student-based approaches (Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN), 2015). However, the latest report from the OECD (2016) discovered that traditional education persists in most of the country, that is, the public education system. For some scholars like McNulty and Quinchía (2007), the problem comes from the insufficiently qualified English teachers' staff within public schools, especially in primary school. English teachers will not be willing to use new approaches or strategies in the classroom if they are not even able to communicate in English. López, Peña,

and Guzmán (2011) expand this vision, arguing that public schools have unique requirements considering the diversity of their population, the curricular guidelines, and the number of learners they manage.

Nonetheless, Sanchez and Obando (2008) address an interesting point arguing that one factor in low language proficiency comes from limited possibilities for the use of the language in real contexts. Students are being trained to take exams and get good scores but not to become bilingual or communicate proficiently in a foreign language (Valencia, 2006). As Torres-Martínez (2009) complains, students in public schools are satisfied with attaining the minimum literacy skills in English during their school stage. If most learners are not genuinely interested in becoming proficient in English, it is necessary to wonder if the situation is the same for the teachers of that language.

The efforts to enhance teachers' professional development in Colombian ELT are not very uplifting. First off, government policies, the PNB, for example, are mainly based on foreign and decontextualized models (Ayala Zárate & Álvarez V., 2017). Another example could be the initial implementation of the In-Service Certificate in English Language Teaching (ICELT) program. In this program, an initial group of teachers was invited to participate in the experience, and having finished it; they replicate it regionally to have a more significant impact on teaching (Hernández, 2007). The experiment was not as successful as expected since the program brought about a top-down process where local teachers were not invited to express a voice and were ignored toward the particular issues that each classroom can have (González, 2007). Thus, there was no point in elaborating on a professional development policy if local teachers were going to imitate foreign policies that were not aware of their context. Besides, Peña, Flaborea, and Guzmán (2011) discovered that there is no connection between the bilingualism policies in ELT

and the structured plans to implement them. The resources can be available, as well as the means, but without competent teachers to handle them, high-language proficiency will never be achieved in public schools. Teachers have unique needs and experiences, which, if they are ignored, failure will be set from the start (Bett, 2016). Therefore, the PNB's idea of bringing foreign models or experts can help as long as those can support the local teachers to increase the subject knowledge that they need, not to eliminate their role and voice in schools.

2.4 Conclusion

To sum up, the studies above converge in the great impact of language proficiency within the foreign language education, in this case in English. In Colombia, appropriating professional development programs for teachers that meet the real requirements of the changing education system must be a need for stakeholders (Olaya, 2018, p. 151), and language proficiency must not get left behind. It cannot be allowed that non-certified teachers, most in primary school get to teach English without knowing the foreign language (Cárdenas Ramos & Chaves Varón, 2013). The PNB was the perfect tool to discover and diagnose English teachers' linguistic competence, even though the results were not satisfactory (Fandiño et al., 2012). Therefore, this study intends to discover some reasons behind the alarming language proficiency level of English teachers and how this level unfolds within their public-education career.

Chapter 3: Method

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the existing research on English teaching language proficiency illustrates the importance of language proficiency for English teachers. The fact that Language Proficiency does not only influence the input that learners receive (Ellis, 1997), but it also reflects an essential skill for English teachers (Richards, 2010). However, the present research

study has also confirmed that English teachers at public institutions in Colombia lack the sufficient linguistic skills to achieve an upper-intermediate level (B2) in the Common European Framework (CEFR) scale (Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN), 2015). This chapter outlines the importance of understanding language teachers' narratives regarding the role of English language proficiency in their professional careers, and the extent to what language proficiency has been affected by the educational setting of a public school. The aspects regarded for the design of this research study include the type of study used, the participants, the context, the role of the researcher, the instruments description, and the data collection procedures.

3.2 Context

The study took place at Colegio Municipal Aeropuerto in Cúcuta, a public school located in the north of the city. The neighborhood where the school is located is mainly composed of medium-low income families, and many students bordering the poverty line. There are three branches of the school distributed over the Aeropuerto neighborhood. The central branch with all the school levels from kindergarten up to high school, a second branch called Virgilio Barco that receives students until 9th grade, and the last branch called Luis Carlos Galán that delivers primary education only. This study is developed with three English teachers from the Central branch and one teacher from Virgilio Barco branch.

In the school, there are around three thousand students in total, being the Central branch the most populated with one thousand five hundred students approximately. Every classroom in either primary, secondary, or high school has no less than forty students, and in some cases, 50 students per class. Despite a recent investment from the government, for example the addition of a new building, the school resources are still limited. In the Central branch, there is only one classroom with technology devices working properly without mentioning that this room is used

as an auditorium for meetings. There is another classroom assigned to the information technology class, which is continuously occupied by the information-technology teachers who must take turns teaching their lessons in there.

Regarding materials, the school does not work with textbooks since many students cannot afford them. Most of the material used is printed, and it is complicated to work virtually due to the lack of technology tools, in fact, 30% of students do not have an acceptable device or internet connection. In the case of teachers, they are autonomous to handle the didactics they consider appropriate, but in rough outlines, traditional education is the common pedagogical approach among teachers. This conventional learning style stems from the vast student population, that makes it difficult to employ innovative approaches with crowded classrooms and difficult social backgrounds.

3.2.1 Type of study

This study is framed under an exploratory qualitative design with a narrative research methodology. Creswell (2007) defines qualitative research as a set of interpretive practices that make the world visible. In this way, the study here presents tools that provide a broader comprehension of the English teachers' world in Colombian public schools. Thus, qualitative research studies do not intend to answer a hypothesis through empirical data, as in their quantitative counterpart (Sampieri et al., 2014). This kind of research is based more on an inductive and logical process that allows the researcher to explore, describe, and set a theoretical perspective (2014, p. 8). Besides, this type of study locates the observer in the real world and turns this world in different kinds of representations, either interviews, field notes, or even conversations and photographs (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Narratives, for example, constitute the

representations of real English teachers' stories that are fully involved in the world of public education, teachers who have lived worth to tell experiences to hear and understand.

Narrative Research has, as its main feature, human experience, and according to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), it is directed to understanding and to make sense of that experience. This research design has three commonplaces (Clandinin et al., 2007) that were relevant in the development of this kind of study: (1) Temporality, which refers to temporal transition in the events under investigation (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006) ; (2) Sociality, that involves feelings, hopes, desires, and factors that form individuals and (3) Place, which evokes the specificity of the location included in the research. A narrative researcher needs to wonder and think through the impact of each site on the people's experience (Clandinin et al., 2007). In this manner, this type of research is insightful since teachers have gone through different backgrounds in terms of language proficiency. They can have studied the same bachelor's degree, but they must not have taken the same time to finish it due to different reasons. They all speak English, but their feelings or goals might not go in the same direction regarding language improvement. They can work in the same school, but they do not have the same perception of using the English language in their classroom.

To sum up, the narrative approach in qualitative research gives shape to quotidian lives regarding facts in the past, present, and future (M. Blanco, 2011). English teachers' experiences are the foundation of this research, and how they think and reflect upon that experience is the phenomenon under study. However, picturing narrative as a methodology that only consists of telling stories is entirely away from reality, and it "(...) *requires particular kinds of wakefulness*" (Clandinin et al., 2007, p. 21). This kind of research does not refer to tell or retell stories from people but to inquire and see discover the whole background behind that surrounds those stories.

3.2.2 *Participants*

There is a group of four English teachers in this study (two women and two men) working with different grades at Municipal Aeropuerto public school. The women teach English in ninth, seventh, and eleventh grade. The men work with sixth, tenth, and eleventh graders. Primary school teachers were not chosen for this study since the school does not have English licensed teachers in primary school. Hence other teachers, mainly Spanish teachers, are in charge of imparting the English lessons at the primary school level. The participants are all licensed teachers from Universidad de Pamplona in Pamplona, Norte de Santander, and their ages range from 30 to 45 years old (mean). Three of the participants have a master's degree, but only one of them has a disciplinary master's degree in English Didactics.

Participants' teaching experience in the public-school sector ranges from two up to twenty years. Nonetheless, their experience differs in the population that they have attended. The first woman has only worked in schools, starting from primary up to high school. The second woman has two years of experience with public schools, but she has taught undergraduate students at Universidad de Pamplona. The men have both worked with schools in rural, urban, and university settings, but one of them has only worked with high school students.

Regarding their English language proficiency, three participants feel confident about their linguistic skills, but they are aware of the consequences of not being in contact with the foreign language. A participant claims, for example, that her language proficiency has decreased with time, and she believes that she needs to reinforce her communicative skills, especially in spoken language. Considering international examinations, they all had taken either mock or real proficiency tests when they were studying their bachelor's degree. After graduating, they claim that they have not needed to take these exams, expressing that they do not need the certification

to start working with public schools. Nevertheless, they argue that they do not count on the resources to afford these examinations, which will not imply any salary income or promotion.

3.2.3 *Researcher's role*

My role in this study is that of a critical and active participant that recognizes the importance of language teachers as thinking professionals who can help pose and solve problems related to their educational practice (Burns, 2009). Since I entered the public school as a secondary school teacher, I was always interested in the lessons that the more experienced teachers could teach me, especially how to handle crowded classrooms with learners from a complex background. I have wondered how these teachers can carry out an English lesson in the middle of such difficult situations. As a narrative inquirer, I need to attend the three practical justifications stated by Clandinin et al. (2007): The personal, the practical, and the social personal. Considering the first justification, I have seen how my proficiency has decreased with the lack of practice and interaction in the foreign language. I can have a deeper understanding of my colleagues' environment because I am situated in the same setting as them. Practical, regarding how insightful this research will be to think differently about my practices, the others' practices. Finally, in the social justification, I think about the social and educative issues that this study might address. Language proficiency is an aspect that can be shown as crucial for English teachers, but it might not be considered as the primary goal when teaching in a public-school setting.

3.2.4 *Ethical considerations*

Ethics plays a vital role within this research study by following three fundamental principles: Anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent (Sanjari et al., 2014). In this way, the researcher asked the participants to sign a consent letter (Appendix F) before applying the

research instruments being aware of the research objective, and how it was going to be carried out. Ethics permeate narrative inquiry from start to finish, and the participants need to feel they are represented in the research texts (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). In this study, the four participants are English teachers, and the research developed intends to deepen into their personal lives while inquiring into their subject knowledge. Therefore, engagement with the participants is crucial in this study, letting them know that the research does not intend to judge them or criticize their work. Creating awareness about a phenomenon that can be happening not only in their schools but all the public institutions in Colombia makes up the research study's real objective.

3.3 Data collection Instruments

The data collection instruments in this study were designed to analyze teachers' perceptions about the role of English language proficiency in their careers. Through these instruments, it was possible to observe, in rough outlines, how English proficiency is necessary for the teachers in public schools. The data collected here has not only provided information about whether teachers have decreased their English language level in the public-school setting or not. They give a deeper understanding of language teachers' realities that go beyond teachers' subject knowledge.

3.3.1 Descriptions and justifications

3.3.1.1 International mock test of English

The validity of tests have been supported by ethnographers and case study researchers that have employed them as valuable source of corroboration for observations (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). This study employed a mock English test that intended to assess English

teachers' linguistic skills in reading and listening. The test was taken from a real First-Certificate-In-English (FCE) mock test offered by Cambridge Assessment English (Appendix G) to certify the B2 language level according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). It is important to clarify that English tests, as the FCE, are validated and recognized by Colombian authorities when it comes to certify English Language Proficiency (Ministerio de Educacion Nacional [MEN], 2017). Besides, Cohen et al. (2007) argue that using standardized tests allow the researcher to compare sub-populations with a whole population. Hence, the researcher can validate English teachers' language proficiency and make assumptions about the wider population of English language teachers in the same working conditions.

However, this test goes beyond assessing teachers' linguistic skills by trying to prove the probable language proficiency issues that an English teacher in public schools can present. According to Cohen et al. (2007), the golden rule to use a published standardized test is that "*it must demonstrate fitness for purpose*" (2007, p. 418). In this manner, the results obtained in this mock test encouraged English teachers to reflect upon their knowledge and provide qualitative information about how they felt while taking this exam and the factors that could have influenced the result, either positive or negative.

3.3.1.2 Audio and written narratives

The second instrument consists of inquiring into teachers' perceptions and background regarding the evolution of their English language proficiency. The advantages of this type of instrument rely on the opportunity for participants to share their reality directly (Creswell, 2009). In this instrument, the teachers read a prompt that encourages them to answer and reflect upon three crucial points: First, their perception of English language proficiency in public schools. Second, the evolution of language proficiency along with his teaching career, and third, the

factors that could influence their English language level while working in public schools.

Nonetheless, it is important to annotate that this instrument can be disadvantageous regarding the difficulty of interpreting it (2009, p. 180) and that teachers can have completely different ways of seeing their English language level. Therefore, the test applied in the first instrument played a crucial role that helped teachers know an approximate score for their language proficiency and reflect upon the reasons behind this score. In this manner, the test could influence teachers' perceptions, encouraging them in the narratives to think not only about their results, but also what they have done all these years in terms of English language proficiency development.

Considering the emergency declared in the country due to Covid-19 pandemic, the narratives in the study were adapted to the teachers' situation and preferences. In this manner, teachers were not obliged to write their narratives, but they could send them via WhatsApp audio files or a written document in Microsoft Word.

3.3.1.2.1 Written Narratives

Written narratives intend to encourage the participants to think and reflect upon their lives narratively (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). In this narrative, the participants must first read a text (Appendix H) that engages them with the research problem. The text included three items that encourage the participants to write and reflect upon their lives as English language teachers in public schools. There is no estimated length for these narrative texts since teachers must not feel conditioned for writing this narrative. The more information they provide, the better data to collect for the study. Teachers must feel that they are narrating their lives through this instrument. An open space that will allow the researcher to understand participants' realities concerning the role of language proficiency in the public-school classroom.

3.3.1.2.2 *Audio narratives*

The reason why this kind of narrative was designed relies on the easiness to collect the data due to the difficulties in the Covid-19 pandemic and the workload that teachers have with the online classes. Therefore, teachers were given the possibility to send their narratives through audio files in the social network WhatsApp. There was no timing that controlled participants' thoughts or ideas, and the researcher allowed the participants to speak in the language they felt more comfortable, either English or Spanish. To transcribe the data, the researcher employed a Web 2.0 tool called Happy Scribe that was adapted to the language chosen by the participant. However, each transcription from the software was verified and compared with the audio file by the researcher in order to avoid mistakes

3.3.1.3 Interview

The final instrument employed in this study were live interviews online with the participants. Of all data collection instruments, this instrument is defined as the best single method to promote understanding and getting at the truth (Ruane, 2004). To encourage knowledge by showing up teachers' realities and perceptions play a significant role in this study. An interview provides the researcher with historical information (Creswell, 2009) that constitutes a crucial element in the temporality phase of the narrative inquiry (Clandinin et al., 2007). Therefore, this interview intended to deepen the English teachers' background, realities, and perceptions about themselves and the whole environment surrounding them. This interview had as its primary goal, to get those stories behind the role of English language proficiency in the public-school teacher career.

The interviews were developed via Zoom or Skype meetings and they were estimated to last forty minutes with each participant. Each teacher was shown a set of PowerPoint prompts

(Appendix I) that contained the questions and then started discussing the answer with the interviewer. Also, this study followed the model of standardized open-ended interviews (Cohen et al., 2007) in which, the respondents answered the same questions facilitating comparison and reducing biased arguments. Consequently, although the participants answered the same questions in the interview, all of them had different backgrounds, stories and anecdotes that helped the researcher to compare and triangulate the data.

3.3.1.4 Researcher's journal

Teacher's journal plays an important role in this study since it is an instrument that allows the researcher to analyze and reflect upon data that is hard to remember (Wiegerová, 2013). Thus, this teachers' journal was used as a tool for the researcher to note factual events, reactions, and thoughts (Burns, 2009) that could come up from teachers after the interview process. These notes, carefully organized by the researcher, could provide a wider understanding of the context, and get to know teachers' perceptions regarding the objectives of the study.

3.3.2 Validation and piloting

Validation and piloting play a significant role in assessing research instruments before applying them with the participants. Piloting helps the researcher to prepare for the main study by ensuring that methods and ideas would work well (Kim, 2011). In this study, the piloting and validation of instruments before the application was crucial to discover not only difficulties but also new ideas that could not have been initially included in the formulation of the problem (Igwenagu, 2016). Therefore, all the research instruments in the study were validated by a Research Advisor and a Research Professor in the master's program. Besides, two teachers with experience in public schools, one from the school context and the other from Bogota, were part

of the piloting before applying the instruments. All those perceptions, as well as their points of view, were crucial to developing the methodology in this study.

3.4 Data management procedures

The data collection was carried out by implementing an online mock proficiency test to the four participants, four semi-structured interviews and four personal narratives. In the case of the test, each result was put on a data analysis matrix that displayed each participant's score with a short analysis regarding the interviews and narratives developed with the participants. Besides, there is an analysis memo for each participant regarding the feelings and perceptions from the researcher towards the answers in each data collection instrument. The reflections that came up in the memos allowed the researcher to find connections in the data and start coding the information easily without missing important details that could support the conclusion of this study.

3.4.1 Validation

All the data management procedures employed in this research study were validated by a Research Advisor and a Research Professor in the master's program. For analyzing the results obtained in the test, narratives and interviews were carefully transcribed and organized on different documents. A research professor approved the use of grounded theory data analysis methodology to carry out the data analysis in this study. The details from this methodology can be found in the following section.

3.4.2 Data analysis methodology

Grounded theory is the data analysis methodology implemented within this research study. For Corbin and Straus (1990), grounded theory involves the researcher in the study of

contextual relationships and how to specify causes, conditions and consequences within social processes. In this methodology, data sets the foundation of theory and the analysis developed in this data generates the concepts to construct (Charmaz, 2006). In this manner, the researcher develops three types of coding based upon the data: (1) Open, (2) Axial and (3) Selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Open, as the identified concepts considering their properties and dimensions, axial, as the connections between the categories emerged from that open coding, and selective coding as the selection of a core that can validate the other categories as well as refine the previous process (Kawulich, 2004). Nevertheless, this process must be accompanied with what Charmaz and Belgrave (2015) call, a constructive approach of the grounded theory, which overall, encourages the researcher to reflect upon interpretations and produce data with actual interaction between the participants and the researchers. Therefore, the data collected in this study enables the researcher to “(...) learn what occurs in the research settings we join and what our research participants' lives are like” (2006, p. 17). In other words, this study made the researcher put himself in the participants' shoes and have a critical but reflective view of the circumstances that surround the study.

3.5 Conclusion

The chapter developed above exposed all the aspects considering the research design and the methodology carried out in this study. It also exhibited the theory behind qualitative research with a narrative design approach. This type of study exposed the careful planning needed to implement the research instruments, and the necessity of the researcher to be engaged with the participants and the problem (Clandinin et al., 2007). It was clarified the fact that this study does not intend to tell or retell teachers' stories but to deepen into those stories and analyze phenomenologically the impact that these stories can bring up to the community. Finally, the

chapter highlights the importance of the four research instruments within the study and how the validation and piloting set the ground to obtain reliable data that address the primary research objective. This data analysis and instrument results are explained with more detail in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides evidence of the data analysis procedure with the four research study participants. The categories that emerged will be explained and analyzed to establish a precise organization of the project and the hierarchy of concepts that support the research process and the results.

4.2 Categories

4.2.1 Overall category mapping

As mentioned in the previous chapter, grounded theory methodology from Corbin and Strauss (1990) set up the steps to analyze data starting from the open coding stage up to the selective coding and the categories; all this data emerge from the semi-structured interview and the narrative instrument. However, the data triangulation was completed with the placement test (Table 1) applied first to support the coding hypothesis and the categories that came up from the analysis between the results in the test and the arguments stated in the other instruments.

Table 1*International mock test results with the researcher's interpretations*

Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C	Teacher D
average	average	average	average
8 OUT OF 53 (15%)	34 OUT OF 53 (64%)	26 OUT OF 53 (49%)	49 OUT OF 53 (92%)
This participant had the lowest results in the test. The teacher probably got confused or failed to follow instructions. It seems the participant did not have experience with this kind of test.	In this case, the participant had a good performance in each skill, especially in listening. However, the average is not high enough to demonstrate mastery in the language.	This participant is the opposite case from the previous one since the best score relies on reading and use of English. However, the number of correct answers is considerably lower than the previous participant	This is the best result of all participants; the score was almost perfect. The participant demonstrates experience with this kind of exams as well as high proficiency in the language.

Regarding the open coding stage, Cohen et al. (2007) perceive open coding as a process that allows examining the data to identify functional analysis units that can give the researcher a code for each concept found. By deepening into the instruments, these narratives and interviews intended to respond to the mock test results and bring about a reflective process in the participants. This open coding compiled the raw data to make wonderings about participants' thoughts towards their language proficiency, the linguistic policies surrounding, and how these two factors unfold their language level while working in public schools.

Table 2

Open coding. Participant A. Narrative 1

NARRATIVE FROM TEACHER A	CODES
<p><i>Pues realmente desde el 2014 que me gradué hasta ahora el 2020, he sentido realmente que mi nivel de inglés ha bajado muchísimo, muchísimo. Para uno no bajar el nivel de inglés, tiene que estarlo hablando, tiene que estarlo practicando. Realmente, no es que se olvide, pero si se pierde mucha calidad de las cosas. Well, really, since I graduated in 2014 until now in 2020, I have really felt that my level of English has dropped a lot, a lot. For one not to lower the level of English, you have to be speaking it, you have to be practicing it. Actually, it is not that you forget, but a lot of quality of things get lost.</i></p>	<p>Teacher's proficiency decreased. Low teacher's practice in L2</p>
<p><i>No hay digamos los implementos necesarios para pues para que ellos de pronto se motiven. There are not, let's say, the necessary implements so that they (students) suddenly get motivated.</i></p>	<p>Lack of resources</p>
<p><i>Bueno, digamos que pues el nivel de inglés en los colegios públicos es muy bajo Los estudiantes que tienen digamos que hablan, que se expresan, son muy poquitos, son digamos que son 3 de 40. Well, let's say that the level of English in public schools is very low. The students who have, let's say they speak and express themselves; they are very few, they are, let's say, 3 out of 40.</i></p>	<p>Low students' proficiency, Classroom size</p>

Table 3*Open Coding. Participant B. Interview 2*

INTERVIEW FROM TEACHER B	CODES
<p><i>Yo lo que percibo de todo eso es que como la falta de control o de la regulación a que esas políticas si se estén siguiendo y que digamos al menos los libros si se estén trabajando hacen que eso no se logre, que no se vea que digamos muchísimos de nosotros tengamos el compromiso de asumirlo.</i></p> <p>What I perceive of all this the lack of control or the regulation that whether those policies are being followed or not and that let's say, at least the books are being used make that this (language proficiency) is not achieved, that it is not seen that we have the commitment to assume it.</p>	Lack of regulatory policies
<p><i>Creo que es como una falta de voluntad de parte nuestra y de aventurarnos a hacer un trabajo bastante fuerte y al mismo tiempo creo que es una falta de control o de regulación estatal lo que ha conllevado a lo que pues no se tenga a los resultados a los que siempre le hemos apuntado.</i></p> <p>I think it is like a lack of will on our part and to run the risk and do a fairly strong job and at the same time I believe that it is a lack of control or state regulation that has led to what, well, the results are not achieved. the ones that we have always pointed to.</p>	Teacher's reluctance, lack of regulatory policies
<p><i>La dificultad es de entrada teniendo en cuenta que los estudiantes pues como lo hemos debatido en ocasiones anteriores digamos que la formación en escuela primaria respecto a inglés es bastante nula.</i></p> <p>The difficulty is initially taking into account that the students, as we have debated it on previous occasions, let's say that the language training in primary school regarding English is quite null.</p>	Low proficiency in primary school.

The open coding process can be exemplified in Tables 2 and 3, in which some crucial concepts revealed how language proficiency is unfolded in the English teacher's career within a public school. These concepts later began to show repetitions in the participants' discourse, and the linking among all participants' responses came up with connections that needed to be organized. In this stage, axial coding was applied to prove these relationships in the open coding and to organize the different patterns and concepts that result in the selective coding stage and a category mapping.

Pandit (1996) supports the arguments above regarding the usefulness of coding when arguing that data was put together and joined to identify probable categories or subcategories. Thus, in Figure 1, the patterns are marked with a color representing each category with the most remarkable patterns identified during the open coding stage. On the other hand, the circles display the evolution of this coding from inner to outer patterns by creating a relationship of cause and effect in the categories established. This procedure provided a deeper understanding of which factors are making an influence on English teachers' proficiency. Finally, in the selective coding stage, the procedure narrows down the data and finds the core category related to the other categories and subcategories created indeed, the more categories are reduced, the easier it is for the researcher to work with them (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). These new findings in the categories are labeled by Creswell as "the casual conditions, strategies, contextual conditions and consequences"(2002, p. 411), which are connected to the discovered core category become the basis for the ground theory process (Babchuk, 1997). A process that reveals the expected results in the research study starts responding, as Figure 2 displays, the objectives settled above.

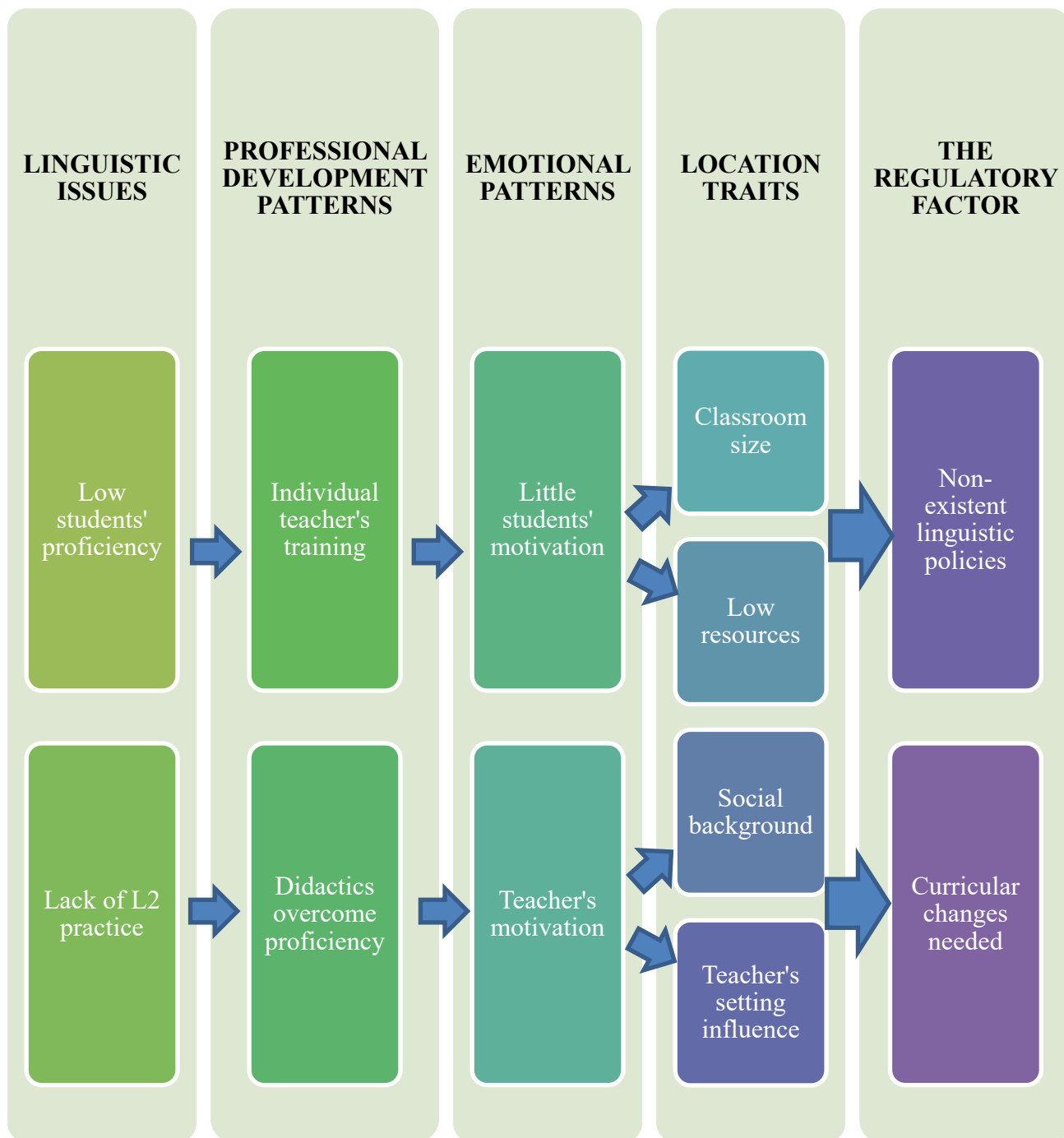
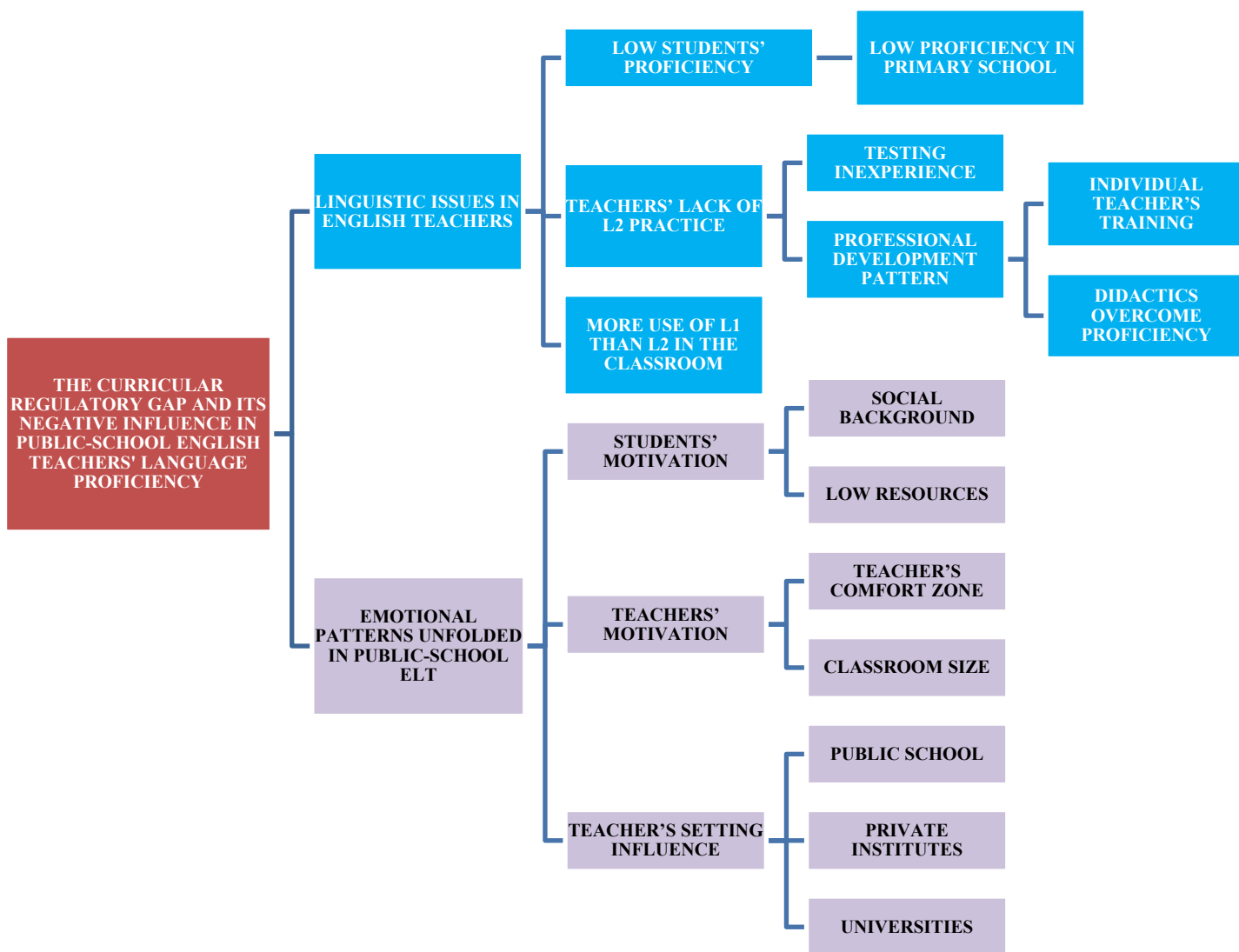
Figure 1*Axial coding*

Figure 2

Selective coding



4.2.2 Discussion of categories

Considering the selective coding figure above, the first category can be described as the linguistic issues in public-school English teachers that expose the lack of English language practice in their workplace and in their professional lives. From this major category, other subcategories unfolded: The low or nonexistent English language knowledge in primary school English teaching. Secondly, the low language proficiency development in students and the significant preference of L1 for teaching English, and finally, the lack of experience in international proficiency examinations which are not demanded in the public sector.

On the other hand, teachers' motivation and pedagogical professional development cannot be overlooked. The second major category constitutes the emotional patterns that emerge from the self-reflection process that the participants had to go through when responding to the narratives and interviews. From these reflections, the following subcategories emerged as part of the selective coding process: Teacher's motivation, students' motivation, and the teacher's setting influence since some participants have worked in different places apart from the public school. This study exposed how much teachers strive for educating before teaching a language. For the participants, didactics become more crucial when working with their students since there are several factors (resources, motivation, policies) that influence the classroom goals in terms of English knowledge. In their view, students are expected to learn something, no matter how little, but learn it perfectly. Thus, teachers dedicate to teach topics, mostly grammar or vocabulary (Appendix B), before communicating in the language proficiently. Richards (2010), within his core dimension skills for foreign language teaching theory, explains that language knowledge and didactics are crucial for the correct development of the learner. In this manner, teachers do

not need students to learn topics, their students must be encouraged and taught to learn and speak English proficiently. Both pedagogical and linguistic skills are necessary to succeed in English language teaching.

4.2.2.1 Linguistic issues in English teachers

Having analyzed the data from the three instruments, all the participants agreed that the development of their language proficiency could be affected at a certain point in the public-school career. One of the essential connections found in the narratives and interviews was the lack of practice and language use within the classroom. All the participants agreed that language proficiency is a matter of practice and converged in the great need to use L1 in the classroom due to the impossibility of controlling many students in the classroom and the low language level from their students. In fact, Sanchez-Jabba (2012) underlines endorses the language proficiency problem in Colombian schools by claiming that only 1% of the students can be considered bilingual, an argument that concurs with the low number of communicative students in teacher A's classroom.

In Excerpt 1, for example, the participant demonstrates a truthful self-awareness and a self-reflective attitude towards her English language level when accepting that her English language proficiency has decreased. However, the teacher also clarifies that besides personal factors like family, the low English level in public schools, and the lack of practice within the same setting have influenced the lowering of linguistic skills. This participant does not need to prepare lessons beyond an intermediate level, thus having high-communicative language skills become unnecessary.

<p><i>Muchos factores se vieron involucrados en ese proceso de pronto de bajar mi nivel, porque pues primero pues, me casé, tuve una niña, pues, ósea mi hija nació en el 2015 y pues digamos que yo no volví pues a coger un libro que fuera a mi nivel cierto? que fuera a mi nivel para yo mejorar lo que ya sabía, No, más bien fue los libros que yo cogía era para preparar mis clases para los estudiantes, pues puesto que los niveles de los estudiantes nunca pues han sido más allá de un B1, siempre ha sido un A1, un A2, un B pero no mucho la verdad.</i></p>	<p>Many factors were involved in that process of suddenly lowering my level, because well, first, I got married, I had a girl, well, my daughter was born in 2015 and let's say that I did not go back to pick up a book that was at my level right? That it would be at my level for me to improve what I already knew, No, rather it was the books that I took was to prepare my classes for the students, because since the levels of the students have never been beyond a B1, it has always been an A1, an A2, a B but not much the truth.</p>
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Excerpt 1. Participant A, Narrative 1.

A similar case happens in Participant B's narrative and his interview in which the aspect of language proficiency decrease is retaken when adding elements like the L1 usage in the classroom considering the influence of students' language level, the topics that he must repeat every school year since the curriculum is not designed to teach advanced linguistic skills. He claims, "you learn by teaching," meaning that learning the language is directly related to its use through teaching. Therefore, he underlines the influence of L1 within the English lesson expressing his dilemma between approving students or using L2 more in class.

<p><i>Pues ya en la parte profesional uno llega como a enseñar los mismos temas con los mismos estudiantes. Entonces creo que a pesar de los grandes esfuerzos que uno hace por mantener el nivel lingüístico, el hecho de que uno a los estudiantes la mayoría de las veces les esté compartiendo en español, las aclaraciones se hacen en español y muchas cosas que ya se viven dentro del aula y que uno no puede llegar de pronto a exigir plenamente. Aquí todo el mundo va a hablar inglés porque todos resultan perdiendo y las políticas de las instituciones no permiten cosas así.</i></p>	<p>Well, in the professional side, one comes to teach the same subjects with the same students. So I think that despite the great efforts one makes to maintain the linguistic level, the fact that most of the time one is sharing with the students in Spanish, the clarifications are made in Spanish and many things that are experienced within the classroom and that one cannot suddenly come to fully demand. Here everyone is going to speak English because everyone fails, and the policies of the institutions do not allow things like that.</p>
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Excerpt 2. Participant B, Narrative 2

For Andrews (1999), a language teacher must comply with explicit and implicit language knowledge, this means that interaction in the foreign language must not be limited to the topics learned in the classroom. Foreign language interaction with young learners is necessary for second language learning (Kersten & Rohde, 2013) and teachers need to encourage their students and the institutions to feel a real immersion experience in the language. Nevertheless, the gap between theory and practice is huge and the lack of interaction and use of L2 goes beyond the teachers and students' language level. For instance, the same participant exposes in the interview the lack of preparation in primary school, and the difficulties he must go through when teaching students in 6th grade because of the huge gaps from primary school (See Appendix B).

On the other hand, the data revealed that some teachers are not prepared enough to fulfill international proficiency standards, and this could be proven through the mock test instrument. According to Coniam and Falvey (2002), these tests are taken as a benchmark for teachers since they can establish a standard for their language level. In their own words: '(...) the focus of such tests has been essentially on the subject content knowledge of English or other languages . . . rather than language ability per se . . . [that is] on knowledge about language rather than knowledge of and use of language' (Coniam & Falvey, 2002, p. 16). Bearing this in mind, the data showed three participants that failed or barely passed the test but have more years of experience in the public-school setting and Participant D, who obtained an almost-perfect score in the test but with only two years of experience in public schools (Appendix D).

En 3 ocasiones ya había presentado 3 pruebas 2 de ellas internacionales y una... Bueno 2 presenciales y una digital. Pruebas internacionales.

On three occasions I presented 3 tests, 2 of them international and one... Well, 2 face-to-face and one digital. International tests.

Excerpt 3. *Participant D. Interview 4*

Participant C's interview constituted an interesting case to analyze since he seemed very confident about his English language level and claimed to have been trained in the language overseas, but also seemed reluctant to specify his language level (Appendix C). He focused more on the importance of oral skills to demonstrate language proficiency, and despite the confidence with his proficiency in the interview, he only obtained 49% of correct answers in the mock test (Figure 1). Besides, in the narrative and the interview, it was quite challenging to understand his utterances considering the grammar and pronunciation mistakes he committed; as illustrated in excerpts 4 and 5. Nevertheless, all the participants agreed on the relevance of pedagogy and didactics over the language knowledge, some of them claimed that a high proficiency level was unnecessary since the learners might not take advantage of it (Excerpt 6). The linguistic issues in English teachers start to show emotional patterns that might have influenced teachers' perception of language proficiency in their professional educational development. Excerpt 6 exposed a participant who seems more concerned about didactics or pedagogy than using or teaching the language.

I had the chance to study English in the USA and Canada for three months. That was an intensive Course, a program for teachers. So, I had the opportunity to be there, and to share with Native teachers with the native people there, it was an interesting and very useful experience. So, my pronunciation has been better too. Every day, we are trying to be better in our job, we are learning every day; learning new vocabulary, listening to music, listening to news on the radio and watch the news on the radio, watch movies.

Excerpt 4. Participant C. Narrative 3

Not all the time the tests measure your proficiency, there are many factors when you are answering maybe a test that you don't feel fine at the moment, it's maybe I believe that the most important is...maybe direct conversations, show me what you know, if you are able to speak English ok you do it. So listen this, what is he saying in news on TV, tell me what... I believe that this is the most important because you know that, to be a C1 or C2 in English where it's a language like Spanish where there are an enormous synonyms, sometimes differences to say yes. I don't know, sometimes it's not easy. I'd say that the real test is speaking.

Excerpt 5. Participant C. Interview 3

<p><i>Pienso que un profesor que tenga un nivel C1- C2 y que esté en un colegio público, por ejemplo, en un colegio un contexto social bastante difícil, de violencia, bueno en fin de cuestiones económicas, sociales si? Pues en realidad así tenga el nivel más alto C1 o C2 de todas maneras pienso yo que no lo va a aprovechar al máximo ni él ni los estudiantes que están en clase. De pronto, pienso yo que es más importante la dinámica que tenga el profesor frente a los estudiantes que enseñar la lengua.</i></p>	<p>I think that a teacher who has a C1-C2 level and who is in a public school, for example in a school with a quite difficult social context, of violence, anyway of economic and social issues Well, actually, even if he/she has the highest level C1 or C2, anyway, I think that neither he nor the students who are in class are going to take advantage of it. Suddenly, I think that the dynamics that the teacher has in front of the students is more important than teaching the language</p>
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Excerpt 6. *Participant A. Interview 1*

4.2.2.2 Emotional patterns unfolded in public-school ELT

Participants' insights about the surrounding environment set up a benchmark to recognize how teachers feel towards the importance of language proficiency in their careers. Thus, this category is divided into three subcategories: Students' motivation, teacher's motivation, and the influence of the place where teachers do their job, in short, the teaching setting influence.

4.2.2.2.1 Students' and teacher's motivation

One of the most common utterances from the participants in terms of the relevance of language proficiency in the classroom was students' motivation to learn English. Krashen (1982) annotates that when learners feel highly motivated, their learning performance and linguistic skills improve considerably. In this manner, the classroom's motivation rate can directly influence L2 usage and how eager students are to communicate in English.

All the participants in this study agreed that the motivation rate is not so high, and many times, they are reluctant to participate, speak, or try to understand what the teacher is saying. Teachers' narratives could unfold several factors that go beyond being interested in learning a language. Participant D's narrative, for example, exposes essential aspects to understand public-

school background and how students' motivation can make an influence in her language proficiency level.

As a teacher I would say that my English language proficiency was not trained enough at school, for that reason the level of English language is in standby. All previous considerations are supported in some aspects like:

- *The amount of students in the classroom, there are 30 or 40 students per classroom*
- *The context: families in a low socio-economical status, family problems, money problems.*
- *Students' perception about learning English language. The majority of students do not like to study English in the future.*
- *The curriculum: It is repetitive in the middle school.*
- *Missing classes due to school cultural activities*
- *There is no English laboratory or ICTs tools to practice English skills.*
- *No internet connection*
- *No students' interest in learning English*
- *No tools to work (student's books, workbooks, classware, dictionaries, etc.)*

Excerpt 7. Participant D. Narrative 4

Miranda and Echeverry (2010) claim that the infrastructure and the available resources can determine, up to some point, if a linguistic policy will be applicable or not. Regarding the narrative above, the bilingualism policies, in terms of future expectations, as stated by the Ministry of Education (MEN) (2015) are not considering several issues must face on a daily basis. Schneider (2002) argues that ventilation, lightning conditions, and acoustic can bear on teachers' and students' ability to perform. Gonzalez (2006) also adds that materials like CDS, audiotapes, and textbooks are considered fundamental for an English lesson. Therefore, in a classroom with 42 students or more, a difficult social background and lack of tools to study, communication, and language practice turn into a chaotic moment for both teachers and learners.

We have many problems with, for example, pedagogical resources and most of the schools do not have the right resources to learn and to teach English. We don't have labs. We don't have appropriate classrooms.

Excerpt 8. Participant C. Narrative 3

Teachers truly lack language practice in the public-school setting, but the conditions given in this context do not seem encouraging to practice the L2. Consequently, the motivation loss originates from how eager teachers are to carry out the challenge of improving their language level when this is not necessary for their career. Excerpts 9 and 10 demonstrated that language proficiency development unfolds as an individual matter that depends on the person's interest in improving the language level. These excerpts display that language proficiency is an individual and subjective matter for ELT in Colombia. Without policies that motivate or promote language proficiency development, teachers will not need to improve in a language that only needs the basics to be taught.

Creo que es como una falta de voluntad de parte nuestra y de aventurarnos a hacer un trabajo bastante fuerte y al mismo tiempo creo que es una falta de control o de regulación estatal lo que ha conllevado a lo que pues no se tenga a los resultados a los que siempre le hemos apuntado.

I think it is like a lack of will on our part and to risk to do a fairly strong job and at the same time I believe that it is a lack of control or state regulation that has led to, well, the results are not achieved. the ones that we have always pointed to.

Excerpt 9. *Participant B. Interview 2*

Políticas como tal que haya de pronto en la parte gubernamental para nosotros los profesores de inglés en colegio públicos, no, no hay políticas, en realidad la política es pues tener el cartón que diga que es licenciado en inglés y ya, ya los estudios que uno quiera tener además de eso, es cuestión de cada uno.

Policies as such that there are maybe in the governmental part for us English teachers in public schools, no, there are no policies, in reality the policy is to have the cardboard that says that you have a degree in English and that's it, the studies that one wants to have in addition to that, it is a matter of each person.

Excerpt 10. *Participant A. Interview 1*

4.2.2.2.2 Teacher's setting influence

Finally, connecting the whole mapping presented above, the teacher's setting influence comes up as the last subcategory to analyze. This influence is highlighted as the impact that a

workplace can have on the teachers' language proficiency development. As McDougald (2012) annotates, “(.) More increasingly, private schools and universities have been doing more with English and content” (2012, p. 45), but the public sector that reports 81.3% of all students enrolled in school according to the OECD (2018), do not seem to do the same. Public schools are obliged to follow state and local laws that limit the curriculum to just four hours of English language learning in contrast to their private colleagues, which are freer in this aspect and utilize eight hours of a foreign language class (Rodriguez, 2012). Excerpts 11 and 12 demonstrate teachers' language setting can have a crucial influence on the teacher's perception of the role of language proficiency in their lives. Teachers who have worked in private institutions or universities that demand a high-language level seem to be more concerned about practicing and learning the language independently. As excerpt 11 displays, participant A, who had the lowest score in the mock test, has only worked in public schools since she graduated. A different situation with participant D, who has worked in the public school only for two years, and the rest of experience has been gained at the University teaching setting (Excerpt 12).

Desde el año 2015 estoy trabajando en colegios públicos de aquí de la ciudad de Cúcuta y pues digamos que yo no he trabajado en otra cosa que no sea en colegios si? Siempre he estado en colegios; en bachillerato, he pasado para primaria también dándole inglés en primaria a los niños y otra vez estuve en bachillerato.

Since 2015 I have been working in public schools here in the city of Cúcuta and I can say that I have not worked in anything else than in schools, I have always been in schools; In high school, I went to elementary school also giving children English and again I was in high school.

Excerpt 11. *Participant A. Narrative 1*

Yo llevo desde el 2018 trabajando con la educación pública en el colegio empecé a enseñar inglés en el grado séptimo y el grado noveno. Pues uno llega con toda la actitud de... Yo venía de la universidad donde uno enseña todo en inglés y realmente pues le toca al estudiante estudiar le toca buscar la manera cómo entender, cómo prepararse previamente a una clase.

I have been working with public education in school since 2018, I started teaching English in the seventh grade and the ninth grade. Well, one arrives with the whole attitude of... well I came from the university where one teaches everything in English where students truly have to study, it is their duty to find a way to understand, how to get prepared previously for a class.

Excerpt 12. *Participant D. Interview 4*

4.2.3 Core category

Public-school English teachers' proficiency unfolds linguistic issues that can come from the lack of practice and the L2 immersion within the classroom due to several aspects like students' motivation, low resources, and challenging social background. Analyzing the connections among all the factors explored above, it is quite understandable that the regulatory factor that lacks linguistic policies and urges curricular changes negatively influences ELT proficiency.

This exploratory study found that even though most participants openly claimed to have decreased their language level, all of them agree that the environment surrounding them is not helpful at all to improve. Participants' insights demonstrated that the aspect of language proficiency has not been regulated or omitted by the MEN, and they express the necessity of improving several processes regarding the English teacher's professional profile. Regarding, teacher's assessment, for example, Barrera et al.,(2012) expose that it is still necessary to strengthen the promotion assessment process as well as the annual achievement indicator evaluation. Focusing on the promotion assessment for public-school teachers, this study displayed that the persons in charge of carrying out this process do not need to speak English to

assess English teachers' performance. Participant B claimed that it is quite likely that the peer-evaluator that determines the score to be promoted, might not speak English. Thus, in the lesson that teachers need to record to be evaluated, teachers do not need to use L2 bearing in mind the assessor will not understand anything (Excerpt 13). In this manner, English teachers do not need language training since that is neither a requirement nor a motivation factor to get an excellent score in their assessment process. Without an effective evaluation and follow-up process, teachers will not find any concern to worry about their professional development. They will end up meeting the curricular and pedagogical requirements by aiming for a passing grade in the assessment but leaving behind the L2 importance inside the classroom.

Si usted quiere ir a la segura, grabe en español, por qué, porque a usted lo puede evaluar cualquier profesor no quiere decir pues que por ser profesor de inglés lo va a evaluar uno de inglés , entonces si a usted lo agarra uno de física y usted está , pues en su clase muy buena interactuando y de todas maneras , pues el profesor al final va a decir no entendí.

If you want to be safe, record in Spanish, why, because any teacher can evaluate you, it does not mean that because you are an English teacher, an English teacher will evaluate you, so if you are assessed by a physics teacher and you are, well, in your class very good at interacting, in any case, the teacher in the end is going to say "I did not understand".

Excerpt 13. *Participant B. Interview 2*

On the other hand, these participants demonstrated to be devoted entirely to study or improve their language level (excerpt 14). However, the educative policies do not seem to support teachers' professional development in terms of language proficiency level. Teachers can be willing to train and improve their level, but external factors like school policies or lack of opportunities (excerpt 15) make teachers refrain and stay passive in language knowledge. These elements were also necessary to identify how the core category comes up as the source of either internal or external issues for language teachers regarding their language level development.

<i>Sería bueno como tener esa normatividad de modo que eso nos permita a nosotros estar en constante interés y formación en el idioma, en la proficiencia, en la competencia alta de tener nosotros todas las habilidades en el idioma.</i>	It would be good to have that regulation so that it allows us to be in constant interest and training in the language, in the proficiency, in the high competence of having all the skills in the language.
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Excerpt 14. *Participant D. Interview 4*

<i>En el caso que le digan a uno.. mm vamos a hacer un curso para que se certifiquen el B2, eso seria una magnifica idea pues por lo menos a mi me dicen que hay esa posibilidad yo lo acepto , pero uno sabe que a los colegios no les gusta dar ese tipo de permisos porque deja un hueco en el colegio cierto? , hay estudiantes que se quedan solos porque uno tiene que ir en la jornada laboral, por ejemplo si es un curso todo el día, uno tiene que faltar al colegio, entonces muchas veces vemos que este tipo de apoyo que hay por parte de las secretaria de educación no llegan a todos por esa misma razón , porque los colegios o los coordinadores y rectores prefieren que no haya huecos en el colegio o que los estudiantes no pierdan clase con tal de que uno esté en colegio y ellos no haya ese hueco en el colegio mientras uno está en esa capacitación.</i>	In the case that they tell you ... mm we are going to do a course so that we can be certified for B2, that would be a great idea because in case they tell me that there is that possibility, I accept it, but you know that Schools do not like to give such permits because it leaves a hole in the school schedule, right? , there are students who are left alone because one has to go during the work day, for example if it is a course all day, one has to miss school, then many times we see that this type of support that there is from the secretaries education does not reach everyone for the same reason, because schools or coordinators and principals prefer that there are no gaps in the school or that students do not miss class as long as one is in school and they do not have that gap in the school while one is in that training.
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Excerpt 15. *Participant A. Interview 1***4.3 Conclusion**

All the arguments above responded positively to the research question and objectives through the results that this exploratory study has demonstrated. Regarding the four participants' narratives and insights, English language proficiency unfolds as a real concern in public-school ELT. The results obtained allowed us to observe how teachers' linguistic skills are developed based on their workplace. Colombian public school is a teaching setting that urges radical changes in terms of policies and curriculum, and the lack of resources, autonomy, and inadequate

preparation for young learners' teaching has provoked a decrease in language proficiency and knowledge (Cárdenas et al., 2016). Hence, through this experience, the researcher and the participants developed a self-reflective process by analyzing to what extent the role of language proficiency unfolds within their professional practice. Besides, with this experience, teachers could enhance their self-critical skills while understanding the English teachers' situation in an urban public school. In Alvarez and Ayala's (2017) views, public institutions differ from private when considering foreign language education. They argue that private schools' teachers are language and subject experts who use English as the primary vehicle for learning, contrasting entirely with their public counterparts who almost always use the mother tongue to catch learners' attention. Nonetheless, this expertise in the language comes from training, preparation and support for language teachers to increase their level. Policies that only focus on pedagogical skills to assess or support ELT will not obtain complete and successful results. Teachers need to be asked to improve and enhance their language use and practice in the classroom, but also need to be supported to fulfill those curricular demands. This chapter could demonstrate that a public-school teacher's life has several dimensions that differ from the life of a private or post-secondary education professional; thus, their language proficiency development will unfold according to the situations they encounter every day.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions from this exploratory research study and proposes probable pedagogical implications and further research suggestions based on the analysis. The data analysis presented in the previous chapter revealed fruitful results that allowed the researcher to identify the most outstanding insights towards how English teachers' language

proficiency unfolds while working in a public school. Thus, the participants' responses were sorted into two main categories: Linguistic issues of English teachers and Emotional patterns unfolded in public-school ELT. These categories join in a core category based on the lack of regulatory policies and curricular changes that influence ELT language proficiency, this being the outcome that led to the study's achievement.

5.2 Comparison of results with previous studies' results

Gonzalez (2010) exposed that a typical Colombian citizen may say English instruction in government schools is quite poor and that real language learning occurs in private schools, language centers, or universities. Indeed, one participant of this study admitted having decreased her language proficiency while working in the school; it is essential to remark that this teacher worked in higher education before entering the school. However, Fandiño (2012) found out that even a teacher with a C2 (CEFR) proficiency level who faces the huge issues (crowded classrooms, hours restriction and low proficient students) of a public school will not be able to fulfill the ambitious goals of the government. In this study, some participants openly accepted their failures regarding English language proficiency and highlighted how useless this proficiency can be regarding the difficult conditions of the public school. All of them agreed that they are teachers first, and their duty consists in educating their students as good citizens before teaching the language. In other words, the constant use of L1 in the classroom allows them to communicate effectively with their learners, no matter the risk of decreasing the language level of L2.

Sanchez (2013) claims that educative policies should be especially focused on enhancing English teachers' language level. In his view, this can be done by training teachers who currently have difficulties with the linguistic skills required, but also generating economic incentives that

reward teachers who get to achieve a higher language level. Sanchez's findings assimilate to what participants of the current study mentioned regarding the need for professional development, in terms of proficiency, to become mandatory for teachers to do it. For example, the cost of tests makes it difficult for teachers to become self-motivated to take them. Barrera et al. (2012) for instance, suggest to implement a policy that determines teachers' bonuses for the best assessment results. Thus, economical improvements like these might increase teachers' motivation to enhance and certify their language level and keep practicing their linguistic skills.

On the other hand, the study participants exposed that although policies demand high-linguistic skills for English teachers, there is a lack of encouragement to either improve the language level or to have teachers with advanced proficiency skills. Thus, if the school does not require high-proficient speakers, teachers will only focus their duties and lessons on the elementary topics they must teach. In the views of Hudelson (2001), teachers need to meet the challenge of supporting themselves and their learners to grow linguistically, socially, intellectually, and emotionally. Nonetheless, these teachers, who must go through all the situations above, perceived that stakeholders did not pay much attention to these issues and ended up losing their motivation to grow and improve professionally. In this manner, Fandiño et al. (2012) argue that the difficulties found in the PNB do not come from the teachers' level or the motivation, but the necessity of improvement in the teaching and learning conditions in primary and secondary public schools.

The results in this study opened a path to understand and inquire about linguistic development in Colombian ELT as well as the factors involved within the public-school setting. In the words of McNulty and Quinchía (2007): "(...)educational policies and administrative support sensitive to the teachers' realities can help create the conditions for future professional

development and research inquiry in this field” (p.142). Unfortunately, there has not been much research that explores this field of teachers’ language proficiency in public schools. Hence, teachers are generally eager to show their strategies, tools, and projects that they develop with their students, but the discussion turns complicated when it comes to talking about issues like language training. This research study found that in language proficiency there are always things to improve as educators, and the first step is accepting them not as weaknesses but opportunities to become a better language user.

5.3 Significance of the results

The results obtained in the narratives and interviews could demonstrate that language proficiency is an essential issue to look up within public-school ELT. The participants within this exploratory research could openly accept a gap within regulatory policies considering English teachers' language level and professional educational development related to it. Through this experience, the researcher and the participants developed a self-reflective process in which the role of language proficiency unfolds within their professional practice. Therefore, this process was meaningful for the research study and teachers' lives and conceptions about themselves. With this experience, they could enhance their self-critical skills while understanding the English teachers' situation in an urban public school.

Language awareness is an important message from the participants' insights during the exploration. Teachers need to be aware of the importance of language proficiency and how this can increase or decrease in their careers. This study found out that public-school English teachers can be struggling to maintain their language proficiency due to several factors and constraints in the teaching setting. Nevertheless, teachers clearly explain that this proficiency decrease plays an

individual role according to each person's motivation and attitude towards the L2 practice, either in the classroom or by themselves.

The significance of the results relies on the fact that language proficiency unfolds as a moral dilemma among the participants, i.e., the English teachers. On the one hand, teachers can choose to teach the basic concepts and be comfortable with the monthly salary without updating their language proficiency. On the other hand, they can be willing to achieve high language proficiency, which makes them use meaningful strategies to use more L2 in the classroom and go beyond the basic concepts given by the MEN. In both cases, teachers would have to face the crowded classrooms, the lack of regulatory policies, and the necessity of curricular changes in the public-school setting. This exploration could identify some reasons behind public-school English teachers' language proficiency decrease, and also document their experiences about this issue that concern their professional educational development.

5.4 Research limitations on the present study

During the development of this research study, there were some constraints that came up and delayed the research process at certain point. First of all, the sanitary emergency due to the Covid-19 Pandemic can be considered as the main source of the difficulties displayed below. In rough outlines, the limitations found in this study were: the lack of time for developing the narratives and interviews since teachers had tons of work due to the new virtual curriculum that forced them to change their strategies and methods to carry out the lessons. Other times, teachers felt exhausted of being in front of a screen because of the virtual lessons so that they did not feel like writing to respond the narrative instrument. Thus, participants openly manifested that it was quite easier to do the narrative orally since it was less time and energy use for them.

The international mock test instrument represented another difficulty during the research study. Since the test format was exclusively online due to the pandemic issues, some participants were not familiar with the test software and failed a couple of answers because of the technological constraints. However, this constraint did not significantly change the results, and all the participants accepted their test scores without any complaint. The only aspect to consider was the impact that this result provoked in the participants' attitude during the subsequent research instruments. This score allowed the participants to deepen into their language proficiency development since most of them did not have experience in this type of tests or were not aware of their current language level. During the interview, for example some participants seemed disappointed with the results and tried to justify the reason(s) behind this score (Appendix B and C). Overall, it was required to ask more questions to dig into the participants' thoughts and urge them to accept that their language proficiency was decreasing indeed. Thus, the test results opened doors for personal reflection in the participants and encouraged them to express themselves in the other research instruments that could fulfill the objectives of this study.

Finally, the connectivity and lack of control in the research instruments were a common pattern during the data collection. The internet interruption during the interview was usual and sometimes it was difficult to understand what participants meant since their voices were cut. This situation was a little uncomfortable for the participants who had to repeat their utterances occasionally. Regarding the international mock test, it was complicated to handle the time for doing the test since the researcher had to trust participants' will to avoid cheating during the test, in that moment teachers were too busy to take the test on a live videocall.

5.5 Further research

It is necessary to start developing insightful research concerning ELT's local panorama and the lack of linguistic policy implementations in the public-school setting. This exploratory research demonstrated that public-school English teachers are immersed in a dilemma between risking their linguistic knowledge by leaving several skills behind or going through several issues in their teaching setting because of the external factors (students' motivation, administrative staff, lack of resources, among others) that impede the development of L2 in the classroom. Although the government has improved essential policies for the teachers' new generation, for instance the decree 1278 from MEN (2002), there are still many fields to explore and consider in public-school ELT. This study can be the first in a series of narrative studies about English teachers' lives and contexts. All the regions in Colombia have their own peculiarities and issues, observing and analyzing what each teacher perceives can help draw a roadmap to enhance teachers' and students' proficiency.

Stakeholders need to be aware of the situations that English teachers go through every day before designing policies that intend to achieve bilingualism. Sanchez (2012) claims that it students' language proficiency low scores are not surprising if only a few teachers can achieve a high level of the language, but there is no second thought about why this situation happens. The government cannot consider the bilingualism aspect without considering the lack of resources, preparation, and motivation in the schools to learn English, and how they affect teachers' professional development. Like participant D stated in her narrative, teachers can start motivated since they come from settings where learning the language is meaningful, and the tools are available to implement learning strategies. However, as soon as they face the issues mentioned above, they must give up and decrease language use. The participants developed a deep self-

reflective work to bravely accept that it is necessary to increase and enhance teachers' language proficiency in the public-school setting. The insights contained in this study found out that to solve the teachers' low proficiency rate, both effective linguistic policies and curricular changes need to be improved. There is no point in demanding English teachers to achieve a high level of language proficiency when they cannot even practice it in a crowded, out-of-resources, and demotivated classroom.

5.6 Conclusion

The results of this exploratory research study were successful considering how the language proficiency unfolds in ELT within a teaching setting that needs to be added in the big picture of the educative policies in Colombia. As time goes by in this globalized world, language proficiency certification has turned into a requisite for all educational institutions (Benavides, 2015). Thus, it is quite necessary to start looking at how prepared Colombian English teachers are to compete in the international scenario and to face language proficiency examinations. This study demonstrated that public-school English teachers do not feel prepared to carry out an international certification or examination of language proficiency. In fact, their insights displayed concern about how their language proficiency decreases as they work in the school, and the lonely they feel in terms of support for practicing or implementing the use of L2 in the classroom. As some of them mentioned, the reason why teachers keep the language level is because of the other populations that they have worked with.

Almost a half of English educators do not reach the intermediate level (Sanchez, 2013), and regarding that public education covers the majority of school population in the country, it is pertinent to state that most of these teachers belong to the public sector. Nevertheless, blaming teachers for having a lower proficiency level and penalizing them for this fact does not constitute

a practical and constructive way to fix this problem. Knowing the teachers' quality is not the best, and that there is a lack of motivation from the teaching and learning process, it is possible to design strategies with stakeholders and the government altogether to boost public-school education and motivate teachers and students to learn English (Mejía-Mejía, 2016). The breach between public and private schools is little by little decreasing, and teachers start to feel motivated with the recent strategies created to improve educators' quality (2016, p. 233). In this manner, teachers can start changing their view of the role of language proficiency in their public-school career while making stakeholders feel obliged to create huge curricular changes that can help them feel supported. As Román (2008) argues: "*the teachers that get their students to learn more and better are those who support their teaching processes with use of didactic resources both traditional and high tech.*" (2008, p. 214). Therefore, this research study found that teachers' language proficiency unfolds according to how well educative policies, including linguistic, are implemented in the teaching setting that they work. This exploration can be replicated in many other regions of the country, adding more voices, more complexities, more pros and cons, and especially more variety to the wide spectrum that constitutes Colombian community.

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Appendix A: Participant A's open coding

INTERVIEW TEACHER A	CODES
¿Cómo me sentí? (risas) no sé estaba como un poco complicado, la verdad. Yo contesté teniendo en cuenta mis conocimientos y eso, pero de todas maneras me pareció que estaba un poco complicado	Difficult test
hacía mucho rato que no hacía un examen así como con niveles altos, o hacia mucho rato no, de hecho nunca he presentado un examen de alto nivel	Testing unexperienced
me di cuenta que necesito más práctica, necesito de pronto estudiar más	Lack of language practice
muchas veces uno se queda solamente en los temas que uno está acostumbrado a las clases y me di cuenta que necesito un poco mejorar mis habilidades gramaticales	Knowledge fossilization, need of language improvement
nunca he presentado un examen de estos.	Testing unexperienced
no he mejorado mis habilidades, desde que salí la universidad, me dediqué solamente al trabajo con colegios, y pues desde ahí no me he vuelto así a estudiar como tal, ni he trabajado en institutos tampoco, que también eso le ayuda a uno a mejorar mucho las habilidades lingüísticas	Lack of language practice, Private institute setting influence
políticas como tal que haya de pronto en la parte gubernamental para nosotros los profesores de inglés en colegio públicos, no, no hay políticas, en realidad la política es pues tener el cartón que diga que es licenciado en inglés	Nonexistent linguistic policies
Por otro, yo sé que acá a veces en cursos del British que son muy buenos. Hacen muchos cursos, de pronto para ayudar a los profesores de inglés a que conozcan nuevas estrategias. Aunque en realidad no son cursos que no son para todos, no son para todos los profesores, muchas veces no invitan, invitan a los colegios de todo Cúcuta pero muchas veces esas indicaciones no pasan de una invitación,	Inefficient training resources, lack of participation

ósea se quedan ahí, no llegan a nosotros, no llegan a todos	
en realidad pues el examen de inglés como tal del concurso docente, es sencillo, no es tampoco que sea muy difícil. Me pareció más difícil las otras temáticas que están dentro del concurso, como la parte de lógica, la parte de matemática, la parte del derecho y de las leyes y eso si es un poco más complicado.	Not demanding English test
Pues de ser posible, si es posible hacer una clase, no digamos que un 100%, no. Uno habla que digamos por mucho, yo lo hecho por mucho un 60%, 70% más o menos	Little use of L2 in the classroom
al hacerlo uno se da cuenta que los estudiantes están totalmente distraídos, no están prestando absolutamente nada de atención, porque dicen no entiendo nada, no sé nada, profesora hable en Español, profesora no entiendo, entonces digamos que algunas veces uno lo intenta hacer, pero no digamos que en un 100% total, no, ¿por qué? Porque pues ellos siempre están, de pronto no es ni siquiera que no hagan el intento, no hacen el intento porque quieren prestar atención, sino porque de una vez se cierran y dicen: “no entiendo”.	Students' reluctance towards L2 usage
, he tratado de hacerlo, pero no un 100%, más bien como un 70% y de todas maneras uno en las clases siempre trata uno de hablarles algo en inglés; así sea la explicación, o ponerlos a ellos a que repitan y ese tipo de cosas pero así como tal de hablarles todo el tiempo en inglés, no nada.	Teacher's strategies to use L2
yo desde que me gradué, he estado en bachillerato, también he ido para primaria y otra vez bachillerato.	Only school experienced
Entonces digamos que pues muchas veces uno no solamente da inglés, uno también tiene que dar otras materias de “relleno”, como ética, religión, artística, si son materias que le meten a uno de relleno para completar la carga laboral	Other subjects teaching

<p>uno se dedica nada más como es en mi caso que yo solamente trabajo en el colegio, entonces pues obviamente el nivel de lengua se va viendo afectado, pues se sabe que es de práctica, entonces si claro se ha visto afectado</p>	<p>Language practice importance, lack of practice in school</p>
<p>los estudiantes, pienso yo que esto obviamente si afecta porque nosotros nunca tenemos estudiantes que de pronto tienen la parte social. El contexto social de ellos no es de pronto de aspirar a viajar al extranjero, ellos dirán que pues el inglés, muy bonito y todo, pero para qué les sirve, si ellos no podrían aspirar a viajar de pronto a otro país</p>	<p>Learners' social background</p>
<p>ellos de pronto no alcanzan a entender la importancia de aprender un idioma no solamente para viajar sino también para conseguir un empleo, entonces pues eso muchas veces influencia mucho en su desarrollo en el colegio, en inglés, de pronto porque ellos piensan que no les va a servir de nada</p>	<p>Little learners' motivation</p>
<p>les pregunto de pronto cosas de su vida, también les pregunto, por qué no me entregaste algún trabajo o algo así en inglés, cosas muy cortas, y ellos muchas veces siempre responden en español, yo les puedo preguntar en inglés, pero ellos la mayoría de ellos, la gran mayoría, diría que un 95% responden en español</p>	<p>Teacher's little use of L2, students respond in L1</p>
<p>un profesor que tenga un nivel C1- C2 y que esté en un colegio público, por ejemplo en un colegio un contexto social bastante difícil , de violencia, bueno en fin de cuestiones económicas , sociales si? Pues en realidad así tenga el nivel más alto C1 o C2 de todas maneras pienso yo que no lo va a aprovechar al máximo ni él ni los estudiantes que están en clase</p>	<p>Highly qualified teachers not needed</p>
<p>es más importante la dinámica que tenga el profesor frente a los estudiantes que enseñar la lengua , porque pues un examen , de pronto un nivel C1 sea muy bueno de pronto no sé para una universidad, porque de pronto los estudiantes tienen más nivel y</p>	<p>Didactics overcome proficiency</p>

<p>los estudiantes deben aprovechar más a ese profesor. Pienso yo que el profesor puede tener mucho nivel de inglés , pero si no tiene la dinámica, no tiene de pronto la pedagogía para llegar a los estudiantes y enseñarles realmente como ellos realmente necesitan aprender</p>	
<p>pienso yo que un profesor con un nivel C1 llega a un colegio público , pues con el contexto que yo le había dicho y de pronto no se dedica a nada más sino solamente al colegio , el profesor va perdiendo sus habilidades porque los idiomas son de práctica , no va a llegar al colegio a hablar en inglés pues con el vocabulario que tiene un docente, un profesor de un C1 C2 con un vocabulario mucho más diferente, no básico sino con un vocabulario más avanzado , entonces es lo que hace más que todo la diferencia de los niveles de inglés , porque ya tiene un C2 , la persona que tiene un C2 utiliza un vocabulario que es más avanzado y diferente que la persona que todavía está en un nivel A1,</p>	<p>Basic linguistic skills at school</p>
<p>para mi opinión no es realmente importante que un profesor tenga un nivel de lengua tan alto , más bien aprovechar lo que sabe y sepa como enseñarlo , como llegarle a los estudiantes.</p>	<p>Didactics overcome proficiency</p>
<p>yo llevo cinco años trabajando en la parte pública y en realidad nunca me habían exigido un examen , que haga un examen o un curso o un examen certificado de inglés nunca me han exigido ni me lo han pedido ni nada</p>	<p>nonexistent Linguistic policies</p>
<p>ni tampoco pues se ofrece un apoyo pues de enseñanza, o sea, de cursos, cursos de inglés</p>	<p>Little language proficiency demand</p>
<p>en época de pandemia, he visto que hacen muchísimos cursos en línea , cursos de hablar en inglés que se reúnan que va a haber un taller , de pronto para mejorar la parte oral si he visto muchísimos cursos que han estado aplicando por parte del gobierno en esa parte para los profesores de inglés , ya es cuestión de cada quien si</p>	<p>Pandemic policies for training</p>

se quiere unir a esos grupos , a esas charlas , a esos talleres	
<p>uno sabe que si uno se va para un curso de esos si? Para uno poderse en el caso que le digan a uno.. mm vamos a hacer un curso para que se certifiquen el B2 si? eso seria una magnifica idea pues por lo menos a mi me dicen que hay esa posibilidad yo lo acepto , pero uno sabe que a los colegios no les gusta dar ese tipo de permisos porque deja un hueco en el colegio cierto? , hay estudiantes que se quedan solos porque uno tiene que ir en la jornada laboral, por ejemplo si es un curso todo el día, uno tiene que faltar al colegio, entonces muchas veces vemos que este tipo de apoyo que hay por parte de las secretaria de educación no llegan a todos por esa misma razón , porque los colegios o los coordinadores y rectores prefieren que no haya huecos en el colegio o que los estudiantes no pierdan clase con tal de que uno esté en colegio y ellos no haya ese hueco en el colegio mientras uno está en esa capacitación si?</p>	Administrative barriers for training

NARRATIVE FROM TEACHER A	CODES
Siempre he estado en colegios; en bachillerato, he pasado para primaria también dándole inglés en primaria a los niños y otra vez estuve en bachillerato si?	Only school-setting experience
Bueno, digamos que pues el nivel de inglés en los colegios públicos es muy bajo si? Los estudiantes que tienen digamos que hablan que se expresan son muy poquitos, son digamos que son 3 de 40 si? más o menos un promedio 3, no le pongo más de 3, si acaso a veces es uno o dos o tres, o sea máximo son 3 de 40 estudiantes	Low proficiency, use of L2 issues, classroom size
el nivel de lengua en los colegios públicos es bastante bajo, puesto que pues ellos no sé creo que no se motivan, no hay digamos los implementos necesarios para pues para que ellos de pronto se motiven más que con videos, juegos	Public schools' low proficiency, students' motivation, lack of resources

Pues realmente desde el 2014 que me gradué hasta ahora el 2020, he sentido realmente que mi nivel de inglés ha bajado muchísimo, muchísimo	Teachers' proficiency decrease
para uno no bajar el nivel de inglés, tiene que estarlo hablando, tiene que estarlo practicando si? Realmente, no es que se olvide, pero si se pierde mucha calidad de las cosas sí?	Lack of teacher's practice in L2
me casé, tuve una niña, pues, ósea mi hija nació en el 2015 y pues digamos que yo no volví pues a coger un libro que fuera a mi nivel cierto?	Teacher's reluctance to learn
los libros que yo cogía era para preparar mis clases, si? para los estudiantes, pues puesto que los niveles de los estudiantes nunca pues han sido más allá de un B1, siempre ha sido un A1, un A2, un B pero no mucho la verdad	Students' low level
, yo me descuidé mucho en mi parte personal de mi carrera, mi parte profesional, entonces si ha bajado mucho mi nivel de lengua	Neglect, teacher's proficiency decrease
yo pues lo acepto y me he dado cuenta, no trabajo en institutos que digamos que los institutos son los que lo mantienen a uno pues como el nivel de inglés siempre pues a la par cierto? Entonces siempre he trabajado en colegios	Private institute setting influence
, pienso volver a sacar tiempo para mejorar mi nivel de inglés.	Motivated teacher

Appendix B: Participant B's open coding

INTERVIEW FROM TEACHER B	CODES
<p>digamos que me sentí muy incómodo y al mismo tiempo un poco pues nervioso porque no tengo mucha experiencia en presentación de test internacionales , había presentado uno hace mucho tiempo y pues conozco digamos los nombres y como se desarrollan , pero no como tal tenía mucho tiempo sin tomar alguno, entonces fue como ese cruce de nervios como con esa voluntad de responder ese si el contenido</p>	<p>Test discomfort</p>
<p>se da uno cuenta que, que hay muchas cosas se han quedado atrás en cuanto al uso del lenguaje, que muchas veces uno leyendo el texto entiende las ideas generales de manera muy bien , digamos la parte de audio , si , digamos que uno entiende el contenido , de que se trataba o que , que están hablando de eso que están hablando de aquello, pero al momento en el que uno se encuentra con preguntas muy exactas, digamos que se ha perdido esa finura en el momento de tener como esa sensibilidad para descubrir o para entender cada parte de un audio</p>	<p>Teacher's proficiency decreased</p>
<p>teniendo en cuenta mis resultados, creo que hay mucho por estudiar, aunque pues no sé creo que por momentos hubo unas preguntas que sentí que estaba muy seguro y pues bueno creo que me falló ahí el hecho de haberme confiado en algunas respuestas, entonces creo que eso fue lo que me mostró que hay mucho trabajo que se debe retomar y que hay mucho repaso a nivel lingüístico que se debe hacer y que no solo quedarse como tomar la generalización de una idea sino que hay que tratar de conservar con esa finura del lenguaje.</p>	<p>Test discomfort, Lack of practice</p>

<p>yo puedo decir listo yo me defiando en el idioma , pero si a uno le preguntan por política gubernamental de algo dependiendo del examen o de cierto nivel que se este tomando pues hay muchas cosas o muchas expresiones donde uno se queda afuera lo mismo en la parte escrita de pronto si es enviarle una carta a cierto personaje entonces hay muchas cosas que son muy precisas de la escritura que las cartas en inglés, como se estructuran y que uno con el desuso o si al no tener la necesidad de contar con el uso del idioma pues se va perdiendo esos conocimientos se van dejando atrás entonces uno se va concentrando como en lo inmediato</p>	<p>Lack of practice</p>
<p>digamos que las políticas y con todo lo que ha emanado el ministerio con los libros y con todo lo que ha salido en los últimos 5 años a partir de 2015 ha sido muy bueno con una excelente voluntad pero habría que mirar muchos factores por lo cuales esos niveles de proficiencia del lenguaje donde se lleguen a mejorar o donde se llegue realmente a ver en un colegio público un nivel comunicativo en el inglés, un nivel de expresión o unos resultados en la prueba del icfes bastante buenos, estamos lejos</p>	<p>Inneficient policies</p>
<p>todo lo que nos han dado es demasiada bueno , pero hay algo que marca mucho la diferencia y es que digamos que todos son simplemente como directivas o recomendaciones se los lanzan al ministerio de educación se lo lanza a las secretarias de educación por los programas de bilingüismo los distribuye , pero no hay como un factor regulatorio</p>	<p>Inefficient policies</p>
<p>, entonces queda muy además de que en Colombia el currículo es de desarrollo institucional y las instituciones son individuale</p>	<p>Individualized curriculum</p>
<p>yo lo que percibo de todo eso es que como la falta de control de la regulación a que esas políticas si estén siguiendo y que digamos al menos los libros si se estén trabajando hacen que que eso no se logre, que no se vea que</p>	<p>Lack of regulatory policies</p>

digamos muchísimos de nosotros tengamos el compromiso de asumirlo	
falta de voluntad de parte nuestra y de aventurarnos a hacer un trabajo bastante fuerte y al mismo tiempo creo que es una falta de control o de regulación estatal lo que ha conllevado a lo que pues no se tenga a los resultados a los que siempre le hemos apuntado	Teachers' reluctance, lack of regularoty policies
la dificultad es de entrada teniendo en cuenta que los estudiantes pues como lo hemos debatido en ocasiones anteriores digamos que la formación en escuela primaria respecto a inglés es bastante nula	Low proficiency in primary school
el ministerio nos ha dado muchísimo para el bachillerato , pero con primaria estamos graves , entonces como viene un desfase pues bastante amplio desde primaria , digamos que nosotros cuando tomamos estudiantes en sexto grado tenemos que llegar a primero como a quitar muchos fósiles	Low proficiency in primary school
muchas veces nosotros como cultura colombiana o no lo sé , nosotros escuchamos a alguien hablando en inglés y nos da es risa , entonces al menos es bueno para empezar a romper todo eso y para empezar a crear como un hábito de escucha y de empezar a decir nuestras primeras palabras en inglés	Students' motivation
digamos que entrar a dar la clase completa en inglés siendo profesor de colegio público y habiendo estado en colegios públicos ya 6 años , el primer conflicto que usted se va a encontrar bravísimo va a ser con los padres de familia porque eso va a hacer que en los 15 días van a estar en el colegio dándole quejas no a usted sino a los coordinadores de que ese profesor les habla todo en inglés no se le entiende nada, los muchachos no le entienden , mi hijo va a perder , mi hijo ya perdió	Parents' influence in teaching
cuando uno se presenta a los concursos o por nombramiento para colegio público en inglés, usted va fijo que lo van a nombrar de sexto hasta once , usted no sabe de primaria	Non-qualified English teachers in primary school

<p>. Primaria tiene un concurso aparte , que son los profesores primaria y la mayoría de ellos , aunque uno se puede presentar con cualquier licenciatura , pues generalmente con los de inglés nunca nos presentamos para primaria , nos presentamos para inglés y sabemos que inglés fijo va de sexto a once</p>	
<p>digamos que en ese desfase entran muchos licenciados, pues todos muy buenos, con muchas cosas que enseñar , pero traen la idea de que enseñar inglés es coco y pues digamos que no le dedican el tiempo suficiente o no le dedican la enseñanza con las estrategias correctas y eso hace que las clases se queden en vamos a ver colores entonces yellow, blue, entonces vamos a pintarlos y de ahí no pasan , nunca se arma una oración; los animales la mayoría de las veces es lion, tiger y de ahí tampoco pasa porque los estudiantes solo lo aprenden a escribir</p>	<p>Non-qualified English teachers in primary school</p>
<p>la deficiencia esta es en que no tenemos licenciados en lenguas extranjeras en primaria y que pues no creo que eso se resuelva muy pronto</p>	<p>Non-qualified English teachers in primary school</p>
<p>mas que inyectarles un idioma que si uno lo mira a la cruda y cruel realidad de ellos , pues no les representa mucho , ellos no ven el uso del lenguaje en el contexto , entonces eso desfavorece y si uno mira toda la situación social que ellos viven , uno al final dice pues yo para que me pongo a pelear con ellos por la voz pasiva</p>	<p>Students' hard context</p>
<p>ahí es donde nosotros también empezamos a perder nivel también porque usted centra el proceso educativo formativo en otros intereses , entonces usted ya empieza a mirar otras realidades con los estudiantes y pues el idioma es , tiene un movimiento y si uno deja que se estanque un poco, luego ya retomar es un poco complicado, por eso mencionaba al inicio que pues al momento de ser comunicativo lo logra , pero en el momento de tomar lenguaje o situaciones muy específicas pues uno puede como</p>	<p>Teachers' lack of practice, Teaching focus changed</p>

desvariar un poco con lo que uno con los conocimientos que tiene en el momento	
digamos que pues la institución , las instalaciones así como carencia de muchos elementos que uno pudiera como motivar a los estudiantes también se ve, tenemos solo un aula audiovisuales, entonces hay que pedirla con tiempo para poderla utilizar, no hay un espacio en el que se puedan utilizar tablets o computadores o celulares , pues la red de internet tampoco daría para ello , entonces depende mucho más de la creatividad del docente en el aula.	Teacher's responsibility
Nosotros muchas veces creemos que esos niveles nos van a llevar es a ser profesores universitarios y eso de pronto es super wow , y es de pronto algo que culturalmente se ve , que yo me pongo un nivel C2 , pero si me dan una decanatura por allá en un departamento de idiomas porque un C2 para trabajar en un colegio público , pues a veces como que el ego , no hablo por todo el mundo pero si conozco situaciones de compañeros donde se vive, entonces pues por eso lo menciono , como que el colegio público además , se crea como esa contracultura de que es mejor el privado , entonces que si yo tengo un C1 , entonces esos profesores están es en privado	Setting influence
donde se pierde un poquito el interés y ya lo centramos a inglés y donde digamos que tener el nivel C1 y C2 si es vital y si es importante, pero no necesario, es en el hecho de que nosotros muchas veces nos identificamos con cierto tipo de enseñanza o cierto tipo de población y nos quedamos ahí, entonces si yo sé que voy a estar en sexto grado y que del año no voy a pasar de alfabeto , números , verbo to be y un poquito presente simple y si me alcanza el tiempo veo un poco de pasado simple , veo un continuo , entonces hace que los profesores que uno se quede ahí	Teachers' willingness to improve
inglés terminamos es en profesores de español , que porque usted sabe inglés , puede enseñar español o al contrario , si	No advanced knowledge needed

<p>usted es de español , usted puede enseñar inglés , entonces los profesores de español también pasan a inglés . En nuestra institución no es así, tenemos todos los profesores muy definidos, pero si conozco muchos casos donde sucede, entonces es ahí donde uno puede decir el nivel si es muy importante, pero al final para desempeñar el trabajo no es necesario</p>	
<p>es que ni siquiera es necesario porque usted puede diseñar una guía y usted le echa toda la explicación en español , desarrolle una guía de no sé , complete, complete con el auxiliar, ya usted enseñó el auxiliar , entonces el estudiante se centra en completar o se centra en traducir y eso ni siquiera exige que el profesor conozca el idioma , usted descarga una guía lee de manera muy general lo que tiene que explicar , va y lo transmite y también el conocimiento los estudiantes no es muy amplio , entonces el poquitico que usted sepa le sirve para guiar al estudiante y pues eso hace también que , que como que se pierda ese sentido de un nivel súper alto en las instituciones.</p>	<p>Little teacher's use of L2</p>
<p>si usted quiere ir a la segura , grabe en español , por qué , porque a usted lo puede evaluar cualquier profesor no quiere decir pues que por ser profesor de inglés lo va a evaluar uno de inglés , entonces si a usted lo agarra uno de física y usted está , pues en su clase muy buena interactuando y de todas maneras , pues el profesor al final va a decir no entendí</p>	<p>Teacher's assessment policies in L1</p>
<p>la falta de control es bastante.... demarca mucho porque si a uno no lo controlan muchas veces uno se relaja y es como un hecho cultural nuestro , nosotros no nos están vigilando , no funcionamos</p>	<p>No regulatory policies</p>
<p>para entrar como docente y demás , no piden las pruebas de nivel sino solo la licenciatura ,</p>	<p>No language testing requirement</p>
<p>yo podría decir que aquí en Cúcuta si , la gran mayoría de los profesores yo creo que estamos entre un B1 y un B2</p>	<p>Intermediate and upper- intermediate proficiency</p>

<p>ser muy flexibles pues tampoco es la manera de llevar los procesos , yo soy de los que creo que hay momentos en los que se debe presionar, que hay cosas que se tienen que colocar como obligatoria , si usted no , esto de los idiomas es una cuestión de aptitud , con P también , digamos no todos tenemos esa posibilidad de aprendernos un idioma con todo lo que involucra</p>	<p>Proficiency regulations needed</p>
<p>, pero entonces queda como esa duda de que bueno , uno sale con un nivel muy bueno y por qué esos niveles empiezan a decaer después y ahí es donde uno mira que muchas veces a uno como lo dejan elegir y pues uno toma la zona de confort y desafortunadamente ahí se queda todo</p>	<p>Teachers' choice to improve</p>
<p>usted sabe que va a trabajar en un colegio público y que a usted lo van a dejar en sexto entonces se concentra en seguir repasando en verbo to be , y ciertas cosas o ciertas estructuras o bueno si ya lo avanzan de grado a usted ya ve los tiempos , los pasados , los progresivos , algo de perfecto , de pronto por ahí en décimo y once como digamos que los idiomas al menos así han venido funcionando que para cada grado es ciertos temas algo que ha venido cambiando con los libros y con lo que el ministerio ha dado , pues entonces hace que uno se relaje</p>	<p>Teachers' "comfort zone"</p>
<p>sin nosotros irnos a desarrollar una competencia de que el estudiante identifica el vocabulario con cierto tema que se maneje en su ambiente inmediato, pues nos toca que bajarle mucho a esa competencia y más bien irnos como ha hechos muy específicos, de algo muy esencial que necesitamos que el estudiante aprenda</p>	<p>Low language immersion</p>
<p>digamos que todo el control de los organismos, digamos gubernamentales, al estar ausente, carente de ellos, depende más del trabajo que nosotros queramos hacer con los estudiantes, de lo que nosotros queramos aportar a la sociedad y por ello aunque muchas veces nuestro nivel lingüístico se reduce un poco, tratamos de mantenernos en una línea de aprendizaje y de formación</p>	<p>Absent teachers' regulations, teachers' individual strategies</p>

<p>muy independiente, haciendo maestrías o tomando diferentes cursos o estrategias que nos permitan mantener el idioma activo, para seguir transmitiendo un conocimiento oportuno a los estudiantes, pertinente con unas metodologías, unas estrategias que pues se apliquen a los contextos que estamos viviendo y que ese control o esa regulación, que al menos debería ser mínima, pues la estamos ejerciendo nosotros mismos, con nuestro propio pensamiento y nuestra propia capacidad de reflexión sobre la sociedad en la que estamos inmersos, sobre la problemática que existe y la manera en que nosotros podamos ayudar para que todo eso se supere, entonces, al no existir, digamos un control externo, nosotros hacemos un control interno, muy reflexivo, muy de nuestra parte para seguir aportándole a la sociedad, pues todo el conocimiento que nosotros hemos logrado obtener.</p>	
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NARRATIVE FROM TEACHER B	CODES
<p>que en muchas instituciones los profesores de español terminan enseñando inglés simplemente porque se asimila que al conocer la lengua española se conocería la lengua inglesa,</p>	<p>Non-qualified English teachers</p>
<p>profesores de inglés que pues con el tiempo el nivel ha ido desmejorando y ha ido pues si decayendo a través del tiempo y no ha habido como digamos oportunidades de mejora y a su vez pues si se evalúa ese nivel lingüístico en los estudiantes también es bastante bajo</p>	<p>Teachers' low proficiency, little training opportunities, students' low proficiency</p>
<p>aunque la preocupación del estado y en los últimos años ha sido elevar ese nivel muchas veces se pues la política estatal es muy diferente a lo que se conoce en las instituciones</p>	<p>Decontextualized policies</p>
<p>gobierno habla por ejemplo de haber entregado más de 3 millones de libros en los últimos años desde que empezaron a salir sin embargo tenemos instituciones a las que nunca ha llegado un libro o</p>	<p>Resources issues, Little support</p>

tenemos instituciones donde nunca el gobierno ha llegado a dar un taller sobre como trabajar con esos libros, es decir que se entregan muchos materiales y se dejan como a disposición o a voluntad de los docentes si los quieren utilizar o no	
muchas veces el docente como tampoco se le interroga desde el estado sobre que está haciendo, pues ignora este tipo de elementos que se le dan	Teacher's neglect
la proficiencia en el nivel del idioma extranjero llegue a ser para los estudiantes de instituciones educativas públicas en su mayoría bajo, poco comunicacional, de pronto se entendería una base de vocabulario	Students' low proficiency, Lack of L2 oral practice
ya en las grandes ciudades donde los docentes de pronto tienen la oportunidad de hacerse a otro trabajo, una institución que les exija más o universidad, el nivel ya de proficiencia en el idioma en cuanto, si al manejo y lo demás por parte de los profesores ya se nota un poco más elevado	Setting factor
soy graduado de institución educativa pública, donde, como ya lo dije en el punto 1, la enseñanza del inglés no es tan fuerte o la exigencia no es tan fuerte en comparación con compañeros que de pronto iban de instituciones privadas o que habían tenido la oportunidad de hacer cursos	Teacher's learning background
Un profesor me dijo que yo podía presentar la prueba Michigan que la pasaba y pues bueno, accedí a ello. Tomé parte de preparación con el profesor y logré pasar esa prueba. En su momento las pruebas eran obligatorias en ciertos semestres de la universidad. Para graduarse en cuarto semestre tenía que tener una prueba B1 y octavo semestre B2. Sin embargo, a través de una serie de demandas eso se quitó. Las pruebas se anularon y ya no era requisito tener pruebas de estándar internacional para graduarse	Professional requirements, Testing
Respecto a la evolución del idioma, yo creo que cuando uno enseña, aprende. Son	Practice through teaching

dos personas las que aprenden, aprende la persona a quien se está enseñando y aprende uno como enseñante	
Y pues ya en la parte profesional uno llega como a enseñar los mismos temas con los mismos estudiantes	Curricular issue
Entonces creo que a pesar de los grandes esfuerzos que uno hace por mantener el nivel lingüístico, el hecho de que uno a los estudiantes la mayoría de las veces les esté compartiendo en español, las aclaraciones se hacen en español y muchas cosas que ya se viven dentro del aula y que uno no puede llegar de pronto a exigir plenamente. Aquí todo el mundo va a hablar inglés porque todos resultan perdiendo y las políticas de las instituciones no permiten cosas así	L1 and L2 little usage, school policies, approving or learning
Entonces se da mucho a esa experiencia de que el idioma vaya desmejorando, la evolución del idioma es muy individual, es muy si la persona siente que ya llegó al tope del que no quiere pasar o si quiere mantenerse e incluso elevarlo después de que se gradúa de la universidad. Algunos, tomamos la decisión de seguir estudiando, de seguir leyendo en inglés, de comprarnos unos libros en inglés, de ver una película en inglés para asimilar el idioma, pero también es entendible que hay personas que hay profesionales de la educación que no lo toman	Language level decrease, teachers' responsibility, teacher's conformity
, al no ser un idioma aplicado al contexto, al no ser una segunda lengua, sino una lengua extranjera, en algún momento a través de los años el idioma deja de evolucionar y empezaría a decaer en el nivel.	Stopped language learning, language level decrease
que tenía como una idea de no entrar a las aulas a enseñarlos y a no ser un traductor. Tenía como esa expectativa. Era como la motivación llegar a ser un traductor reconocido aquí por el ministerio de los traductores oficiales y demás	Pre-service teacher's motivation

<p>se habla de los programas de inmersión que se desarrollan en diferentes regiones del país, se habla de los programas de intercambio del Reino Unido o de la India, y algunos de ellos representan ciertas limitaciones para los docentes porque, por ejemplo, piden que se tenga cierto nivel lingüístico para hacer parte de ese programa.</p>	<p>Unattainable opportunities</p>
<p>Se habla de un apoyo de los extranjeros que vienen extranjeros a las regiones a promover el idioma con muchos docentes, sin embargo, pues es algo que no es notorio, hay muchas instituciones que nunca reciben las visitas de ese tipo de personal.</p>	<p>Inneffective teacher training</p>
<p>, aquí en Cúcuta conozco el caso de dos colegios donde han entregado libros. Sin embargo, no llegan a la mayoría de las instituciones, así como no llega, digamos, los recursos, el recurso, el my ABC English kit al colegio, simplemente llegó un paquete, una mochila con su material, entendiendo que el colegio tiene 3400 estudiantes, entonces es muy limitante</p>	<p>Little resources, numerous students</p>
<p>Muchas de las secretarías de Educación, los programas de bilingüismo los manejan de una manera muy aleatoria o incluso hasta escondida.</p>	<p>1.Bilingualism policies 1.1 Inneffective bilingualism programs</p>
<p>el hecho de que usted quiera ser una excelente profesional y dar una excelente educación, el acceso a becas para maestrías y doctorados que tengan que ver con mejora lingüística</p>	<p>Teacher's decision to improve</p>
<p>La mayoría de las veces los profesores terminan poniendo de sus propios recursos para la formación obtener maestrías en el idioma inglés.</p>	<p>Low profesional development support</p>
<p>Entonces, eso hace también que muchas veces el factor económico se vuelva como... como el primer incentivo para mejorar el idioma</p>	<p>Financial factor</p>
<p>el hecho de querer tener un buen nivel para darle una buena enseñanza a mis estudiantes y el hecho de querer tener un buen nivel para tener la oportunidad de</p>	<p>Teacher's motivation</p>

acceder a otras plazas de trabajo diferentes a las que representa a las instituciones educativas de carácter público	
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Appendix C: Participant C's open coding

INTERVIEW FROM TEACHER C	CODES
at the beginning was a little difficult, grammar structures and we were looking for the correct word to complete the gap, it's a little difficult, yes. The comprehension reading was easier than the writing	Difficult test for the teacher
yes I took an exam when I was working a CTC here in Cúcuta, well but I can say that this test that I did with you was more difficult than before	Testing inexperienced
I believe that maybe about the test was as I said to you the first and second part, maybe is the time. Sometimes it's difficult to think at the moment what is the right word that you have to put there, because you know you don't have the accents very clear, it's a very similar speaking the words and that complicates too much, to take like a final decision.	Listening skill issues
we don't have more experience about that kind of test and maybe we know the methodology, the answer until how to work with this kind of test	Low experience in proficiency tests
I believe that now we have better teachers than before cause now we teachers have now more resources to learn and to teach the language than before obviously, maybe before we have most teachers with the best, excuse me, with a better pedagogy, and they are more teachers to say in some way than bilingual. Now, most of the teachers really they are bilingual, they have more chances, and the policies for public school, I believe... There is a good intention, we don't have enough resources, we don't	Better teaching resources currently, lack of resources in schools

<p>have labs, we don't have special classrooms for the teaching of the language.</p>	
<p>I believe the problem is we have to work more with the students, how to encourage students to learn a new language, how to implement new methodologies and try to... that the students see the importance of learning a new language, in this case English, because most of the students, they don't like, they think that they are not gonna use this language, they don't think they are going to travel or to study abroad and maybe sometimes no because the teachers don't do the best of them, they do it but some students reject to learn a new language. Teachers sometimes use all methodologies, all the resources they have in hand, but some students really they don't they don't, they are nor interested in learning a new language</p>	<p>Demotivated students</p>
<p>there are some students that... they have made courses and they speak, they can talk with the teachers in English. That situation is different, the worse students are always in advance, but we don't have to put back the rest of the students because they need to be at the same level and we try to do all the best that we can because they have to get some goals that are in the curriculum according to the policy of the Ministerio de Educación about the bilingual program</p>	<p>Same level lessons goal</p>
<p>I watch movies, I read the newspapers in English, you know that I like music, I read the lyrics of the songs, I try to chat with people of other countries. So I do it because I like it, well I hope to share this knowledgements with my students.</p>	<p>Teacher's language practice, low speaking or writing practice</p>
<p>all the students are not in the same level, and because some students, they feel ashamed if they make mistakes from other students</p>	<p>Students' fear to use L2</p>
<p>But maybe sometimes they are afraid of making mistakes, and they stop. I believe it's the most difficult, and obviously we are in an atmosphere that our native language</p>	<p>Low L2 usage in the classroom, low student's proficiency</p>

<p>is Spanish and to work 100% of the class, I believe is impossible, you know that is almost impossible in an institute or in a bilingual school because sometimes they don't know enough vocabulary to understand the conversation about readings, you know it's different, is a little complicated, is complicated but not at all impossible</p>	
<p>there are good students that they... sometimes they make questions in English, but not at all not all the students, it's a few number</p>	<p>Few proficient students</p>
<p>in this country we have different social problems with people, some students have a better life, a better, a better social condition than others and that sometimes influence in the teaching in the classroom</p>	<p>Uneven Students' social background</p>
<p>I explain all everything in English. When I work in a virtual classroom, a virtual meeting, well sometimes, most of the time I explain in Spanish and sometimes I explain something in English</p>	<p>More use of L1</p>
<p>I can't tell lies to my students, I have to be sure what I know, I have to be sure what I'm teaching, and I can say that well I am teacher I am here because I have worked very hard to be here, that's the result of all my efforts, I believe also that the teachers have to be a higher level. Students, it's so proud of whatever teacher that his students say: "oh my English teacher is very well and I listen I saw my teacher speaking English with a person that came from the United States or Canada. It's a proud for us really.</p>	<p>Teacher's proficiency importance</p>
<p>I consider that really I can be in B2, trying to get better every day</p>	<p>High teacher's level</p>
<p>not all the time the tests measure your proficiency, there are many factors when you are answering maybe a test that you don't feel fine at the moment, it's maybe I believe that the most important is...maybe direct conversations, show me what you</p>	<p>Proficiency test objection</p>

know, if you are able to speak English ok you do it	
I believe that this is the most important because you know that, to be a C1 or C2 in English where it's a language like Spanish where there are an enormous synonyms, sometimes differences to yes say I choose this, I choose... I don't know, sometimes it's not easy. I'd say that the real test is speaking.	Communicative skills prevail
not all English teachers have this level, they are not certified in B2	Low teachers' proficiency
but I believe that the government must give the tools, all the chances to get that level, not only for example choosing some teachers to send these teachers, for example, for a seminar, because they have B2, but I don't send those teachers because they don't have B2, So I believe that we have to give all the opportunities for all the teachers, even I can say that some teachers are in A1 or A2, I can say that because most of them, they know grammar	Lack of opportunities, low teachers' proficiency, grammar-oriented teachers
you don't know how you feel so there are many aspects that don't make you feel fine that you can make mistakes later you say: "oh this was very easy" at that moment I didn't feel fine.	Teachers' test difficulty
they don't present the test encouraged or they really, they don't care because at the end if you got B1 or B2 you don't receive anything, you don't receive a gift, your salary is not going to be higher, nothing, just to try to put if you are in that level, but at the end they are not motivated to do the test at the end, and most of the students and all the teachers for example 2277 most of them don't do the test, even this new status, most of the teachers don't present the test too.	Lack of proficiency policies
I believe that sometimes people from other countries they are natives, but they are not teachers and they are sent to school to teach English. I believe that's wrong because they speak English, but they are	Native speakerism issue, lack of teachers' training

<p>not teachers, they don't know how to teach. Maybe we will need that if you're going to bring people, bring really educators, teach first to the teachers and then to the students not to teach to the students because at the end, it's just like in circles, that students, most of the students go the first classes, later they don't go at the end just two or three students I believe that it's a wasting money there.</p>	
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<p>NARRATIVE FROM TEACHER C</p>	<p>CODES</p>
<p><i>I believe that English in public school is very poor</i></p>	<p>Public school low proficiency</p>
<p><i>Some students don't like English as a second language. Some students don't see language like a useful tool for their lives.</i></p>	<p>Little Students' motivation factor, L2 decontextualized</p>
<p><i>We have many problems with, for example, pedagogical resources and most of the schools do not have the right resources to learn and to teach English. We don't have labs. We don't have appropriate classrooms. So that's one of the main reasons because the level is very poor</i></p>	<p>School out of resources</p>
<p><i>In spite of that, there are some students that they have done courses in institutes and they have a good proficiency and they have a good level. But the number is little Not all the students have the chance to study in English institutes because sometimes most of them are very expensive, in the public school</i></p>	<p>Students' language level</p>
<p><i>The teachers here, they must transmit their knowledges to our teachers in order to get better the level</i></p>	<p>Teacher training importance</p>
<p><i>I had the chance to study English in the USA and Canada for three months. That was an intensive Course, a program for teachers</i></p>	<p>Professional development opportunity</p>
<p><i>we are trying to be better in our job, we are learning every day; learning new vocabulary, listening to music, listening to</i></p>	<p>Constant learning</p>

<i>news on the radio and watch the news on the radio, watch movies.</i>	
<i>I have also work in universities, institutes and schools where I have had the chance to share with native teachers, with native work mates that I have Learned Much of them</i>	Different teaching settings
<i>I believe that teachers must be studying every day, must be prepared for the future</i>	Individual teacher training
<i>I have to study every day, I have to be a good teacher, I have to show to my students that I speak English that I can communicate with native people And not a teacher just to study grammar or to write on the board</i>	Teacher's role
<i>We have many troubles here with the students</i>	Students' factor
<i>I believe that English can be taken as a course in the curriculum of the school. Not like a subject, a course where students have the chance to learn a new language to speak English well. I believe that's the way we have to, to follow. To have a better level and a better proficiency of English in our public schools</i>	Curricular changes needed

Appendix D: Participant D's open coding

INTERVIEW FROM TEACHER D	CODES
durante la presentación del examen pues fue una dinámica que generalmente ya hemos pasado por ello. Nosotros los profesores, antes de graduarnos debemos presentar ciertos exámenes para demostrar nuestros niveles de inglés y pues en 3 ocasiones ya había presentado 3 pruebas 2 de ellas internacionales y una... Bueno 2 presenciales y una digital. Pruebas internacionales	Testing experienced

<p>en colegio realmente pues generalmente los colegios no exigen un certificado del idioma sencillamente. Con el título pues se sobreentiende que ya el nivel es un nivel bueno del idioma</p>	<p>No testing requirement in schools</p>
<p>En lo que dices que piden un nivel mínimo de B2 que el docente mínimo de tener un nivel de inglés B2. Pero lo que si noté es que en ningún lado de ese proyecto demanda a los docentes un certificado que lo que lo valide que convalide su nivel sí entonces está como ese vacío, ese vacío normativo en ese proyecto y por lo tanto pues usted puede perdón puede decir un profesor bueno graduado o recién graduado con experiencia o recién graduado puede decir si yo tengo nivel B2, ah bueno profe listo usted está disponible para la vacante. No la idea es pues que hay ese vacío en esa normatividad en la que se requiera una validación de una de una prueba internacional que le certifique según el marco común europeo. Pues ¿y qué se ha visto hasta el momento? pues podríamos decir que, bueno yo estoy en la en la educación pública y no sabría a ciencia cierta pues sería muy.... No sería para juzgar si el docente tiene o no un nivel B2 que es lo mínimo que exige la secretaría educación pero si sería bueno como tener esa normatividad de modo que eso nos permita a nosotros estar en constante interés y formación en el idioma, en la proficiencia, en la competencia alta de tener nosotros todas las habilidades en el idioma sí entonces pues existe ese vacío Giovany y realmente pues ahí sí ya es como cuestión de la parte administrativa de la parte de quienes dirigen ese proyecto poder enfatizar o hacer un requerimiento por escrito frente a esa formación que deben tener todos los docentes para mejorar todo lo que tiene que ver con el programa y el proyecto Colombia bilingüe.</p>	<p>Absent linguistic policies, No certification or testing required</p>

<p>uno ve que muchos profesores por ejemplo los de mi generación a los que se graduaron conmigo pues ellos han continuado sus estudios de formación, se quieren preparar y quieren estar.... Si, practican cuando nos vemos personalmente o practicábamos. Pero también es cierto que, pues hay profesores ya de la antigua, ósea de la generación anterior que si se ve, ya han perdido un poco como esa interacción en el idioma entonces es y pues uno a veces se siente incómodo cuando uno quiere interactuar con ellos</p>	<p>Unequal teachers' proficiency</p>
<p>me di cuenta al cabo de un mes, dos meses que los estudiantes estaban muy perdidos que por más de que yo buscara las estrategias pues había cosas que me entendían que me comprendían, pero los resultados en una prueba o en la forma en que ellos iban a expresar era muy poca ¿por qué? porque solamente tenían contacto conmigo en el aula y pues realmente era muy poco el tiempo sí. Cuarenta estudiantes es un poco complejo, eso lo haría uno de pronto que sea un grupo mínimo de 15 estudiantes de diez estudiantes en una clase con poca con pocos estudiantes pero en este caso eran cuarenta entonces como muchos no entendían entonces se formaba o desorden o se desinteresaban o desistía completamente de atender la clase entonces me tocó que dividir mi enseñanza no en un ochenta sino bajarle completamente a un casi que 50 español 50 inglés pero nunca hacer traducción no era traducir sino que era como bueno. Entonces yo les escribía en el tablero las secciones de la clase vamos a trabajar esto la gramática si obviamente va a ir en español, pero los ejercicios prácticos que son orales lo vamos a hacer en inglés y así yo sigo preparando poco a poco para que ellos fueran como adaptándose la metodología.</p>	<p>Low students' language proficiency, Crowded classrooms</p>
<p>Pues en este caso y hasta esta fecha no es posible llevar una lección en educación</p>	<p>Different teaching approaches, absent teaching agreement</p>

<p>pública en un 100% en inglés además que los estudiantes pasan por diferentes. Aunque es en los mismos contenidos pasan por diferentes metodologías de enseñanza o digamos en estrategias que utilizan los diferentes docentes y por lo tanto es a veces como es un poco complejo poder unificar que expliquemos tanto porcentaje en inglés o tanto porcentaje en español. Y ahí es donde está el problema porque hay profesores que manejan una dinámica diferente de clase hay otros profesores que manejan otra dinámica de clase y pues ahí no hay como un balance entonces todo influye desde el pasado desde lo que trae el estudiante en sus años anteriores y lo que uno pues quiere proponer</p>	
<p>en mi caso yo les aplicaba lo que es communicative approach si que trabajamos todas las habilidades inmersos en una clase entonces era como pasar rápidamente entonces yo lo llevaba un ritmo pues casi que acelerado y eso al inicio para ellos era un choque porque ellos no estaban acostumbrados a esa dinámica si por lo menos yo trabajaba en lugares privados y era así, pasábamos de Listening , Reading , Speaking , Writing en una sola clase podría ser una clase hora y media pero hacíamos pequeñas actividades que incluyeran todo ese tipo de actividades , en el colegio no porque la dinámica viene diferente entonces primero para mi fue el choque</p>	<p>Shocking context</p>
<p>qué hice yo ,irme pues más lento con ellos y más pausado en cuanto a manejar un lenguaje en inglés español casi que en un porcentaje igual y la dinámica de trabajo entonces hoy vamos a trabajar por lo menos dos habilidades sí. Por ejemplo lectura reading comprehension y listening entonces ir bajándole gradualmente a ese tipo de actividades y así y bueno funcionó porque los chicos de esa manera yo encontraba más divertida la clase porque ya los encontraba más dispuestos , más</p>	<p>Slow-paced learning, low usage of L2</p>

<p>divertido , más atractiva la clase ya estaban más dispuesto ya querían inglés y esa es la idea pues que ellos se enamoraran porque pues no es fácil con nuestro contexto y menos un contexto de un estrato socioeconómico no tan alto entonces esto fue cambiando poco a poco</p>	
<p>yo no puedo dejar pasar una situación escolar que merita una solución de parte del profesor que está ahí orientando 40 personas 40 adolescentes 40 niños por enseñar no sé un vocabulario de x tema. Entonces es cómo saber discernir en ese tipo de situaciones la importancia del aprendizaje es buena pero siempre y cuando haya una formación también de nuestro rol social de nuestro rol como docentes que somos formadores antes que ser maestro o quienes solamente se encargan de enseñar una lengua extranjera yo pienso que eso va como unido porque qué hago yo enseñando a un niño vocabulario o tal temática si el niño es grosero es patán no sabe respetar a su compañero no sabe escuchar entonces primero debe ser persona antes que ser una persona que pueda manejar una segunda lengua o que puede expresarse en una segunda lengua.</p>	<p>Educative priority over language use</p>
<p>en este rol como docente de educación básica y media. Eso hace que uno disminuya la proficiencia del idioma. Eso lo he notado lo he sentido y uno es consciente de ello yo soy consciente de ello si he bajado el nivel y me he visto si es a veces como le diría uno frustrante.</p>	<p>Teachers' proficiency decreased, teachers' frustration</p>
<p>A veces llega el día en que uno dice ay no es que no me entendieron absolutamente nada en clase no y uno se frustra uno quiere llorar uno quiere uno les explica de todas las formas con otro adjetivo con otras señas con la mímica se convierte allá en el super clown y no uno sale frustrado de clase y hace entonces uno como que siente ese desánimo y ese desánimo emocional o</p>	<p>Teachers' lack of practice, low students' motivation</p>

<p>profesional hace que yo hoy no voy a enseñar en inglés entonces entro enojado a una clase si pero a veces uno tiene que bueno yo reacciono igual porque y en ese proceso se la pasa en esa batalla realmente dentro de la aula bueno hoy sí los voy a obligar , ellos no tienen porque dominar mi nivel de profesionalismo y así es como uno va contrarrestando todas esas dificultades que ve en el aula y que ese desinterés de los estudiantes pues se transforma en frustración en mi frustración profesional y si se baja nivel claro porque claro yo no estoy hablando 100% inglés en clase</p>	
<p>otro aspecto es que tengo también contacto con estudiantes de pregrado y pues eso me permite también formarlos a ellos en inglés y me mantengo ahí practicando y poder para no perder la competencia pero sí sé una experiencia de estas alturas después de pocos años y siento que el nivel ha bajado por qué porque yo practico con unas amigas , compañeros , colegas y unos uno se da cuenta que esta palabra se me olvidó cómo es que era entonces uno empiezan las lagunas mentales entonces uno busca la forma de decir la palabra y entonces ahí está el otro entra y le ayuda y así entonces sí afecta de alguna manera ese contexto en la educación básica y media realmente en la proficiencia de uno como docente y más en los pocos años de experiencia que llevo en la docencia.</p>	<p>Teachers' proficiency decreased, Teaching setting influence, teachers' individual learning</p>
<p>bueno yo pensaría que no es lo más importante que tenga un nivel C1 o C2 , sí digamos que como profesional lo debe tener, pero para enseñar realmente en un colegio público se necesita. No es tan importante digamos certificar el C1-C2 sino más bien certificar unas estrategias pedagógicas que lleven a un aprendizaje atractivo por parte de los estudiantes</p>	<p>Pedagogical strategies prioritized, no advanced language needed</p>
<p>es válido tener el certificado y eso es un orgullo para uno como profesional pero cuando hablamos de la educación pública</p>	<p>Didactics overcome subject knowledge</p>

<p>lo más importante es tener esa vocación de enseñar y lo más importante tener esa creatividad y esas estrategias que el estudiante se enamore, generalmente los colegios de educación pública son estudiantes con muchas necesidades no solamente económica sino también afectivas y no quiere decir que uno se convierta en socio afectivo dentro del aula sino realmente que lo que uno les enseñe les transmita a ellos pues sea algo cómo lo explicaría</p>	
<p>lo público es un poco complejo por la cantidad de estudiantes pero pues yo pienso que poco a poco se van ahí las puede uno ir incluyendo todas las buenas estrategias que puedan proveer a los estudiantes un mejor aprendizaje para ellos</p>	Teacher's motivation
<p>cuando yo presenté el concurso docente para aplicar a la educación pública uno de los requisitos no el certificado inglés no fue contado como yo presenté mi certificado de idiomas y no fue contado como requisito esto ni me sumó puntos en la calificación , eso quiere que pues no lo han demandado no lo demanda el ministerio de educación nacional</p>	Absent regulatory policies
<p>me parece una buena opción que el ministerio de educación o que la secretaria de educación nos pudiera certificar a todos los docentes con una prueba internacional según el marco común europeo eso sería genial , pues bien sabemos que hay que prepararse para presentar esas pruebas hay que estudiar hay que de hecho, las entidades que ofrecían estas pruebas ellos tienen un curso previo para poder presentar las pruebas, es decir, lo ponen a uno en contexto de cómo va a ser la prueba como va a ser dirigida en fin le dan a uno el material para poder estudiar y así permite que uno se esté preparándose , esa sería una buena opción.</p>	Teacher's willingness to change policies
<p>en términos de ascenso o salariales la prueba no define no eso no está estipulado en términos de ascenso o en términos</p>	No incentives for language proficiency

<p>salariales son los estudios de posgrado especializaciones maestrías concurso docente para ascenso interno , doctorados pero nivel de inglés en nuestro caso no señor eso no ocurre todavía</p>	
<p>nosotros los docentes del decreto 2277 si somos evaluados anualmente. Pero pues como su formato estándar para todas las áreas no especifica que el docente tenga un B2 dentro del aula de la enseñanza, no.</p>	<p>Unspecific teacher's assessment</p>

NARRATIVE FROM TEACHER D	CODES
<p>After one month of implementing communicative approach, I realized the result was not totally positive because I used to teach in English, for example 70% English language and 30% Spanish language, then students do not respond with the level they should be in, taking into account the English levels from the Colombian English program.</p>	<p>L2 USAGE IMPLEMENTED, STUDENT'S LOW LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY</p>
<p>it was necessary to change the strategies in the classroom and teach step by step in a slow pace where students have enough time to practice the proposed activities in class. Moreover, the input by the teacher changed into "Spanglish", with 50% percent in English and 50% in Spanish</p>	<p>STRATEGY CHANGE, L1 USAGE PREVAILED</p>
<p>the majority of students used to ask to the teacher to translate even they had the dictionary or co</p>	<p>Students' use of L1</p>
<p>I would say that my English language proficiency was not trained enough at school, for that reason the level of English language in standby</p>	<p>Language practice stopped</p>
<p>The amount of students in the classroom, there are 30 or 40 students per classroom The context: families in a low socio-economical status, family problems, money problems</p>	<p>Classroom size factor</p>
<p>Students' perception about learning English language. The majority of students do not like to study English in the future</p>	<p>Students' motivation</p>

<p>The curriculum: It is repetitive in the middle school. Missing classes due to school cultural activities</p>	<p>Repetitive Curriculum</p>
<p>There is no English laboratory or ICTs tools to practice English skills. No internet connection No students' interest in learning English No tools to work (student's books, workbooks, classware, dictionaries, etc.)</p>	<p>Lack of Resources, students' motivation</p>
<p>I started improving my English language proficiency when I decided to work while I was studying eighth semester</p>	<p>Pre-service teacher's language level</p>
<p>Nowadays, I keep practicing English by myself in order to improve everyday through some activities like movies, audios, audio books, free written production and chatting with my colleagues</p>	<p>Individual teacher's practice</p>

Appendix G: FCE mock test

FCE mock test

The First Certificate in English (FCE) is an international examination elaborated by Cambridge University. This exam assesses the language skills to communicate confidently in an English-speaking environment. According to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), this exam is situated at level B2. Therefore, the language skills that are evaluated here correspond with the demands of the Colombian Ministry of Education. This test is an edited format from a sample test made in 2015 in which there are three skills to evaluate: Use of English, Reading, Listening. These skills were chosen since they regard vital aspects of English language skills as you can in the description of each section. Read the instructions carefully. Answer all the questions.

Siguiente

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Motorbike stunt rider

I work **(0)** a motorbike stunt rider – that is, I do tricks on my motorbike at shows. The Le Mans race track in France was **(9)** I first saw some guys doing motorbike stunts. I'd never seen anyone riding a motorbike using just the back wheel before and I was **(10)** impressed I went straight home and taught **(11)** to do the same. It wasn't very long before I began to earn my living at shows performing my own motorbike stunts.

I have a degree **(12)** mechanical engineering; this helps me to look at the physics **(13)** lies behind each stunt. In addition to being responsible for design changes to the motorbike, I have to work **(14)** every stunt I do. People often think that my work is very dangerous, but, apart **(15)** some minor mechanical problem happening occasionally during a stunt, nothing ever goes wrong. I never feel in **(16)** kind of danger because I'm very experienced.

9. *

1 punto

Tu respuesta

10. *

1 punto

Tu respuesta

Appendix H: Narrative instrument

In this instrument, teachers will write about their experience as English language teachers. The main objective here is to obtain information about what teachers believe towards the bilingualism policies in Colombia and how they have influenced in the role of their language proficiency inside their classrooms. Read the prompt below and write a letter narrating your insights, comments or anecdotes:

Language proficiency is considered a core dimension skill for English language teachers (Richards, 2010). In fact, teachers are considered as the critical source of input for students (Ellis, 1997), this latter means that English teachers need to have excellent linguistic skills to give students the necessary subject knowledge. In this manner, the Colombian government has made several investments in order to improve language proficiency of English teachers during all these years considering the bilingualism plan that they have for the country (Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN), 2015). Thus, according to the Ministry of Education (MEN), 48% of Colombian English teachers (licenciados) were supposed to have an upper intermediate language level (B2) according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) by the year 2013. In fact, one of the main objectives in the plan constitutes to ameliorate the English level of English teachers (Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN), 2015, p. 17) .Taking into consideration all the aforementioned factors, tell us how closer the previous claims are to your real life as an English teacher in a public school. Tell us your perceptions about:

- A) English Language proficiency in public schools.**
- B) The evolution of your English level during your career.**
- C) Factors that could have influenced in your English language level and the interest to improve it or keep it.**

Appendix I: Prompts questions

INTERVIEW PROMPTS (QUESTIONS)
How did you feel while taking the international mock test? What did this test show you regarding your English skills?
What do you think about language proficiency policies for public school teachers in Cucuta?
In your opinion, is it possible to carry out a lesson 100% in English, in your classroom? Why? Why not?
Many times, English teachers struggle with different kinds of situations in the classroom that make us realize we are educators before English teachers. These difficulties usually come from our learners 'social background and how they have been educated at their homes. Do you think that these social factors, and the hard situations that your students must go through, have influenced how you use language in the classroom? Have these situations surpassed the importance of language proficiency in the classroom?
In your opinion, Is it important for an English language teacher to be highly-proficient in a public-school? For example to reach levels like C1 or C2? WHY?
The Colombian Ministry of Education demands English teachers to have at least a B2 language level. What do you think about this demand regarding English teachers in Cúcuta?