Exploring EFL Teachers' Activity and Identity Construction through the Path of Private Institutional Policies

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ABSTRACT

Teachers' identity-in-activity is an area that has not been explored in depth in the EFL domain. The objectives of this research study were to explore and understand how a group of English language teachers working at a private language institute constructed their identities in regard to their teaching practices and institutional policies, and to analyze how methodologies and rule systems affected their identity construction. Four EFL teachers from a language institute in Bogotá participated in a qualitative study in which a semi-structure interview and a focus group discussion were used as sources of information. Data were analyzed by using a narrative approach.

Findings revealed that teachers' identity construction transited from the past; seeing education in an instructional way, where they did not feel they would be teaching in the future, to nowadays love and enjoy their profession. Institutional policies impacted teachers in the way that they had to adopt a binary position when being and not being observed in class by their bosses. Taking roles of other professions was a way they consciously exert agency to escape from the framing teaching produced at a language institute. And finally, teachers strategically negotiated with policies in their teaching practices.

Teachers acted autonomously based on their beliefs and professional formation not to become just implementers of curriculums who can be defined by a number. Instead, they stood as professionals in charge of transforming people's lives through education. This research study provides rich information for institutions to consider in terms of teachers' professional development and participation in curriculum implementation.

Keywords: EFL Teachers' identities, identity-in-activity, institutional policies.

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Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

To answer the demands from society in terms of job opportunities, people are seeing the educational sector not only as public or private entities that provide different subjects, but as a way to reach abilities or skills the job market demands (Torres, 2009). This is why, "Educacón para el Trabajo y Desarrollo" [Education for Human Work and Development] (Colombian Ministry of Education, 2006) is gaining more and more space in the market of education; especially at language institutions, where education and language are usually seen as some good or product that can be purchased by anyone. Students are finding this kind of institutions as a faster and more concrete way to acquire a language ability to have a better job.

On the other hand, it appears that language teachers work at this kind of institutions due to the comforts they provide; they do not take work home, do not talk to parents, do not prepare classes, the payment is not low compared to other schools or language academies, among other benefits. In my experience as one of those teachers, I was able to gather their thoughts about the reason why they were working at this language institution, by analyzing what teachers told me in their narratives. Teachers' Identity in the context of these institutions is a point I want to address, due to the fact that it plays a fundamental role to define who they are and who they have become as teachers. But, how do teachers' activities help them build who they are as teachers working at this institution?

The purpose of this research project is to have a better understanding of how teachers construct their identity when they are in activity. Inspired by Goffman's theory of identity based on 'activity' (Goffman, 1959), I analyze that teachers at this kind of language institutions work by following a protocol which is carefully designed, structured and followed as a fixed process.

Based on the results of a preliminary questionnaire carried out to determine the existence of the research problem stated in this project, teachers showed they felt as implementers of a curriculum, feeling affected in their identities that are framed into institutional policies. In this fashion, they felt that the institution constrained them in the way that their opinions in regard to pedagogy were not taken into account.

In a follow-up of this discussion, the body of this document deals with the concept of teachers' identity as the main focus of the research. This theoretical approximation along with the theory of Identity-in-Activity work with the purpose of analyzing how teachers' identities are constructed while working at an institute and how, at the same time, they are shaped by educational policies.

This study has the aim to explore and understand EFL teachers' identity construction as individuals in a language institute. My interest for this topic arose by the fact that teachers felt the methodology implemented by the institution prevented them from doing what they considered appropriate in their teaching contexts. Taking into account informal talks and a preliminary questionnaire, teachers expressed that their identity was set as implementers of a curriculum, and that their own perspectives, ideas and even methodologies had limited consideration. This was because one of the policies in the institution was to follow a strict didactic sequence. In this sense, Cohen (2008) states that the ability of teachers to take risks in implementing new ideas and strategies is linked to analyzing teachers' identity. According to this author, if teachers are given some freedom in their classroom, their identities could emerge through the creation of material, exercises and didactic activities depending on students' needs; in other words, there are more logical relations between teachers' work and the needs of the population.

It was my goal to search for answers on how teachers construct or reconstruct their identities in terms of language, language pedagogy and language learning as well as individuals in the frame of a language institution. Following Petrosky (1994), it is important to analyze teachers' language because, in the process of using language to construct knowledge, teachers create themselves as teachers. In this line of thought, it was important to analyze what teachers say they do in their classroom in order to account for their identity construction and how activity plays a role in this process.

Justification

This study is relevant in language teacher education because what teachers do in their classroom reflects what they know and believe in. These beliefs portray their identity on every activity carried out (Clark & Peterson, 1986). Language teacher identity has become an important topic to discuss since it is an element that helps to make sense of our teaching practices. To start understanding what teachers do in their classroom, we need to answer two important questions such as 'who am I?' and 'What kind of teacher do I want to be?'. Researchers have recognized these two questions as key aspects in considering the teaching profession as a whole (Thomas & Beauchamp, 2007). These authors acknowledge the fact of analyzing teachers' professional identities as the main core of the construction of their own interpretations of "how to be" and "how to act" as teachers (p. 230).

One of my goals as a searcher was to contribute to the analysis of language teacher identity in a non-official education context, considering the importance of this topic for teacher professional growth and development. In doing so, I got involved analyzing the experiences of some teachers, who were my colleagues at a language institute; a reflection was developed through the interpretation of their thoughts as someone who shared their context and had lived similar experiences.

With this project I intended to raise awareness about how institutional entities represented in the policies and methodologies required by different institutions frame teachers' identities into set positions that affect how they teach. I discuss in my paper the way private institutions could be affecting teachers' agency in different areas such as making their own decisions,

implementing pedagogy, and acting towards their practice in terms of designing or carrying out different activities. Teachers' personality, feelings, and behaviors are also said to be affected due to these effects, and I am particularly interested in saying how their identity may not only affect their teaching practices, but also their own lives.

To respond to the research questions which are: *What is the impact of a language institution experience in teachers' construction of their identities? How do English teachers working at a private language institution see themselves as professionals?* And *How do English teachers negotiate policies in their practice when working at a language institute?* I carried out a preliminary questionnaire in which teachers had the opportunity to express their opinions in regard to the effect of institutional policies and the way teachers make decisions. I pointed out the way those decisions had an impact on different dimensions, such as teachers' personalities, teachers' activities, and teachers' perceptions etc. During this preliminary questionnaire, teachers came up with common feelings and thoughts and some of them even labeled themselves as 'servers' or just 'implementers' of a curriculum. They also expressed that they felt their role as teachers is alien to them. However, some others seemed to be comfortable when they described the methodology and justified this as an already-made, designed package. The most prominent position teachers hold is as 'implementers' of a curriculum or as 'robots' , but not as independent teachers who can decided what is more pertinent in class, but to follow what is established. These two positions among others will be explored in the findings.

As a consequence of my reflections on this context and the teachers' feelings in this questionnaire, I attempted to develop this project with the aim of exploring my field by gathering teachers' voices and building up an understanding of how all these voices and reflections are showing impact on their identity construction. I will specially look at the way an institution may

empower or disempower teachers' decision-making process toward pedagogy. In this vein, individuals will be the main source of information in order to get a better understanding of the way teaching is perceived under educational policies at a language institute.

Problem statement

In-service teachers usually find themselves in a predicament because they tend to face contradiction(s) in terms of what they believe in and what they really do in classes. There is "An inextricable relationship between teacher identity and classroom practice" (Kanno & Stuart, 2011 p. 250). Therefore, listening to teachers' voices plays a significant role when understanding their pedagogical practices to recognize what teachers do in their classrooms. Teachers are also granted the opportunity to share their opinions, ideas and thoughts, which leads to engaging in a community of practice (Wenger-Trayne & Wenger-Trayne, 2015) that fosters reflection through receiving meaningful feedback from their peers. In other words, this would help teachers feel appreciated by applying activities they consider may work best in order to give a voice to students. This proposal is stated on the importance that Goffman has claimed to different activities as a medium to frame identity construction. My view of identity-in-activity focuses on how teachers as subjects can be both: constructed by activity or can be agents in institutional frames as subjects aware of institutional structures.

I aimed at exploring how teachers have experienced working for a private institution, and how the rules and policies implemented permeate the construction of their identity. One of the common comments they made was to feel limited by the methodology they had to follow. When policies limit teachers to follow a curriculum, their identity is substituted by the institutional identity (Ball, 2015) since their role is to apply something already designed, and their contributions are not valued to build the curriculum. They usually feel frustrated and distressed, due to the fact that by being aware of those restrictions, they sometimes refuse to follow dictated

practices. That way, they got involved in a duality of either adopting what they consider was appropriate for their practice or complying with the institution policies.

To exemplify the abovementioned, a longitudinal narrative inquiry, carried out by Tsuis (2007), revealed that the identity formation is highly mediated by social and institutional structures that teachers do not usually feel comfortable with, provided that their teaching practices usually reflect what they believe in, as well as their personality. These factors constrict teachers from designing their own materials and activities, which sometimes demotivates them to go beyond their classes. For instance, teachers working at this kind of language institute mentioned that the methodology they follow does not let them change the material proposed by the institution nor apply their own material during classes.

Regarding Identity-in-activity, the struggle of following institutional structures is validated because teachers do not have the freedom to teach and put into practice their beliefs in terms of education, as well as their knowledge built throughout their personal and professional experience. Thus, their stances are distant from their teaching practice due to the different restrictions they face when working at a private language institution.

As part of teachers who have been engaged in formal and informal education to teach English, I realized that teachers' possibilities to act autonomously depend on the requirements and dynamics of the institution; whether they regard teachers as part of their decision-making or they refrain teachers to have a voice in the development of the pedagogical experience.

As a personal example, when I started working at the language institute where this study took place, I found that the methodology was somehow new for me. They used a Presentation, Practice and Production (henceforth PPP) approach, which refers to the way a class or an activity is organized, first, the presentation of the topic, then the practice section, and finally, the

production part. I was not used to working with that approach, and I had to get familiar with it in that context. Despite the fact that the methodology became pretty clear to me, with the time, I felt restrained by not being able to make decision on the approach that best suited my students' needs. Eventually, I realized that this was a common feeling among my colleagues, who were also uncomfortable about this frame.

Going back to my discussion in the justification, teachers' identity may be affected by what institutional policies establish and this is my overall interest. Since the core of this research project is teachers' identity, I came across three research questions that guided the data collection and analysis.

Research Questions

- What is the impact of English teachers' construction of their identities in the experience of working at a language institute?
- How do EFL teachers working at a private language institution see themselves as teachers?
- How do EFL teachers negotiate institutional policies in their practice when working at a private language institute?

Research Objectives

- To describe the impact of a language institution experience that shapes the construction of EFL teachers' identity.
- To interpret teachers' reflections on their role as professionals when working at a private language institute.
- To identify EFL teachers' negotiation with institutional policies through their identity-in-activity.

Having established the objectives of this study, I proceed to theoretically support my stance toward identity, identity-in-activity, and institutional policies. As further discussed in the following chapter, teachers' identity represents who we are, and how we act in our teaching environment. Hence, it recognizes the interaction with the context that surrounds us, as it is socio-culturally constructed.

Chapter 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter accounts for the literature review, presenting theoretical and research-based sources that support the idea of language teachers' identity-in-activity. The term Identity is first analyzed, since it is the macro topic in which many types of identities are displayed. Then, identity-in-activity is selected to deepen in how teacher identity is reflected in the different activities carried out, as well as the different contexts they take place in, all this within institutional policies that shape teachers' identity.

This research was developed starting from the perspective of language teacher identity, defined as not fixed and changing, in an ongoing construction. It is shaped in relation to others (Reeves, 2009). Furthermore, I discuss the theory of identity-in-activity, as a determining factor, in the sense of defining teachers' identity in practice. Based on this premise, our identity varies depending on the context as well as on the activity carried out.

Moreover, I address the influence of policies in framing teachers' identities, as they make sense of who they are and what they do while interacting with external factors such as the setting, the culture, and the political norms. Thus, they take a given position after negotiating with different power relations (Varghese et al., 2005) Therefore, I aimed at understanding how teachers make sense of who they are while working at a private language institute.

After discussing teachers' identity as fundamental in the construction of who the teachers are, I interrelated two components that allowed me to analyze and portray the activities that construct the identities of the teachers who work at the institute.

The first one is language teacher identity which includes the theory of *several selves* coined by Goffman (1959) where each person behaves according to the situation they

experience. Basically, teachers act in accordance with each of the different scenarios they work in. The second, Identity-in-activity explained by Cross & Gearon (2007), is discussed to illustrate how teachers, as subjects of their activity system, make sense of their role within that system and how they act within it (Cross, 2006). A reflection is derived from the understanding that policies shape teachers' identities into "subjects that satisfy the needs of the market" (Guerrero, 2009 p. 34) as well as how their performance is evaluated in terms of productivity, standards and quality (Ball, 2015).

The following is the exploration of the axes mentioned before and the bounds they have among them in order to support this research study.

EFL Teachers' Identities

Identity has been seen from different points of view: some authors have believed that teachers' identity is related to the social context by those people they (Richards, 2017). Additionally, Beijard, Meijer and Verloop (2004) define identity as an ongoing interpretation of one-self and being recognized in a context as a kind of person. Others have considered that teacher identity is more related to a socio cultural perceptive. Based on the previous literature, such as different theories of identity, post-sructuralist (Goffman E. , 1959), sociocultural (Cross & Gearon, 2007), constructivist ((Duff & Uchida, 1997), I understand teachers' identity as multiple and representing who we are and how we act in our teaching environment. It is socioculturally constructed by the interaction not only with our students but also with our colleagues; it is changing, and shapes and re shapes who we are in a society. According to Olsen (2008) "Cultural identity refers to the ways any person identifies with or, is influenced by, broad cultural categories such as race, class, gender, religious beliefs, sexual orientations, nationality, ethnicity, language and physical ability" (p. 4).

Meanwhile other authors such as Varghese et al., (2005), citing Borg (2017) have defined identity as "Socially, culturally and politically constructed" (p. 12). I consider that teacher identities are influenced by the culture within a context, other people in society and activities they are being part of. Finally, from a sociocultural perspective, Roth (2004) argues that identity is continuously made and remade in (mediated) activity; being in a continuous becoming. Based on the different positions mentioned before, teachers' identities are framed into a sociocultural context, where activities and people help shape and re-shape them.

Institutions hold some policies that form an identity in teachers, which in turn are derived from a higher construction that comes from the idea of a neoliberal education, seen as some good, or company. Teachers working for these institutions consciously or unconsciously shape their identity within these institutional policies that reinforce who they are or make them adopt those policies as theirs, by agreeing on what it is proposed.

Within a post-structuralist view of identity, identity does not work in isolation, it is not understood as a singular item. Instead we contemplate multiple identities because in this view it is seen as a process of becoming, though which teachers portray their identities. That is, our identities change depending on the context, activities and even people we are sharing with, and so, we avow some of them while rejecting others. In this fashion, identities are not static, they are part or a sociocultural practice. Following this idea, this project is framed in a sociocultural perspective.

For the understanding of identity, Goffman (1959) presented a new conceptualization of how identity in general is constructed. From his perspective, he used metaphors from dramaturgy in order to analyze interpersonal interactions. Goffman argues that when actors (people) are acting on stage (activity), they are conscious about being observed, and based on that, they

perform under social rules and social conventions. The actors' performance is different according to the context; backstage, front stage, etc. This is why identities take forms depending on the situation the person is living.

In other words, the author specifies two notions, which are key when describing formal and informal interactions: the *self (*how we perceive ourselves) and the *face* (how we would like to be seen by others). We can have a clear idea of who we are and, at the same time, and idea of how people would see us. In that sense we tend to change our behavior and act according to the situation/context in order to fit in society. For instance, teachers in their classrooms tend to act differently than in a parents' meeting because the level of comfort is not the same. Teachers may feel that in class they are not observed in a judgmental way as they would in a parents' meeting.

In tune with the previous discussion, the topic on language teacher identity-in-activity becomes an important topic to take into account when talking about the teaching-learning process. In language teaching, teachers may act based on what is established by the institutions, they change or adapt the way they behave or the roles they take according to the context they are immersed in, the activity they are taking part in and also the kind of people they are dealing with, because for teachers it is not the same talking to their students (who have been with them for some time and already know them) as to the administrative staff (who are more aware of punctuality, class preparation and students' results in terms of good grades).

Golombek and Johnson (2004) and Varghese et al., (2005) explained that understanding language teaching and learning as well as teachers requires having a clearer sense of who they are, their professional, cultural, political, and individual identities, which they claim, or which are assigned to them. All the factors that surround the teaching practice are part of how teachers make sense of themselves and so, what they do in and out their teaching context. This is to say

that by exploring their identities, we can comprehend more clearly what they do in classes and the reasons why those actions take place in classrooms.

From another view, identity comprises a series of events of participation and reification through which our experience and its social interpretation are informed (Wenger,1999). Then, by developing our relations with others, we produce our identity as a complex interconnection. Wenger, as well as Goffman (1959), agrees on the fact that our identity is built based on each of the experiences we have lived, the interaction we have made not only with people but also with the environment and how we are aware of it. It is formed by layers, each of them represents our experiences and our interpretations of those in order to make sense of our reality.

Wengner (1999) continues his definition of identity by affirming that "Bringing the two together through the negotiation of meaning, we construct who we are. (p. 15). In other words, identity is linked to the negotiation of our participation and reification, we make sense of who we are by giving meaning to our life experiences.

These previous definitions contribute to my understanding of identity in the way that by holding multiple identities, depending on the experiences we live, we have a better comprehension of what we do in every activity we carry out. Every action we take and every decision we make being conscious about who we are, and the way we would like others to see us. Our identity is acquired in an ongoing process where people understand their role in a system and act towards it.

A complementary definition is provided by Clark (2009) who also argues that Identities are partially given yet they are also something that has to be attained, offering a potential spot of agency within the unavoidably social process of becoming. There is a mobility in the understanding of identity, which provides the space of agency in its construction. So, by being

aware of their context and activities, teachers make decisions and exercise control over their lives trying to fit in the environment they are immersed.

All the above mentioned definitions of identity show a tendency to define it as something non-static: On the contrary, it is seen as socially constructed and it is also tied to a context and to interactions in society (Duff & Uchida,1997; Tsuis, 2007; Varghese et al., 2005). In this vein, I frame this research proposal in a sociocultural theory in which the identity is a culturally constructed sense of one's self (Butler, 1990). This is because in regards to a context, identity appears to be situated and also shared socially, politically and historically through practices (Gee,1996). This is to say that identity is negotiated by people depending on the situation and the context where they are immersed.

This identity does not work in isolation, it belongs to a society, rules, policies, and other factors that shape it to form who we are and give an explanation to what we do. According to the authors mentioned above, identity is a developmental ongoing process in relation to social practices of one's experiences. The way identity evolves is by having members of a social group participating actively in social practices. That is, identity is socioculturally constructed by the experiences people hold and share in regard to a situated setting. Accordingly, subjects also create membership and collective identity. In other words, participants of a group identify themselves and create a membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Going back to the idea of teachers' identities specifically, they decide who they are and how they want to be seen in their classrooms based on their beliefs, assumptions and previous experiences. In connection with what was discussed by Tajfel and Turner, (1986), teachers' identities are portrayed in their activities, in the way they exercise agency in their learning environment, and in the way they manage situations within different circumstances.

On the whole, identities are built upon a lot of factors such as the context, culture, beliefs, assumptions, and previous experiences, among others, that define who we are and what we do in every action we take. I analyzed teachers' identities, because it represents an opportunity to comprehend in a better way why some actions are taken, some decisions are made, as well as the agency that is exercised by teachers in the different contexts they experienced.

Gee (2001), for example, explains Identity as built around four perspectives, *nature, institution, discourse, and affinity identity*; these four ways to view identity do not work in isolation, they are interrelated and coexist and are set in a context. They serve the purpose of focusing our attention on different aspects in which these identities are formed and sustained. I consider that these perspectives complement the idea that I have been holding during this research project of how identities are constructed and the way they define who we are.

Gee (2001) provides a table in which he explains four ways to view identity, that is what he meant by identity as being *"certain kind of person"* (p. 99).

Process		Power	Source of power
1. Nature-identity: a state	developed from	forces	in nature
2. Institution-identity: a position	authorized by	authorities	within institutions
3. Discourse-identity: an individual trait	recognized in	the discourse/ dialogue	of/with "rational" individuals
4. Affinity-identity: experiences	shared in	the practice	of "affinity groups"

Table 1. Four ways to view Identity.

This table shows how identity is conceived in terms of the co-existence of 4 perspectives in order to identify how identity is constructed and preserved. According to Gee (2001), we are what we are based, first of all, on our *"natures" (p. 100),* which means that it is a state we are born with, it is recognized by ourselves or others; second of all, due to the position we occupy in society. Furthermore, because of our individual accomplishments as they are recognized by

others. Finally, we are what we are based on the experiences we have gone through within certain groups. His view agrees with the other authors' in terms of explaining that identity is socially constructed, taking into account a specific context where the teachers are immersed.

All in all, the topic of teacher identity is a concept that needs attention in terms of getting a better understanding of how teachers develop themselves and the way they perform in their classes, because their identity while teaching tends to change due to many factors such as, what they believe is best for the students, what their background experiences tell them, the way they were formed as teachers, their values, beliefs, culture, and context, among others. Goffman's theory talks about how the world is like a stage for people, where there is a front stage and a back stage (regions of life, as he calls them) in which people- in this case more precisely teachers – are actors that chose these two stages depending on the context they are being part of. For instance, if they choose the front stage they use the impression management. That is to say, that impression management deals with the fact that we as people always try to make ourselves more appealing to other people, in other words, to be accepted in the society. This may be, for example, when we as teachers are observed in class or when they are in a meeting or presentation. These moments happen conditioned to what to say and what to do in order to impress the audience and, at the same time, to be accepted by them. On the other hand, if teachers choose the back stage, they find the space to be themselves due to the fact that this a close and hidden place where people can be who they really are.

I think these two stages were a good basis for me to analyze what happened with teachers at the institution where I worked. Teachers appeared to hold a position while not being observed and they appeared to hold another one when they were doing another job without any influence of other members of the academic field. They affirmed that they do different things when they

are "alone" in their classrooms. On the other hand, they consider that when they are in meetings or under the sight of someone representing power, such as a boss, they change the way they behave. Nevertheless, I strongly believe that to understand how EFL teachers working at this kind of institution make sense of who they are and what they do in their different practices, I need to go beyond and consider how this relates to their identity construction. While conceptualizing about identity, the idea of identity-in-activity shed some light on how this could explain the way the complexity of identity construction may have been happening in the context of this institution. Consequently, I set forth the second construct of this research study: teachers' identity-in-activity.

Identity-in-activity.

In order to account for teachers' identity, and the continuous negotiation of their different roles as teachers, I decided to focus on identity-in-activity which is explained as the influence of activity to make people set positions towards their practices within specific contexts.

Before talking about identity-in-activity, the theory of Activity itself must be reviewed. The theory of Activity discussed by Engeström (1987/2015) supported the idea that every single activity we carry out, from waking up in the morning, to working and in the case of teachers, teaching by using a specific material relies on factors and situations. Those factors and situations are understood as contained in ideas, people, social concepts, tools, and rules that contribute to the purpose of making the activities possible. In other words, our different activities are influenced by external actions that allow the activity to come to reality. Engeström's theory is summarized in a triangle that talks about how the activity system works.

Figure 1 below illustrates how the activity system is developed by taking into consideration some features that make the activity possible.

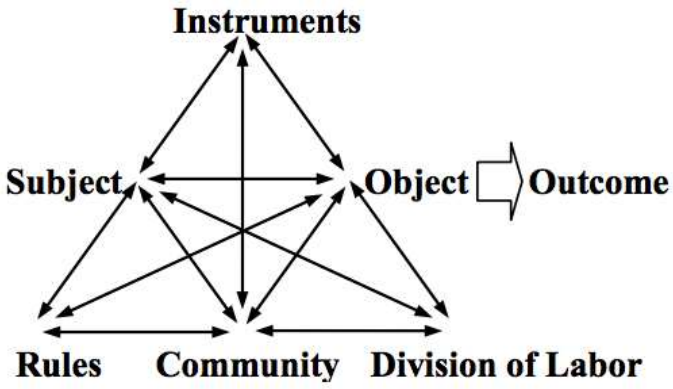


Figure 1. The structure of human activity as a system. (Engestöm, 1987. p. 41)

This triangle explains, on one hand, the different factors that influence the activity and on the other hand, the outcome that is produced in every activity. **The subject** refers to an individual at some location in a given Activity System. In this research project, the subjects would be the teachers who carry out different activities. 'Raw material', refers to the teachers as the principal source and 'problem space' has to do with the context at which activity is directed and which is modeled and transformed into outcomes, all that is defined as **the object.** In other words, the object is the activity itself, which is the result of factors working together. Activity in this research study would not refer to classes, it would deal with other kinds of situations that, in this case, teachers are part of, such as meetings, administrative activities they have to do/attend, and checking books, among others. The objects that participates in the activity is defined as **instruments**. Materials used by teachers as TVs, computers, books, and so on are the instruments that come to be part of the activity system. **Community** deals with the context and people involved in to making the activity happen, different meetings, trainings, classes, colleagues, discussions, etc. **Rules**, have to do with the social or cultural influence in the activity. Institutional policies guide the different processes of the activity. And finally, the **division of**

labor talks about how the job is split up. This last factor can be related to how the job in every activity is divided by people within the same context of the subject.

In terms of the outcomes, the activity is produced when all the factors play together to make the activity happen. This outcome of the activity is developed into a collaborative development; all these factors influence what I produce as the outcome. After having in mind that activity is the result of conditions mediated by some instruments that involve obeying a set of rules developed by a community organized and settled to develop specific tasks, it is necessary to see how this relates to identity. This is what I will now start discussing.

What I refer to teacher identity-in-activity has to do with the idea of understanding activity as a system that contributes to the identity construction. This construction is usually mediated by the system that underlies activities but it also attributes the subject with a space for agency when being aware of the mechanism that forms part of that system. Teachers as subjects of activities making sense of what they do through them. Teachers' identity in this way is also determined by who we are and how we act towards an activity in a specific context. We, as teachers, construct different identities depending on both, the activity we are carrying out and also the context we are taking part in. For instance, in the private institute where this study took part the curriculum is seen by teachers as a process developed in a top down approach. As shown in the previous sections, language teachers appear to be expected to adopt the curriculum without major debate or interpretation. Consequently, and preliminarily in my analysis, they appear to adopt an institutional identity. Going further with this discussion, this might also deal with other discussion which have underscored the lack of agency in specific professional tasks such as material selection. From the interview, the teachers' perspectives showed that they also become "implementers of a non-authentic material as they follow", textbooks, equipment, visual aids,

determined by official programs as pointed out by Quintero and Guerrero (2013) . On the other hand, it is necessary to see how this all work to produce agency.

The importance of identity-in-activity falls back onto the analysis of what teachers do in their classrooms and the way they feel about following different procedures so those critical moments of identity construction become visible. Some have said that when teachers do not have freedom to do what they consider is more convenient for certain kind of students they reproduce and legitimize discourses (Giroux, 1998). Identity-in-activity is then, framed into different discourses and context where teachers decide to choose who they are. Leontiev (1981) talks about the theory of activity in which he argues that "One individual activity has meaning in relation to its specific social context" (p. 75). This is to say that the identity-in-activity is linked to social relations. Society and the context contribute to the construction of our identity. It is not constructed in isolation, isolated it is a process that involves others, different contexts and activities. In agreement with this, Cross and Gearon (2007) reiterate that this is the process of 'becoming' rather than 'being. Basically identity is "a being in continuous becoming throughout activity systems" (Roth, 2003. P 54).

Identity-in-activity was taken in this research project as it serves the purpose of analyzing possible contradictions that may emerge between teachers' identities and activity systems. The institutional context, which is the case of the participants of this study, becomes important for this analysis considering that the institutional policies adopted this kind of language institutions may have been playing the role of shaping teachers' identity. As I have analyzed this situation, this is something teachers usually struggle with. According to Golombek, cited by Gary Barkhuizen (2017), teachers, in their activity, experiment some contradictions in their feeling, doing, and thinking. Due to these contradictions, they assume different positions that according

to Goffman could be in the 'front stage' or the 'back stage' depending on the context or activity carried out.

Identity-in-practice, another term that seems to define what I take on to define as identity-in-activity and identity-in-discourse are two concepts that have been coined to describe something that is action oriented and that is discursively constituted in most of the cases through language (Varghese, 2005). These two concepts are socioculturally constructed into situated contexts where teachers make sense of the way their identities are explored and shaped with others. In the context of teaching, teachers construct ideas of what good teaching is and who their students are, etc., socially and those constructions take specific connotations depending on the contexts where they are acquired, such as the university, as students, etc. Those constructions struggle with the rules of an institution that direct to conduct their teaching. In this sense, teachers can also show resistance. When teachers show resistance or dissent on the way they teach, the exercise agency through professional development in order to have a better understanding of their identity and the reason why they make different decisions in their teaching.

Then, Agency is understood as "the ability to exercise control over our life" (Biesta, Field, Hodkinson, Macleod, & Goodson, 2011). This is to say that for instance, when teachers decide not to follow the methodology implemented or proposed by any kind of institution, or try to modify it into something that fits more the personality and beliefs of the teacher, that teacher is exercising agency. Teachers, as Goffman (1959) affirms, are aware of the existence of social contexts that they are part of, there are some established ways of acting, rules or models to follow, and the teacher, as an agent, has the possibility to decide when that person is able to be who he/she really is (back stage) or how he/she would like to be seen by others (front stage).

Echoing Goffman, people in general, act in a different way when they are in a social setting and also when they are alone. When they are alone they practice what to say and how to act for the time when they are in the front stage (in a social setting).

Teachers' identities then, are portrayed and perceived during all the stages of the teaching-learning processes, due to the fact that teachers reflect their beliefs and experiences in every activity they design. For instance, when some teachers have the opportunity to have freedom in their curriculum, they analyze students' learning processes and based on that they are able to design some materials or activities that could be more meaningful for students so, the teaching-learning process would be more enriching for both sides. Other teachers do not have the chance to change anything, they are asked to follow an established syllabus, curriculums and activities. Here is where, according to Golombek (2004), teachers experience some tensions because they explore the cognitive and emotional dissonance and find contradictions in what they think and do in their classes. Teachers take positions based on who they are or who they have to pretend to be towards the activity or context they are being part of.

They sometimes reflect upon some questions such as, who they are? (Thomas & Beauchamp, 2007), Why they change who they are? if they are contradicting who they consider they are as teachers. This is when teachers feel as if the policies restrict them from being who they are, by adopting institutional policies that sometimes do not contribute to letting that inner person be, but instead make it hide it more to fit the established.

Teachers' identity-in-activity is explored to understand the complexity of teachers' identity in general. So that, the connections teachers have with their beliefs, their context, the policies they are immersed in, as a whole, defines the position a teacher holds. However, as discussed in my introduction, in the contradictory world of marketization in which education

seems to have evolved, it is relevant to say that researchers have argued that, teachers' identities, views, and ideas may be framed into structures that institutional policies have constituted. Since the criticism relies on seeing the quality education affected by the purpose of marketization, it is necessary to understand activities also as immersed in economic interests which mediate with what they decide to choose as professionals. The next section will delve into explaining how teachers' identity-in-activity may be affected by what is constituted in the demands of institutional policies.

Institutional Education Policies

After finding connections between teachers' identity and teachers' identity-in-activity, the construct of educational policies plays an important role in guiding teachers perform teaching in certain ways that may be or not influenced by external factors which they may be aware or not. This is why in this section I try to show a critical view of institutional policies that demands understanding them as constituted in power relations that shape them as part of a system that may influence the subject's identity. In doing so, this section starts by defining what policies are, as well as the aspect of marketization that seem to go along the policy making process. Then I argue how those institutional policies tend to frame teachers into conditioned discourses and a determined performance. Finally, I address on the possibilities of how teachers may exercise agency toward those institutional policies that set them in different positions they have to follow. These connections allow me as a researcher to explore the impact these policies have on their identities as well as how activities also mediate their identity formation by analyzing their different opinions in regard to their roles as teachers and how they act in different context as well as how they feel institutional policies affect them.

To start with, policies in general are "ideological and political artefacts which have been constructed within a particular historical and political context" (Burton & Weiner, 1990, p. 205). Some of the arguments developed around the understanding of policies have criticized the ideological positions that underpin policies. Within those arguments, some have said that they serve the purpose of standardizing processes and favor processes of evaluation just for the sake of finding easier ways to evaluate and look for efficacy (Bentley, 2010). This criticism is addressed to show how policies may have also worked as a main purpose to satisfy the market. (Guerrero, 2009). Education is nowadays seen as a product where policies provide an order to make the process of teaching or learning 'easier', in the way, that by numbers, entities measure the performance of teachers or students. There is like a math equation to describe someone's performance (Ball, 2003). Educational policies, more precisely, are the principles and rules that institutions adopt from a higher entity that designs them to establish an organizational schema to follow.

According to Kogan's (1975) perspective of policy making, this process starts as a way to achieve goals or solve problems, in which educators and policy makers designed strategies to create interventions in order to solve the predicaments identified. A policy model that summarizes Kogan's position was designed by Jennings (1977) . The process begins with the initiation (validation of the existence of a problem) then, there is a stage called reformulation of opinion (opinions are gathered about the problem) after that, alternatives emerge (options are presented) later, there is a discussion and debate (the options are transformed into policy proposals) and finally, the implementation is carried out (the policy is operationalized). This kind of policy making needs to be managed and developed by experts in the field of education.

Teachers, who are the ones in their classrooms on within the education field, have many contributions to enrich this process whose objective is education improvement.

As it is seen in the review of literature, it appears that this process is developed by holding a neoliberal positions in which education is seen as some good or product that can be sold and purchased by anyone just by paying a monetary cost (Torres, 2009). Since the tendency for policy making is to be developed by economists or people who care about numbers, results and profit, education is not seen as a tool that transform realities (Ministry of Education, 2012). This kind of important decisions are made by people whose majors are not in the field of education. Since these people are administrators and economist, they see education as a business, it has to produce profit to be able to enrich the economy of the nation. It is fundamental for taking teachers and educators into consideration to create policies in the field of education.

This neoliberal stance is a linear policy model, since the process cannot change the order or skip steps. The development of this policy model has been challenged through the time, due to the fact that this kind of policies 'portray policy generation (people that are regulated for stricter rules and policies) as remote and detached from implementation' (Bowe, Ball, & Gold, 1992, p.17). Policy then 'gets applied' to people by a chain of implementers (Bowe, Ball, & Gold, 1992). This is to say that this policy making should not be analyzed in a linear way, but as a process that is made and re–made throughout the implementation, as a cycle, made up of 'policy context'. (Bowe, Ball, & Gold, 1992, p.17).

Policies in general depend on the context they have been created for, as well as how people interpret and implement them in different settings. It is not the same applying policies that were created in Europe, for people with different social factors that may interfere with the education, to a country as Colombia, where issues such as famine, displacement, poverty, etc.,

affect students and so, their right to study. More precisely, in private language institutions students usually get in debt to study a foreign language, because of the idea of learning a foreign language as a way to get better opportunities in life. This kind of institutions continue reproducing methodologies that were designed for specific and very different contexts where learning is guaranteed. In a context where policies are applied without taking into account the needs of the context may affect the conditions of learning, as well as work opportunities and professional values.

In Colombia, linguistic policies for teaching English have also been seen as 'linear' or 'unidirectional'. Several authors have asserted that this way of developing policies in Colombia has underlined a neoliberal ideology which has also supported models of marketization. It has been said that policies follow foreign models that attempt to standardize the local needs (Guerrero, 2009). "Basic Standards of Foreign Language Skills: English" (Mineducacion, 2016a) defines in its document the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CERF) as a tool to compare the English learning in Colombia with the international standards. This framework has been chosen by the Colombian Minister of Education (MEN) as the way to make Colombia bilingual without full understanding of the social and economic needs. As I have been arguing so far, this kind of framework perpetuates the imposition of global discourses and languages over the other languages existing in a country just to fit the trends in the market (Guerrero, 2009).

In this vein and going back to the discussion of identity, it can be argued that teachers are guided to adopt an identity that might not be theirs. For instance, Torres (2009) claims that "we find each other in a colonial conflict (we do not know for sure who were are)"(p.5) . We are always naturally looking for trends, places to fit, and things to follow, but we do not necessarily

trace back our own culture, native languages, our identity in general to choose our local languages and to stop the perpetuation of international discourses.

From that perspective, we tend to acquire ideologies and construct ourselves on the basis of those surrounding ideologies (Torres, 2009). In this case, policies influence people to believe that becoming bilingual (in terms of English and Spanish) is a way to reach the Western culture, we do not go against those ideas because we are unconsciously created on those discourses (Torres, 2009).

I think in local education the option of choosing a second language for being bilingual should not be limited to foreign languages (usually English, French and German). Native languages should be offered to people in order not to contribute the disappearance of indigenous languages that are part of the cultural patrimony of any nation. Education should not be seen as business, as it is seen by the government, which adopted the Education for Work and Development as a program to train people in different skills by allowing language institutions to manage it as a business.

Marketization and the emergence of Education for Work and Development.

Within this discussion of managing education as a business, marketization of language teaching has also been seen in the production of second language acquisition as business (Ball S, 2015) in which people with high income can access to be "bilingual". I propose to analyze this phenomenon in private language institutions by mixing the concepts of identity, negotiation and marketization. In the marketization discussed from the view of education and teaching and learning, it appears that also universities and schools have also changed their vision of education for something more similar to marketing. According to Ball (2015), education has been translated into a product. It has become some good and where institutions are providers of

services and parents and clients are the demand in this market. This is to say that the view of education is not seem the same way among teachers, since they perceive themselves as implementers of curriculums, but also among people, since parents, nowadays are looking for the best good (institution) to enroll their students in. Within this same ideology, the MEN created the Education for Work and Human Development to meet the necessities of nowadays education caring more about productivity and updating in different aspects in a short time (Mineducacion, 2016a).

'Education for Work and Development' seems to be the guidelines that language institutions in general are based on. This means that language institutions are framed in providing a service that is offered to people to achieve their goals in a short time for training purposes. Law 1064 of 2006, Article 2 describes it as follows: The government recognizes Education for Work and Human Development as an essential factor in the educational process of the person and the dynamic component in the training of technicians and experts in the arts and crafts (Colombian Ministry of Education, 2006). Therefore, the way these policies are stated reflects neoliberal interest and highlights the need to analyze private institutions as products that have been derived from those policies.

This kinds of guidelines are offered to look attractive to people, since by paying a low price compared to prices for students taking university majors and the fact that they study less time, it is possible to earn good money. This is also underscored by the idea that studying under a program such as 'Education for Work and Development' is sometimes even more profitable than a professional graduated from a university. These circulating ideas about the advantages of these institutions make them appealing in terms of saving time and money.

Private language institutions tend to take advantage of these needs which are constructed based on the market needs. Needs such as being a bilingual by the time students finish their professional majors, getting an English level for traveling abroad or getting a better job. Those ideas which are grounded on fitting education into a profitable business.

Education for Work and Development in the context of Colombia then, is a service offered with the aim of complementing, updating, training in academic or labor aspects to obtain certificates of occupational aptitude (In article 5 of Law 115 of 1994). According to the MEN ,this training program demands the institution to be permanent, personal, social, and cultural to complement the integral formation of the student. The MEN, by establishing these requirements, can evaluate if this kind of institutions meet the requirements to stay in business. The provision of the educational service is characterized by organizing an institutional educational project which reflects flexible curricula without restrictions to the system of levels and degrees proper to formal education (Law 115 of the MEN, 1994). Based on what was mentioned before, establishments that offer the Education for Work and Human Development service have transformed the idea of institutions as educational and formative places into companies that provide services based on the laws of supply and demand, aiming to have a more profitable notion (Torres, 2009).

This kind of institutions are created based on the Law 115 of the MEN ,1994 and then modified by the decree Nº 4904, 2009. It offers and functions in provision of the educational service for 'The Education for work and Human development program'. According to their constitution and the theoretical discussion developed here, I infer that those policies contribute to, make not only education but also the English language a commodity (Ball S, 2015). I said this

because English appears as a consumption object that contributes to the imposition of foreign approaches that do not take into account our context. (Guerrero, 2009).

Others have also seen this when analyzing linguistic policies in Colombia (see e.g. Usma, 2009). Since English is claimed to be a global language, we are trying to adopt it due to the supply and demand marketing ideology. This market sells the vision of seeing English as an opening door to succeed, to find better opportunities in life and as a unique access to the globalized world. Consequently, when people see English as a way to obtain a better job, it is basically seen as an instrumental object rather than as a means to access and understanding 'the other', recalling the words of Usma (2009) learning the language to understand the other is one of the main objectives of language learning.

People nowadays are seeing learning languages as a way to improve economic conditions rather than as a way to approach others, o communicate with others; and, companies take advantage of this idea by highlighting them as a possibility to 'succeed' in life. This is sometimes accompanied by other material acquisitions that include purchasing books or courses. Languages academies or institutions have identified this niche as a profitable business in which "prospect students" buy their dreams by acquiring some "good". Here is where teachers find a predicament between managing this kinds of institutions as business, as something profitable or as a place to create knowledge. As seen in the diagnosis of the research problem, teachers feel this kinds of institutions do not take into consideration their contributions in terms of education, their beliefs; their identity. Instead, they seem to be more interested in selling their goods, which uncritically also adopt foreign teaching approaches that were not designed to work having in mind the conditions of the local.

Therefore, this goes back to my assertion of teachers struggling when following policies that are designed for companies that are more interested in making money and developing different goals. As it will be seen later in this study, one of the consequences is reflected on teachers expressions that show their identities are many times overshadowed by this kind of policies and they feel has an impact on their work, for example not having a significant part in their own teaching-learning process.

As having discussed how the marketization has taken place in the Colombian education by guidelines such as the Education for Work and Development, I want to focus now on how the policies adopted by the government might impact teachers' identities.

Teachers' identity: struggles with institutional policies.

Teachers' identity in relation to institutional policies plays a crucial role, since according to Ball (2015) this is the era of numbers, and teachers' identity is defined by institutions as *performance.* A key term to understand what teachers usually struggle with is 'performativity', which is explained by Ball (2003) as a mode of regulation of processes and teachers that is done by judgments, punishments, rewards and comparisons. These controls prevent teachers from feeling some freedom in their classes, since they are judged and controlled by supervisors. Numbers have become a tool for measuring people's performance. Teachers, more precisely, are assessed by following a checklist, where numbers define them and their teaching into productivity, which is measured by numbers. Performativity is nowadays a common behavior that institutions develop in their employees. Teachers in a performativity system are controlled by the system. This is to say that, since they are measured, compared and judged, by the different academic institutions, the way it has an impact on them is not positive, due to the fact that they tend to follow what the system demands.

These behaviorist performance also causes that they exert performativity in their own teaching by; measuring students, defining them with a number based on their productivity or the like. Therefore, teachers lose sight of what education is. It is like a cycle in which they are measured by the coordinators, the coordinators are measured by the boss and the boss, is measured by the Ministry of Education. The following figure represents graphically this measuring cycle.

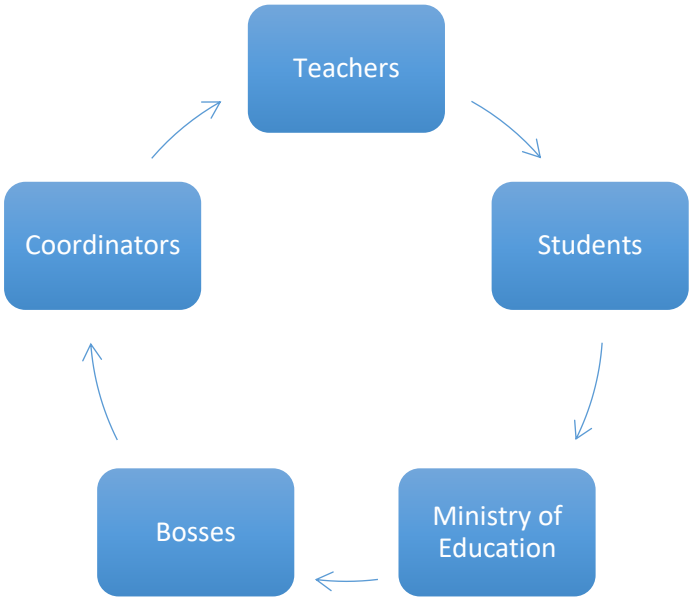


Figure 2. Measuring cycle. Institutional policies.

Teachers involved in this marketization cycle are described in three different ways as described by Guerrero (2009) First, as *Invisible* referring to those teachers that are not taken into account by the government when it comes to make decisions. In this vein, the government assumes that what the main representatives of the Ministry of Education and the party declares is what is best for the decisions about the education of the country, leaving aside teachers, the principal actors in education. Second, as *Clerks*, for those who obey and follow instructions from a superior who knows 'best'. These teachers usually, in order to keep their jobs, try to avoid giving an opinion or participating due to the fear of losing a stable job. This is a hard situation

that is endured since finding a job in Colombia has been mostly seen as difficult. And finally, as *technicians/marketers,* a metaphor in order to define those teachers who work as employees of a 'Factory' (School/institution) whose 'products' (students) are there for the sake of satisfying the needs of a market.

A similar position is presented by Ball (2003) who coincides and adds elements that contribute to the understanding of the role policies play in education. He criticizes that current education reforms try not only to change what teachers do in their classes, but also who they are. Their identity is involved in the way their performances are measurable in terms of productivity, targets, competition and cost-effective by administrators, state officials and national officials. They have been building up their identity through policies. Teachers' identities are developed within institutional policies that measure them in terms of their performances being successful or unsuccessful, on outcomes losing sight of who teachers are, their values, morality, beliefs etc.

A research study carried out in the UK by Jeffrey and Wood (1998), showed that by contrasting their teaching with policy demands, one of the teachers felt some guilt about her teaching. This teacher came out with different questions such as "Is this right? Am I doing this right away? Does this cover what I am supposed to be covering", etc., in order to try to justify her intuitions when applying something new or changing what was already established. This kind of feelings is what I, as a teachers working at private language institutions as well as my colleagues, feel since following the curriculum, protocols, and materials is considered a 'must'. These teachers say they sometimes reflect upon not only if what they are teaching is accurate for students, but also if their role is as real teachers or just implementers of curriculums and activities.

In the same line of thought, in the context of Colombia, Correa and Usma (2013) argue that policy making is being done top down, since the organizations leave aside the opinions and contributions teachers may have in regard to the necessities of each context's necessities. Stakeholders play an important role in the policy making process, due to the fact that they have taught in different contexts, so they know, probably based on case studies how some policies could be formulated and how those policies may work taking into account the different teaching scenarios we have in our country. They contribute by designing policies and taking into account factors that teachers and education in general deal with every day. What different countries usually do is to adopt and adapt international policies and frameworks, and that is when nations live aside their multiple contexts a as well as their reality. These different factors should be taken into account when designing policies to contribute to the creation of authentic materials to make learning more meaningful.

From this perspective, it would be naive to think that in Colombia we have homogeneous students and that one methodology and material will work for all of them. The way the education has been based on textbooks as the primary sources for a successful leaning process, contributes to the standardization and marketization of educational knowledge (Escobar, 2013) because of the idea that a single teaching method could not be valid for all types of context (González, 2007). Materials, such as text books should be authentic material, taking into account the culture where this material is presented, not assuming a universal or globalized culture. It is not that students should not know about other cultures, on the contrary, they should learn about other cultures but value their own to compare, contrast and learn from different cultures around the world.

The top-down policy making process is one of the aspects that motivated me to research about teachers' identity-in-activity. While working at this kind of institutions, I noticed that what Ball (2015) talks about in his different articles and books reflected what I was experiencing at work. At first, I followed what was established because I needed the money, I did not realize that what I wanted to do was something different, but then I started finding gaps in different aspects, such as the methodology, the importance the institution gave to the economic interest over the academic one, and so for. This is the topic I am interested in, since in this kind of institutions teachers adopt, as Ball's (2003) calls it, a refusal position in order not to be the kind of person produced by the system. Later in my analysis, I will deeply explore how this appears in the participants of my study.

Base on Ball's illustrations, in the public sector in the UK, also guided me to link the idea of identity construction based on activity as he shows how teachers assume different positions in different contexts. Having the idea that activity and contexts may provide subjects with opportunities or barriers to construct their identities I see activity theory as a way to relate the construction of identities, in the frame of policies which are neoliberally constituted. By doing so, I think teachers may not only be influenced but have possibilities to develop transformations. Overlapping this idea to the Colombian context, I can assert at a private sector that situation is quite different, due to the fact that teachers have to follow procedures and protocols that are designed by the administration and must be applied the way it is established. It is different in the way that there is no choice for teachers to change anything as in the public sector in the UK.

Last but not least, I also find useful to review how policies are connected to agency too. Despite the constrained context in which teachers appear to be, Ball's arguments claim that teachers do exert agency through their identity construction. This is why the next discussion is

addressed to show how studies have shown how agency is exercised within the frame of what appears to be oppressive policies.

Agency, policies, and identity

Torres (2009) builds on these ideas of marketization of language by saying, for example, that "The role of foreign language teachers consists of acting as public relation professionals who are replaceable in the gear of the welfare and progress market guaranteed by language training" (p14). Since there is a high demand of English language teachers, they can be replaced easily if they do not follow the pre-established expectations. It is assumed that there are a lot more teachers who may adapt themselves to this kind of conditions where changing imposed views in terms of curriculum appear not to be acceptable. However, Ball (2015) considers that there is a key aspect in this marketization of education, and it consists of the way this system can encourage us to think about ourselves as teachers.

Biesta et al., (2011) affirm that there are 3 elements that are necessary to distinguish in order to understand teachers' identity and agency. The first one refers to 3 dimensions that compose agency: the influence of timeline: the past, the orientations to the future, and the relationship with the present. The timeline serves the purpose of analyzing identity and agency chronologically in a timeline, in which past, present and future experiences are seen as attributes that affect what teachers do and who they are. In this view, agency is exerted linked not only to their beliefs and background experiences, but also to those activities they develop every day that require their decision making. The second has to do with the fact that agency depends on the context people are immersed in. In other words, agency is mediated by the activity. And finally, agency can be exercised by the teachers in the way that by holding a high or low degree of agency according to their professional development process they can act differently following

who they are. With this last element, teachers are conscious of analyzing what could convey them more in terms of analyzing their options to teach and materials to use for example, they reflect upon the different circumstances they are living and in words of Goffman, they act based on their self- performance or hidden self to make decisions.

According to what is stated in this discussion, one of the roles of teachers is then, to exercise agency in the activities they carry out. This appears to contribute to make agency possible by following who they are as teachers and their beliefs. However, as explained above, in the era of marketization this possibility is not clearly seen by entities that work on making policies and within those, by language institutions that adopt policies due to the supply and demand of the market.

Based on Ball's contributions, there is a reflective point in our different activities to recognize ourselves either successfully, or average, or unsuccessfully and, as a result of that to take responsibility for working on ourselves, improving ourselves, making ourselves better practitioners. This idea leads us to think that, despite the institutional policies, the system in general as well as the way the different educational entities measure us by our performance, we may still construct identities that play significant roles in our teaching. I build on Goffman's definition of activity as a space to construct identity to reinforce that awareness of the conditions of every day context, subjects are knowledgeable and this provides agency to act. In this line of thought, we perform to fit circumstances and expectations of the audience. Our identity is affected by activities and conditions to act according to what society in general demands from us.

To conclude, teachers' identity has many features that negotiate in the construction of who a teacher is and how a teacher teaches. As seen in the previous discussion, their identity is determined by their previous experiences, what they believe in, and their reasoning in terms of

deciding what and how to carry out what they do. It is also shaped by the institutional educational policies that most of the time, play a determinant role in their teaching affecting who their identity since they adopt an institutional identity that sometimes they disagree with. These policies in this study were found important as they appear to frame teachers' views in the way they apply protocols in which everything is established from the beginning of the class to the end. In this context, it seems that there is no chance for teachers to contribute to possible changes because those institutions come up with protocols and methodologies leaving aside the possibility for teachers to be themselves and to exercise agency in their classrooms. Agency should be exercised to let our identity construction fit the activity not the policies to make us fit. Basically, it depends on us to either refuse or adopt policies to make the change we want to see in education. To understand the way those negotiations or struggles of identity construction mediated by policies and activities is the main concern of this study. In the following section I will explain what the methodology proposed was in order to reach that objective.

Chapter 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The previous chapter introduced the theoretical framework that underpins this research project. The topics of identity in general, identity-in-activity and institutional policies were analyzed and interconnected to answer: *What is the impact of English teachers' construction of their identities in the experience of working at a language institute? How do EFL teachers working at a private language institution see themselves as teachers*? And finally, *How do EFL teachers negotiate institutional policies in their practice when working at a private language institute?*

This chapter presents narrative inquiry as the design implemented within a qualitative research, that bases its analysis on human experiences. It also accounts for a description of the participants and the context, the instruments and techniques, such as an interview where teachers' narratives were analyzed and a focus a group in which scenarios where applied to discuss about participants' role as English teachers. Finally, I discuss the ethical considerations and the role I adopted as a researcher.

Type of study

This research project aligns with a qualitative study because this kind of research serves the purpose of providing the researcher with opportunities to have a better understanding of a social phenomenon, for in this research study, teachers' identity construction. Besides, it respects the meaning of how people interpret and build their world and experiences they have (Merriam, 2009). Teachers making sense of their role as teachers within the frame of institutional policies is what this study looks for tracing. I choose this type of study because I was concerned with the

exploration of how teachers made sense of their experiences while working at a private language institute.

Yin (2011) proposes five features of qualitative research in order to obtain a better vision of the teachers' identity as a whole. These 5 features are: 1) studying the meaning of people's lives, under real world conditions. In my case, I used this principle as part of the questions to format my interviews. I asked participants different questions taking into account their context and reality, due to the fact that by talking about their lived experiences, I could understand how teachers make sense of their different activities.

2) presenting the views and perspectives of people. During this stage, I interpreted their answers by paraphrasing what they mentioned to seek for confirmation or clarification. I wanted to confirm my interpretations and foster their opinion if they had something to add. 3)converging the contextual conditions within which people live. Their immediate context and reality were taken into account, so some of the questions related to different activities carried out in the working placessince they spend eight hours, six days a week there. 4) contributing insights into existing or emerging concepts that may help to explain human social behavior. In this feature, language teachers' identity was analyzed under the perspective of activity by trying to get more insights based on categories that emerged from the analysis.

Theory was confronted to what participants expressed through their narratives, in order to understand how their identity was influenced by different factors and how they mediated or negotiated those factors to continue preforming some activities. And finally, principle 5) striving to use multiple sources of evidence, helped me collect the data that was gathered through a preliminary questionnaire, an interview, and a focus group. They were used to trace commonalities among their different narratives.

In regard to analyzing identity, which is the center of discussion of this thesis, Norton (2011) argues that a qualitative research is a more appropriate paradigm to use when analyzing identity since identity itself is multiple, changing and is not static. More specifically, this paradigm focuses on narratives, and also highlights teachers' voices so they are heard, explored, and analyzed based on their experiences, their activities, and contexts. By using narratives, teachers have the opportunity to share thoughts, stories, or ideas, when doing so, they depict their understanding of the world and in those narratives their identity is printed in the way it is unique and honest. "Much of our experience is formed through listening to and telling stories, selfhood and narrative are extremely linked" (Rio, 2003, p. 559).

Stories become a way to express ourselves in the way that we make sense of our lives and the way we act with others. Narrative Inquiry talks about how through stories we as humans understand our lives (Andrews, Squire & Tambokou, 2008). In a narrative inquiry approach, through narratives, teachers are able to express their opinions freely and that could help me understand how their identities are portrayed (Rio, 2003).

Consequently, through their narratives, teachers' opinions were the most important pillar to analyze in order to have a better understanding of how teachers perceive themselves as teachers working at a language institute, while using the five features of qualitative research coined by Yin (2011). "when teachers share their stories with collaborating researchers they display both their lived experiences and their understandings of these. (Wett, 2008, p.374). Therefore, I chose this qualitative interpretive approach to gain new insights about the way teachers make sense of their different activities through their narratives.

Narratives

The research method that uses narratives as a resource of search is known as *Narrative Inquiry.* Connelly and Zu (2008) argue that "narrative inquiry is a conception of the phenomenal world in which experience is mediated by story" (p.221). The stories that people tell contain so much of their understanding of the world, their experiences show the way they see life and through narratives they share all those views with others. This kind of research method is useful in my study, since through their experiences, I was able to understand how teachers made sense of their world and so, their activities, as well as the way they coped with different factors involved in those activities carried out (administrative activities, meetings, trainings etc.).

As I said, my focus was on identity underpinned on the ideas developed by Goffman (1959) in which activity works as the basis for its construction. Having this perspective, I follow Barkhuizen and Wette (2008) who have focused narrative analysis on teachers' work, and who state that the main purpose of narrative inquiry is to understand the experiences of teachers in the particular contexts in which they teach. On this basis, this research project attempts to engage language teachers working at this language institution to share their stories, anecdotes and life experiences in the form of narratives in order to elicit in-depth information related to their activities and their influence in identity construction. Hence, my role as a researcher was, as stated by these authors, to try to understand what these teachers express taking into account the context where they were teaching. In the words of Connelly and Clandinin (1999), teachers' context is their 'professional landscapes': a place where they probably reflect their most important experiences as teachers.

Context of the study

This study was conducted with a group of in-service English as foreign language teachers working at a private language institute in Bogotá, Colombia. One important aspect of this private institution as the context of the study is that the methodology is based on a didactic sequence called Presentation, Practice and Production (henceforth PPP) which is based on Harmer's (2001) contribution. This paradigm has to do with the fact that knowledge becomes a skill to practice and it is learned by parts leading to the whole. This is a well-known structural view of lesson planning in the ELT field. In addition, the material that teachers should implement is made by a particular international publisher. This material is also used in order to classify the different levels of English proficiency that students are expected to achieve. "The books used in this institution are the digital version of the adapted versions: for English Interchange of Cambridge University Press" (Insitutions' PEI, 2017). These books are already organized into classes, they contain grammatical and cultural topics from around the world. Teachers explain and develop the themes and exercises by using the books.

In the same vein, teachers at this institution are expected to meet fulfill specific criteria of a pre- determined profile that the institution establishes: In the PEI (2017) (Proyecto Educativo Institucional) ,there are profiles established for teachers to be promoted. Some of the general requirements are, for example, a teacher must hold a bachelor's degree as a foreign language teacher, or hold a TKT, a B2 or C1 proficiency level as described in the CEF (Common European Framework), certified by an international standard exam (e.g. TOEFL, IELTS, MET etc.) and a minimum six months of experience working as a language teacher. (p. 166). These are the requirements established by the Ministry of Education, for a language institute to have a quality certification and to continue in business.

Usually, full time teachers work in two different schedules, either from 5:50 to 1:40 pm or from 1:20 to 9:10 pm. Classes regularly last 1 hour 30 minutes and the number of students per classroom is six. Teachers follow the same English textbook and they can have different classes in the same block of class from the same level. In other words, Level A1 classes with six different students and their classes may be different as well (class1, class 2, class 10, class 15, class 20, and 21. The book has a separate section for each class, each lesson has a listening activity, grammar and exercises based on a grammatical topic.

The language institute counts on classrooms equipped with TVs, internet and computers available for the English lessons. It also has a multimedia room with enough number of computers for students' usage. The conditions for working at this kind of institution are good enough for teachers, however, there are factors participants struggle with and it is something that will be discussed during the data analysis. This context in this research project plays an important role, since participants could perceive that there were benefits as well as downsides with which they had to deal with by adopting different positions toward teaching at this kind of language institutions.

Participants:

As mentioned before, this research project is carried out with four in-service EFL teachers working at a private language institute. Aspects such as gender were not considered as criterion to choose them, but they happen to be split in half and half unwittingly. Two men and two women voluntarily accepted to participate in the research project. These were between 28 to 33 years old. In this group, curiously all teachers graduated from public universities and have had working experience at both, public and private institutions for more than 2 years. Two of the participants hold a master degree in the ELT, another teacher holds a specialization and the

fourth participant has the undergraduate program. Also, they have been working at this institute for more than 3 years. Even though I did not have these criteria established when looking for the participants, I thought this aspect may have been important for the analysis, due to the fact that, since they have worked for a long time at the same institution, they may have seen or experienced changes in terms of methodology and institutional policies and this may bring insights for my study. These teachers have had different coordinators and so, they have seen changes in terms of what they demand from students. Since they are very reflective teachers, at meetings they reflected upon the activities they carried out at the language institution by giving their point of views based on their beliefs and background experiences.

At the beginning, eight people were invited to be participants of this research project, but due to the amount of time they had, only four of them accepted to participate. They were given a consent form in which aspects such as a providing fictitious names were used so their personal identity was endorsed to be protected.

Following Patton's ideas (2002) who argues that by purposeful sampling, researchers select in preference to others in order to look for cases with rich information to give an answer to the question under study, these four teachers were chosen based on purposeful convenient sampling based on the fact that they were really interested in expressing their opinions in regard to their role as teachers at the private language institute, they seem to be committed with the quality of education and with their work as teachers in general. Among the eight initial teachers, I actually identified the teachers who were more reflective than others, those reflective teachers were the 4 ones willing to participate, so that resulted in a benefit for my study.

Data collection instruments and procedures

The objective of this research project is to describe the factors that shape the construction of teachers' identity based on activity at a language institute. Data were gathered through a preliminary questionnaire, an interview and a group discussion. They were initially designed by using matrices, in order to connect the contents of the questions and situations asked to the participants. The first step consisted of gathering initial thoughts and opinions from teachers through a preliminary questionnaire. Afterwards, an interview was designed based on the teachers' interests identified during the preliminary questionnaire. Finally, a focus group was held in order to confirm and expand the information that what I gathered.

As I mentioned briefly before, a preliminary questionnaire (Appendix 1) was chosen as a way to elicit teachers' narratives in terms of their opinions in regard to their teaching experiences while working at a language institution (methodology, institutional policies, opinions towards teaching at this place). Open questions were formulated in order to allow respondents to have freedom when answering. Cohen, Manion & Morris (2000) state that open questions, permit respondents to give a free response in their own terms, to explain their answers, and avoid the limitations of pre-set categories. This kinds of questions suited my research, since they guided teachers to answer freely, to discuss and even confront their own positions towards education.

The preliminary questions were designed based on informal talks with teachers. In these informal talks, I collected ideas in which teachers expressed issues related to the institute where this research took place. Besides, perceptions in regards to their professional experience were gathered. This questionnaire contributed to identify initial topics of discussion to deepen in for the next data collection instruments. For instance, I identified that teachers expressed some discomfort while teaching at this language institution. This commonality identified from their

narratives guided me to deepen in topics that were recurrently mentioned, such as framing policies, lack of freedom in their teaching, adoption of a position while being and not being observed etc. These preliminary findings were important in the way that they gave me insights about the paths and topics to follow so that a better understanding of their identity, their activities and the factors they struggle with was achieved.

After identifying common topics, they were interested in, I designed more questions to expand the issues they were more affected by or the ones they struggled with such as policies, protocols or materials. These initial findings provided me with the initial topics to tackle

The first instrument that I used to collect data was a semi-structured interview (Appendix 2). According to Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007), interviews allow participants to be the interviewers or interviewees, to discuss their interpretations of the world they are part of. As mentioned before, this instrument was designed based on the topics identified in the preliminary questionnaire, some open questions were formulated along with some prompts to gain all the participants' perspectives, feelings, and impressions. During this interview, the participants started to overly provide answers by telling me some anecdotes. They reflected upon their role as teachers at this institution as well as what they considered their role as teacher was. All this was fruitful since they also connected with their role in society. They particularly expressed how they struggled with the methodology they followed and the institutional policies they had to adhere to since they considered their role in society was not being implementers of curriculums, which was the way they felt while teaching at this kind of language institutions.

Heigman and Croker (2009) say that an interview is a conversation with purpose. The purpose of my interview was to analyze what teachers do in their classrooms, how teachers feel about the job they do and how the activities they are supposed to do it at this institution affect

them. I underlined these areas as possible spaces for them to portray their identities. In the second data collection session, a focus group was implemented, in which a group discussion was developed to confirm information obtained in the interview and to expand the opinions and ideas provided by the participants.

During the interview the topics that emerged from their narratives were institutional policies, agency, and positions they took towards education. After the interview, the focus group served the purpose of deepening in the topics identified during the previous two steps, it also helped to confirm and reaffirm some of the position that participants have in regards to the different topics they shared with me in their narratives. Feeling as robots, implementers of curriculum, framed by policies as well as the lack of freedom in their teaching practices, were some of their common opinions.

The second data collection instrument chosen for this research project was a group discussion, which is defined as an informal discussion among a group of selected individuals about a particular topic (Wilkinson, 2004) The purpose of this focus group was to confirm how teachers made sense of the different activities and experiences they shared with me, as well as their role working at this private institute, and how the different activities they carry out in the institute help them construct their identity. The particular topics that were discussed during these stages were related to professional development topics such as methodologies, teaching experiences, trends in teaching, and so on.

Teachers positioned themselves toward different scenarios proposed (imaginary situations that had some similarities to experiences they have lived or on the contrary, that they have not lived and would like to experience) that let them discuss and reflect upon them. For instance, one of the scenarios debated was "the teacher is not being observed so, he follows the

methodology in a different order. He uses alternative material in his classes and provides the students with extra exercises to help them have a successful class". Teachers participated by providing me with their opinions and by relating these situations to their experiences. Commonalities were identified along the whole focus group among the participants' answers.

A piloting stage was developed and it consisted of employing the instruments to the four teachers who did not take part of this research. This process helped me refine the questions, avoid repeating topics or questions that were similar and to create more clear questions that could allowed me to understand the phenomenon in a better and clearer way. By gathering data from the three instruments, I was able to identify commonalities and relevant topics for them. Their identity-in-activity was expected to emerge from their narratives and corroborated their different positions towards identity construction and institutional policies within a private language institution context.

The Researcher's Role and Ethical Issues

Having worked at language institutions like the one in this research project, I was able to recognize myself living the situations they would share in their narratives. While teachers shared their experiences with me, I could understand their opinions and the way they felt in regards to some factors (policies, methodology, protocols) that they felt some discomfort with. I sometimes felt identified with their points of view since I felt the same way, affected by aspects that were difficult to change. Their different answers and positions that showed a commonality made me reflect upon the view of education that nowadays people hold, as a business, and also the different views teachers still have, as a transformative tool for people to reach goals and dreams.

During this research project I was a modulator and a facilitator in the data collection process, in the way that by providing questions and scenarios, they were able to open up and

express their ideas and positions. I was always attentive to their answers in order to trace possible topics of interest, issues that made them set positions to share along their narratives. I managed to open up spaces for my participants and I guided them by designing questions and situations for them to share their narratives, experiences, and positions. They could feel free to speak their mind and give their opinions with people who were experiencing the same context and similar situations. Additionally, we all had the possibility to reflect upon our different experiences when working as well as our role as teachers in society. Being influenced by activity made participants adopt positions in which they could let their own identity emerge and feel satisfied. Framing activities contributed to their reflection and construction of their identity.

As a researcher I also had in mind that there were terms of ethical considerations to be considered with my participants, for instance, I guaranteed the confidentiality of teachers' identities by using nicknames who they chose in order to protect their privacy. They were also informed about the process we were going to follow during the data collection procedure. They signed a consent form (Appendix 3) in which they agreed on participating on the research project and in which the confidentiality was explained as well as the objectives the study. Statements about the way the study could benefit not only teachers, but also this kind of language institutions were also included. During this research, participants knew they could leave whenever they wanted. Finally, I remained transparent, the data and all the information gathered from the participants was handled confidentially.

In this chapter, I explained the paradigm this research project is framed into. This chapter includes the context, participants and data collection instruments. Data management focused on the deep analysis of teachers' narratives while working at a private language institute where

different activities seem to affect and influence teachers. In the next chapter, I will explain how the data was gathered, and the analysis of the data will be explained in detail.

Chapter 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This chapter focuses on the organization and interpretation of the data collected. It aims to answer the following research questions: *What is the impact of English teachers' construction of their identities in the experience of working at a language institute? How do EFL teachers working at a private language institution see themselves as teachers?* And finally, *how do EFL teachers negotiate institutional policies in their practice when working at a private language institute?* The category and subcategories that helped me answer these questions are also explained and discussed in this chapter.

Data collection and management

This narrative inquiry was developed drawing some stages from grounded theory such as, open coding, axial coding, and selective coding proposed by Corbin & Strauss (1990). Since my principal goal was not to create any theory, but to explore and understand teachers' construction of identity in the frame of an institute, I did not take the grounded theory itself. Instead, I borrowed some of the steps this method uses to analyze the data collected. They were useful in this research project in the way that the steps provided me with an order to follow to identify the categories. The following figure shows the general process in which the data was organized and analyzed.



Figure 3:Data analysis process. (Strauss & Corbin 1990. P.3-21)

The first step carried out was, to label the patterns by using color coding. When doing so, I organized the patterns in terms of commonalities that were recurrent in teachers' narratives into columns in an Excel matrix (Appendix 4), since my research interest was to comprehend EFL

teachers' identity by understanding specifically the influence of their activities, the colors helped me identify a common activity that participants were doing. For example, choosing a major to study, doing administrative activities or attending meetings among others. Perceptions and feelings that they experienced were also important at the moment they referred to those activities.

After labelling the different patterns, I followed the Narrative Analysis proposed by Connelly and Clandinin (2006) in which temporality, sociality, and place took relevance. These categories were useful to identify the dimensions of narratives participants discussed. This temporality refers to their narratives organized in a timeline, sociality deals with how those narratives were constructed within a society and place has to do with the context where the narratives took place. This analysis helped me understand how their actual identity seemed to be taking a shape in the institution based on their previous activities, experiences, and contexts. It served the purpose of analyzing how those activities they described as a timeline in their narratives were reflected in those moments and how activities could have been having an influence in their identity. Within this frame, participants were guided to share their experiences by talking about their past, present, and future activities in the first interview.

After, the data gathered from the interview was organized into those dimensions (temporality, sociality, and place), the repetitive patterns were grouped together to find relations among them. Those relations were classified into feelings toward following protocols, acting to enrich methodology, and other activities that made them particular from being 'the teachers at a private language institute'.

Themes were formed based on Goffman's (1959) theory in which teachers acted differently depending on the actors present at those activities. They reflected upon their role as

teachers at a language institute and doing administrative activities, among others; and they also reflected on how they changed their behavior based on the activity carried out (Cross & Gearon, 2007). And finally, at the end of the analysis, themes were grouped together. Different codes emerged from this grouping such as enriching methodology, limiting protocols and reflecting upon teachers' role, among others. These codes were gathered based on the frequency mentioned by the participants and the relevance of the topics. From the grouped code, a main category and two sub categories arose. *Defining who I am as an English teacher: A continuous negotiation,* is the main category in the data. Teaching practices: Escaping from framed teaching, being self-performed while holding a hidden self and finally negotiating the force of vocation by setting a position toward institutional policies are subcategories that emerged in the research study.

The second phase carried out consisted on following the stages from grounded theory, too in order to analyze teachers' narratives gathered from a focus group (Appendix 5). The data was analyzed by identifying recurrent patterns. They were organized in an Excel matrix (Appendix 6) by identifying both the activity done by the participants, as well as their feelings and reactions. Then, the patterns were grouped into themes, some of the codes that were recurrent were: being evaluated by their performance, refusing to use protocols, and working as machines among others. These themes and codes showed me what Goffman (1959) affirms that people hold multiple identities based on the experiences they live, since participants expressed that hey put into practice different activities and materials. For instance, by attending meetings they could express freely who they were as teachers by giving their opinions in regard to education in the institution.

Last but not least, it is important to say that the interview and the focus group allowed me to do a triangulation process. Triangulation understood as the way the researcher examines the

same issue from multiple sources. Cohen *et al* (2007) explain triangulation as "the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspects of human behavior" (p.141). Since I used two instruments of data collection, I was able to trace teachers' narratives with both instruments in order to look for commonalities within their opinions as well as different positions that could allow me to understand the decisions that they made in their teaching context. By doing so, I could find that their positions in both instruments coincided. They held a strong position toward their role as teachers during their lives and while working at the language institution.

The main category is called *Defining who I am as an English teacher: A continuous negotiation*. Since teachers mentioned that their role as teachers in a private language institute was not the same as their role out of it, I interpreted that they had well-defined who they were as teachers, why they did the activities the way they did, as well as why they continued working at this kind of institutions while paradoxically they seemed to struggle with institutional policies. Since people "are beings in continuous becoming through activity systems" (Roth, 2004, p.54), teachers were able to reflect upon their role as teachers based on their past and present experiences. They negotiated the way they behaved by adopting different positions based on the activity they were carrying out. This adoption of position is what Goffman (1959) defines as the theory of "several selves" (p.36).

Being self-performed while holding a hidden self is the first subcategory that reflects the dichotomy teachers appear to experience when being and non-being observed in class. Teachers by being observed decided consciously to follow the protocol that was expected from them by the language institution. However, when they were not observed in their classes they adopted another position, they let that inner teacher out. This is what Goffman (1959) calls the theory of

"several selves" (p.36), teachers adopted different performances depending on the context they were exposed to.

The next subcategory is called *Keeping a self in teaching practices: Getting away from a limiting methodology by doing alternative practices by setting a position toward institutional policies* which refers to the different activities participants found to refresh themselves from teaching at the language institution, something that they expressed was fatigue since they had to follow routines in classes and topics many times during the day. Teachers could find other activities such as attending meetings, doing administrative chores, and filing among others, to refresh that inner teacher framed by institutional policies and limiting methodologies, to find a way to escape from what constrained them, as well as their real role as teachers. They constructed their identity based on the activities they performed. Since teachers were aware of 'being defined by their performance' (Ball, 2015), they decided to change their behavior and act based on the context they were immersed in. They adopted the 'self' and 'the face' (Goffman, 1959) to endure working at a language institute and they exercised agency in their teaching practices, but at the same time, they accommodated to assume activities different from teaching at the language institute.

The previous categories are connected in the way that they detach from the way teachers see themselves as teachers, from what they consider their role is, depending on the activity and at the same time by being framed within institutional policies that made them act differently, this is why these categories are framed into a constant negotiation.

The summary of my research questions, research objectives, category and subcategories will be shown in the following chart.

Research Questions	Research Objectives	Category	Sub-categories
What is the impact of English teachers' construction of their identities in the experience of working at a language institute?	• To describe the factors that shape the construction of EFL teachers' identity-in-activity at a private language institute based on the different activities in which they are involved as language teachers.	Defining who I am as an English teacher: a continuous negotiation.	Being self-performed while holding a hidden self, tied to institutional dynamics or conditions.
How do English teachers working at a private language institute see themselves as professionals?	• To interpret teachers' reflections on their role as professionals when working at a private language institute.		Keeping a self in teaching practices: Getting away from a limiting methodology by doing alternative practices and setting a position toward institutional policies.
How do English teachers negotiate policies in their practice when working at a private language institute?	• To identify how EFL teachers' negotiate with institutional policies through their identity		

In the following graph, there is an illustration of how the categories are connected to answer the research questions and objectives.

Table 2. Research questions, research objectives, main category and subcategories.



Figure 4. Category and subcategories.

The graph above exemplifies the connections I was able to make with the categories established to answer the research questions and research objectives.

Findings

The first category to discuss is *Defining who I am as an English teacher: A continuous negotiation*. This category emerged based on the fact that the four teachers expressed repeatedly the positions they had to adopt to cope with working at this language institute, being aware of how different an expected teacher at this kind of places was and who they were as teachers. Their identity transited throughout time in a continuous negotiation framed by different contexts, activities and policies that had an impact on teachers in the way that they constructed an artificial identity in which they struggled between following institutional policies and doing what they considered was more appropriate to do in their teaching context. The negotiation took part there, since, on one hand they adopted an institutional identity, and on the other hand they followed who they were as teachers; carrying out different activities from what was established by the institution.

Defining who I am as an English teacher: A continuous negotiation.

This main category answers all the research questions since teachers hold different facets at the language institution to negotiate between the protocols and different policies and their inner teacher in order to continue working there. Two of the predominant facets identified had to do with the fact that they behaved differently when being and not being observed by their coordinator, looking for activities to take them out of that limiting context of being observed. Due to this desire of escaping from the framing classes and protocols, teachers accepted carrying out different duties in the institution such as being receptionist, filing quizzes, or calling students.

They accommodated to the demands from the institution to avoid the limiting teaching they struggled with. And finally, by the continuous negotiation they held while working at the language institution, they followed what the neoliberal model wanted them to do: being a receptionist, calling students for quality purposes, and filing different documents, among others, but at the same time during their teaching practices, they did not let that model change who they were as teachers.

The name of this category was chosen because in the two instruments analyzed it was recurrent the negotiation teachers experienced when struggling with what policies demanded from them. The analysis of the data showed that teachers' identity based on their activities of the timeline transited in a temporal dimension from an aversion to English teaching, to a perspective in which experiences and activities shaped that identity in a positive way for them. And in turn, it changed it to a vocational desire to teach well, and projected their vision of teaching English into moving from their current working place to contribute to the field by teaching or designing materials for improving the learning process. Based on the different activities and experiences they had lived, they constructed their identity as English teachers in the way that by being reflective, they considered that they could provide more of their knowledge by doing something different from what they did at the language institute.

Based on teachers' stories shared with the researcher, I identified that one of the activities they faced in the past, in regard to teaching was choosing their major. Coincidentally, none of my participants thought that studying a bachelor in English would have been the ideal profession for them. They studied it due to fact that their options were limited in terms of money and accessibility. Since Goffman (1959) affirms that, we as people, are knowledgeable beings who

are not passive, we analyze our possibilities; participants analyzed their options, they became English teachers based on the options they had.

They considered that being an English teacher was a decent career to do for a living. Since none of them really wanted to be an English teacher, they thought that by being English teachers they could get better options in life, because they consider the options for teachers in the country are not good enough. They relied on their view of English as a door to succeed rather than on being teachers per se since teachers' education is not well paid in Colombia. This vision about English was in agreement with the perspective of learning English nowadays, that has to do with seeing learning English a profitable business for institutions. This previous topic was discussed in my literature review.

The following excerpts taken from the four participants stories shared during the interview, exemplify this finding that supports the principal category *Defining who I am as an English teacher: A continuous negotiation.*

PARTICIPANT 1	PARTICIPANT 2	PARTICIPANT 3	PARTICIPANT 4
"Before studying this career I wanted to study business administration but public universities didn't have that career, so I liked English but the career was a bachelor. I had to do it because that was all I could pay for"	"I didn't want to be a teacher. I wanted to study English for being an interpreter but that career in Colombia is quite expensive. I studied the bachelor because it was in English but I didn't like the pedagogy"	"Before working as a teacher I was a pastry cook. I thought I needed to do something more profitable and a friend told me about the career English philology because he knew I liked English and then, I applied to the national university and passed"	"I wanted to study English to be able to live in USA but I didn't really want to be a teacher. I found the career as a means to live and study in USA but I never thought I would have been actually teaching the language "

Table 3. (Participants 1, 2, 3, & 4. Semi-structured interview- August 17th, 2018)

From these excepts, participants expressed their desires in terms of what they thought they could study for getting a living. Since they did not have the idea of becoming English teachers as a first choice, their identity transited from choosing the major as the only option, seeing English as the passport to travel to know other cultures, and how the conditions for teachers in Colombia to prevent them from fully choosing to become English teachers. Their identity had been constructed based on the different contexts they had been part of as well as the people they had been involved with; since our identity is constructed in relation to others, they continued building up who they were as teachers. The following excerpt demonstrates how the identity construction of participant one transitioned during his professional formation as a teacher:

> "At first I didn't like being a teacher, but then after mi classes at the university and my teaching experience I found out I was good at teaching and so, I liked it because students learnt." **(Participants 1. Semi-structured interview- August 17th, 2018)**

In the previous extract I could analyze how this participant stopped seeing education, or more specifically teaching in an instrumental way, to a mechanism to transmit knowledge and contribute to the improvement of peoples' lives by learning English based on the participant's experiences.

After seeing teaching in an instrumental way, through the time participants started to change their vision and started to like teaching and had a solid conviction of what the role of the teacher was. An example of this will be found in the following excerpts, since participants expressed how their perception of teaching English had changed to fit the idealized teacher they had constructed from the moment they were studying the bachelor up until now.

PARTICIPANT 1	PARTICIPANT 2	PARTICIPANT 3	PARTICIPANT 4
"Right now, I really love what I do. I have learnt to improve my classes; to improve the way I communicate with students. I really think I have learnt to understand students' positions".	"I like what I do and I try to give my best. However, at this moment I'm looking for something different. I have been teaching English for too long and I need to do something different but within the language teaching field".	"In this moment I think that I have had the chance to be a better teacher, I like the fact that I can use my experiences to teach other people who are starting their careers"	"Well, nowadays I enjoy what I do, I consider I'm a good teacher since I always try to come up with different extra activities for my students. I love seeing how they learn through what I design and how well I have learnt to teach my classes"

Table 4. (Participants 1, 2, 3, & 4. Semi-structured Interview-August 17th, 2018)

Based on these excerpts, the transition of their identity was more evident from most of the participants and changed from seeing education in a structural way to a joyful activity that contributed to their identity construction and the way they saw the role of teachers. Due to the experiences they lived, I could say that as Kanno and Stuart, (2011) affirm, practice (activity in this research project) shapes identity and identity at the same time affects practice.

This is to say that their activity (in this case teaching) helped them change that initial idea they had about teaching English and at the same time their constructed identity helped to change their teaching into a more enriching activity. After teaching English, they changed their perception of what teaching was. They only had the experience of the English teacher they had at school (that was traditional) and thought that teaching would be the same when they faced their teaching practicum. Nowadays they love what they do because they consider that by being themselves, providing students with extra activities, for example, they are good teachers. In other words, they defined themselves as professional teachers.

The last stage of the analysis of the three dimensions proposed by Connelly and Clandinin (2006): temporality, sociality, and place, consisted of determining participants' desires in terms of their future. In this view, participants shared what they considered they would like to do in the future.

PARTICIPANT 1	PARTICIPANT 2	PARTICIPANT 3	PARTICIPANT 4
"I would actually like to work for an NGO or in a volunteering program to teach English to children in other regions of the country, because I would love to transmit what I know in other subjects, but because I like it and not because I need the money".	"I want to work on the development of some online tools, video games, software applications and I would like to focus more on that than on teaching. I could contribute to this field by developing software applications and games"	"I would like to teach in another country. I think that in another country I could learn about different things and also share my experiences for people to learn about my culture or language"	"I would love to work at a university level or maybe teach in another country. I think that I haven't explored those areas and could be enriching for my professional development"

Table 5.Table 4. (Participants 1, 2, 3, & 4. Semi-structured Interview-August 17th, 2018)

Throughout this three-dimension analysis, there were some relevant aspects to recall. Participants' identity changed dramatically based on the activities that were happening from the past to the present and future. There was an influence in the society for them to change that perspective, they could see that by teaching they would be able to contribute to education even at a language institution that has a pre-established methodology to be applied by the teacher. Their identity transited, as Roth (2004) discusses, through the activity we are in a continuous becoming. Our identity in general changes according to activities experienced, contexts, and the society.

To sum up, based on participant' stories, it could be analyzed that teachers' identity construction involved the impact of activities that were formed by the influence of the society, the places or context where the activity was carried out (Gee, 1996). This also helped shape that

identity from what they thought in the past about teaching, the instrumentalization of the profession when they perceived English as traditional and boring, into what is now, the love and desire to teach the best way they can and to the projection of the future, that is changing the actual context and place but continue teaching.

Since participants' position toward teaching English changed through the time, their opinion in regard to the institute also contributed to reinforcing that vision of teachers they built on in the past. Based on their professional education at the university, they could compare and contrast their teaching experiences at the language institute and they found that they were facing a practice they were not formed for. According to their narratives, they considered being English teachers as a free practice in which the teacher exercises agency in the teaching activity depending on his/her capacity of analyzing students' needs. "When I started at this institution I was really excited, but then I didn't like the protocols and I ended up feeling exhausted of repeating the same things over and over without being able to change anything" (Participant 2). The language institution contributed to make teachers reflect upon their role as teachers and so, to adopt different positions being aware of how to act in front of their bosses and how to behave following who they were as teachers. Through that reflection, teachers were able to make sense of who they were as professionals and how to behave towards that position (Cross & Gearon, 2007).

Participants also expressed how they perceived the market has turned education into a business, in which the knowledge is some sort of good that people acquire if they have the monetary resources to afford it. They said English language acquisition has been regulated as if institutions were selling a product and so, the policies frame education into a production machine in which teachers play a role of being gears in a mechanism turning around by applying the same

activities and following the same pre-established methodologies without any freedom while teaching (Ball, 2015).

As shown in this category, teachers held two positions to cope with the fact of continuing working at private language institutes where they did not feel comfortable in regard to the institutional policies. The negotiation teachers held revealed that they kept a self consistently despite the conditions of the environment. The policies at the language institution helped participants to reflect upon their role at that working place and their real role as teachers as the following participant expressed.

> I strongly believe that to be real teachers we have to find a different place to work. What I mean is that here you don't really teach, you only play tracks and reproduce a book. **(Participants 3. Semi-structured interview- August 17th, 2018)**

This participant analyzed what his real role was working at a language institute, different from what his role could have been working at a different context, where materials or activities are not pre-established and where education is not seen in an instrumental way.

The first sub-category *Being self-performed while holding a hidden- self* is relevant and connected to the main category *Defining who am I as an English teacher: A continuous negotiation* because in the reflection stage where they identified themselves as English teachers, they were conscious about another element which was involved, for example, adopting positions to be able to comply with their job. These two positions will be explained next.

Being self-performed while holding a hidden self, tied to institutional dynamics or conditions.

This subcategory answers the question: what is the impact of a language institution experience in teachers' construction of their identities? And the name of the category was chosen

since, based on teachers' negotiation with policies through their actions while they were exposed to other social actors in the previous category, they adopted two stances which had to do with what Goffman (1959) calls self-performed and hidden self.

Goffman (1959) affirms that people behave in a different way when they are exposed to social settings and when they are alone. He calls these two moments regions of life, where people perform "in front stage" and "in back stage". Teachers performing in front stage experience 'the face', which, denotes the way we would like to be seen by others and acting in back stage 'the self' that has to do with how we perceive ourselves, who we are in essence.

Self-performed refers to the way teachers perform while being observed by others, such as their coordinator, adopting a particular position in relation to what these people represent and who had an impact in what they do. Teachers constructed their identity through the activity they developed in the institute since, as we could see in the main category, if they were observed, they had to obey and follow the protocol. The analysis of the data gathered indicated that one of the consequences of this construction prevented teachers from being themselves as teachers. Ball (2015) argues that teachers' behavior changes due to the policies they are framed in. This was evident when they expressed that they felt as robots, as machines, as someone who was different from themselves.

Acting in terms of Goffman (1959), means adopting a stance that is not necessary his/hers in class was one of the commonalities found since teachers were assuming a different role. They pretended to be the teacher the institution wanted. The following excerpts corroborate their feelings toward doing other activities.

> I really love administrative things because I love serving others I love filing documents; I love doing different kinds of activities in order to disconnect from what we do every day. So, teaching, of course I love teaching, but doing it all the time at this institute becomes a routine so, why not changing

(**Participant 1. Focus group. November 22nd, 2018)**

This other profile that teachers have is complementary to their identity. When they find an activity that is not teaching, they find a comfort from the frame of the institution. They find themselves in another environment that provides them with freedom to be who they are instead of who they have to be in their classrooms. Apparently, there is a constant need from participants to escape from this limiting context. When doing administrative activities, teachers assume different positions in regard to what happens in those activities (Ball, 2015), they build up their identity by assuming other roles. This is a conscious act that teachers look for as a way to get away from the context they struggle with.

Then, participants felt as teachers at the language institute they did not usually identify with. This was determined since teachers expressed that, despite they struggled with the institution's protocol, they had to follow it. Apparently, they felt forced to do it because they were aware of the requirements established from the institution.

However, they stated that by doing this, they felt as someone different teaching a class. They had to change who they were as teachers to fit the observation. One of the common opinions among the teachers was that they experienced some frustration between what they were supposed to do in class and what they would really like to do. For instance, on one hand, they believed that instead of following the protocol they could implement some of their authentic material to enrich the learning process.

On the other hand, teachers reflected upon following the protocol and the methodology, they mentioned that when they are not observed they do not follow the protocol and change the methodology. In this view, as shown in the main category, it appears that teachers negotiate the

institutional policies based on the actors surrounding the activity. In other words, they negotiate with the fact of being and not being observed by the coordinator or students.

To exemplify this analysis, some excerpts from different participants are shown next.

PARTICIPANT 1
Every time I followed the protocol, I felt like a machine.

PARTICIPANT 2
I agree with participant 1, you follow the methodology basically because you are being observed and you know that you have to follow it as it is said.

PARTICIPANT 3
I remember once I was observed and I followed the protocol. I felt horribly since my students noticed I changed who I was due to the observation. I felt that teacher wasn't me.

(Participants 1, 2, 3 & 4. Semi-structured interview- August 17th, 2018)

Participant one expressed how uncomfortable he felt while following a protocol in every single teaching activity. He related himself to a machine that is programmed to repeat processes over and over again without having any right to make decisions. Participant two stated that under the condition of being observed in class, he was forced to follow the protocol even though he disagreed with it. He also agreed with participant two on the fact that they felt as machines when being observed and following protocols. And finally, participant three held a similar position with participant one and two, because he shared an anecdote when by being observed in class and following the protocol he felt like another teacher, someone who would never follow that protocol in another teaching context.

These three excerpts above demonstrate that teachers were shaped based on the social conditions and the actors of the activities they did. However, this exercise appears not to be a mechanic task which denies teachers' definition of selves. They exercised agency in the way that they were conscious of how they should have performed in their classes. This attitude goes in agreement with what Goffman's (1959) theory would call, *the face,* which is defined as the way

people (in this case teachers) would like to be perceived by others (in this case by the coordinator). As seen in the excerpts, most teachers followed the protocol and the methodology as it was required by the institution using their own words, "for the coordinator to give them a good score in the observation and for them to keep their job". In the following excerpts, participant one could provide an example of how he was conscious about the position he adopted by being observed.

> P1: Actually, I think that's the way a teacher acts, I mean we find a way to do what we think is appropriate if we are observed, so if we consider that is appropriate to mention the protocol also the methodology followed as they say, we do it, of course because is part of our job, but if it is not appropriate (since we are not observed) or because of the time, the quantity of students or many other things, we prefer to change it or do other things to adjust it or adapt it to the context, to the time, to the thing we have to achieve with them.
>
> (**Participant 1. Focus group. November 22nd, 2018)**

As participant one expressed in the previous excerpt, he knew he was supposed to follow the protocol since it was part of his job. However, he also identified the moments he could change the methodology to his vision of teaching, something more practical focusing on context. This description is well-defined as the 'face' coined by Goffman (1959) and it was identified in the way that this teacher expressed how he changed his regular behavior due to the fact that he was observed by his boss; because of his presence, he modeled the protocol and institutional methodology to fit the institutional format, but in the absence of the coordinator, he decided to act differently, out of the protocol as he considered that was more useful to fit her students' needs. The next excerpt is another example of the position participant three adopted while being and not being observed by the coordinator.

> P3: ...when I have 6 students is very difficult for me to use the protocol or to follow the methodology as they want us. I remember a time when I had 6 students and all of them had different classes, they all came from the previous class with me. My boss decided to observe me, so I had to follow the protocol. Long story short, I ended up following the

> whole protocol and methodology but I ran out of time and I felt I could have given them all the attention they usually get from me.
>
> (**Participant 3. Focus group. November 22nd,2018)**

In the previous excerpt from participant three I also found the same behavior adopted from participant one who assumed two positions depending on being observed and the other not being observed. She said that because the fact that he was observed, he had to follow the protocol. However, she also expressed that it was something she struggled with, because she said the time for six different classes was not enough. As Goffman (1959) argues, people also hold the 'self' position, which refers to the way we perceive ourselves. This view was corroborated in this participant, because she mentioned that when he is not observed he usually provides his students with more attention. By not being observed, this participant exercised agency to decide what activities were more appropriate based on the students' needs. He mentioned that he provided his students with his own authentic materials.

The same was found in the data gathered from the interview, where the self-performed and the face were fundamental for teachers' identity construction. Participants also talked about these two positions they usually take during the teaching activity and the way they felt about it. In the following excerpts you will see how they reconfirm what was said during the semi-structured interview.

> P1: To be honest with you I consider that that protocol doesn't guarantee you to be neither a good teacher, nor have a successful class. It only wants you to follow processes and procedures. I do it when I'm evaluated in class by the coordination, they observe us in class because I want to keep this job, but that is once every month, when I'm not observed I try my best and do different kinds of activities, more dynamic and fun for students.
>
> **(Participants 1. Semi-structured interview- August 17th, 2018)**

This participant reflected upon the way he changed his behavior. He knew that he had to present himself as someone who complied with the rules in the language institute because he

wanted to keep his job. There was an economic factor that forced the participant to follow the protocol. In this case he showed his "face" and when not being observed, he followed his real role as teacher, someone who tried to give his best for students, this is the 'self', as stated by Goffman (1959). The next teacher shared her opinion in regard to the way she felt by following the protocol.

> P2: I mean, my role as a teacher is more like and operator. I mean, I have to follow the content, the classes are already organized, I just have to play the tracks and of course elicit speaking to make the coordinator happy. I try to come up with different strategies and activities for the class but the time is very limiting when you have 6 students plus you have to follow the protocol and it takes longer time.
>
> **(Participants 2. Semi-structured interview- August 17th, 2018)**

Participant two expressed what her role was in the language institute by following the protocol and the methodology. She felt as an operator due to the fact that since everything was already made she only had to reproduce the material. This position is discussed by Ball (2015) when he argues that teachers tend to lose sight of values, principles and modality considering that they are not allowed to think or act autonomously in their teaching activities. They become what Guerrero (2009) would call "clerks" of a "product" which is education. Since the theory of performativity, explained by Ball (2003), refers to seeing teacher as numbers, as producers of performance, they can be measured by their productivity in terms of a number that can define their teaching. This vision of teachers based on polices frustrated them and that is when they shifted to the self.

According to what the three participants have expressed in the narratives of both instruments, they were aware of following what the institutions demanded but at the same time they reflected upon the fact that by being observed they changed who they were. When they were not observed they tried to either change or accommodate the methodology to fit who they were in terms of being teachers, and what they would do for improving the teaching-learning

process. Ball (2015) talks about changing or adapting policies as a conscious act, teachers analyze the possibilities they have to change the activity. Based on that analysis, teachers performed in order to fit both scenarios, being observed (pleasing their superiors) and not being observed (following their vision of teachers).

In this case, participants had expressed their frustration when being evaluated since, not following the protocol takes points out of their score, as well as not following the methodology. However, they evidenced what Ball (2015) would call as *refusal*, which refers to show an opposition not to become the kind of teachers the systems produces. In the following narrative, participant four talks about the use of the books at the institution: a teacher's refusal:

> P4: In my case, I, of course have to use the books to base my classes in terms of topics, but I don't usually follow or try to develop all the activities the way they want us to do it, because some of them are totally outdated and sometimes the topics are for adults and I have children, so I think in those situations I use my bank of activities to cover the topics and make my students feel pleased by my teaching.
>
> (**Participant 4. Focus group. November 22nd ,2018)**

Participant four associated the book to a syllabus to follow but did not identify herself with the material since she reflected upon how outdated and inappropriate for children it was. She showed a *refusal* in the way that she took into account her students' contexts and needs to try to fit her teaching to make it more meaningful. When not following either the protocol nor the methodology, this teacher let her inner teacher out to enrich her class and at the same time fit herself as a teacher. The next participant had a similar position to participant four since he thought that by providing more and different activities leaving aside the book, you could be a real teacher.

> P3: So I combine the text book implemented by the institution and my extra activities for them to have a complete learning process. To conclude, I think that books are not that important if you have a clear order to follow, what is really important is to provide students with your own activities because that is a contribution they are not expecting,

> that is what makes you a real teacher. That's what I do, I sometimes forget about the book and use more meaningful activities.
>
> (**Participant 3. Focus group. November 22nd ,2018)**

A real teacher for this participant is someone who provides students with different and meaningful activities. This participant exercised agency in the way that by offering extra material for students he escaped from that limiting methodology that framed his teaching into something structural and methodical. By assuming different conscious positions in regard to what happens in teacher activities, the teacher refused to be the teacher the system wanted to build (Ball, 2015).

Participants expressed the fact that policies had affected them and so their teaching in the way that their hidden self was being used through agency to develop their practice in the parameter of the institutional policies required by the institution. Participants were asked how they saw themselves in terms of teaching when using the methodology and some of their answers were the following.

> Well, it depends on the teacher, because is more about principles and values, because here at this institution they need and operator, a person who plays the tracks, a person that ties to foster conversations to encourage students to speak but no more, so basically you feel like a robot or an operator. I always try to help students as much as possible, I contribute to the students with more ideas.
>
> **(Participants 2. Semi-structured interview- August 17th, 2018)**

Participant two in a hidden way let that 'real teacher' take place in the teaching activity with students. By helping students as much as possible with ideas or different materials this teacher exercised agency by escaping from the pre-established protocols and materials. She knew that by following protocols her roles were as a robot or operator, a machine without values or agency to make decisions. This teacher's hidden self-allowed her to perform in a hidden way to develop who she was as a teacher. The following excerpt exemplifies a similar view of another participant who also exercised agency when not being observed by the coordinator.

> Well, we as teachers do not have the possibility to decide which activities or which kind of things we wanna do with students, because it is pretty limited, so we have to follow the pattern, follow the structure they give us. Anyway, as a teacher I try to do the best for my students, so certain times I try to modify the steps given, although I try to cover the steps we have in the protocol when my boss observes my classes.
>
> **(Participants 1. Semi-structured interview- August 17th, 2018)**

Due to the fact that the methodology is limiting teachers' performance, they reflected upon the lacks of this methodology and exercise agency by making decisions in their teaching activity by modifying or adapting materials to correspond to that vision of a teacher they held. This exercised agency is their "back stage" where teachers felt comfortable to be themselves and apply what they considered was best for students.

Through participants' stories, it appears that their identity is constructed in the hidden-self, as well. That is, that by not being observed they did not follow a protocol or applied fixed methodologies. However, since they wanted to continue working at the institution, they showed their bosses that they complied. When teaching by themselves, they tried to enrich methodology and they justified this on the ideas they had about their role and its importance of it in the society as teachers which involve values and principles. Something that they found in opposition to following instrumental and fixed protocols.

The participants expressed the way they refused to follow the protocol a way to let their hidden-self take part in their teaching activities. They did it by changing or adapting both, the protocol and the methodology based on their moral reasoning, their values and beliefs were part of every class they taught, since they tried to enrich the methodology by contributing with authentic material, with what they designed and considered could work best. But there was something that was pretty recurrent when analyzing the data, these teachers challenged the policies established by the institution by enriching the methodology. They did this in a hidden

way to show others (the coordinator especially) they obeyed what they demanded, but they were at the same time exercising agency when they adapted the methodology to be the teacher they wanted to be. By taking binary positions, participants felt that they could continue working at the language institution without losing their identity.

Another factor that helped them cope with managing teaching at the private language institute was the fact that the institution provided teachers with extra teaching activities they were asked to carry out, different from teaching. These activities appeared to provide teachers with a relief from using the "face" by following protocols or an established methodology.

Keeping a self in teaching practices: Getting away from a limiting methodology by doing alternative practices and setting a position toward institutional policies.

The construction of identity of these teachers also involved the dichotomy they experienced between exercising agency in their teaching context and accommodating to the administrative activities different from teaching. This subcategory has to do specifically with how teaching practices were shaped by institutional policies and how teachers' negotiation with the dynamics of the institution had to do with escaping from the routines, created by the self-performed identity they were forced to live in their daily activity. This subcategory emerged as another aspect that participants considered to continue working at the language institute despite they disagreed with the institutional policies that, according to them, tried to change who they were.

At the language institute, sometimes the number of students is low; consequently, the teaching activity decreases. In this case, if a teacher does not have any student programmed in a class, that teacher is asked to be 'productive'. That means, teachers are required to do other

activities different from teaching at all times while being in their work shift. Some of the activities involve replacing the receptionist by answering phone calls, filing different kind of papers in the filing room, calling students for different purposes, such as to returning to the institute if they have not been attending classes or to developing surveys related to the service students received. According to teachers' narratives, these different activities were assumed by them strategically since they could distance from the limiting and framing teaching activity that the institution produces. They evaluated this as a 'relief' that allowed them to escape from the self-performed teaching that they felt obliged to develop in the context of the institution.

The system budded up teachers' identity within policies that were only focused on productivity (Ball, 2015). The activities mentioned before that usually took them out of the classroom allowed them to have freedom from following the protocols they disagreed with. Calling students, answering phones, programming students and filing were activities teachers had to do as called "administrative activities" whenever they did not have students in their classroom or when the coordinator needed to present reports. The teacher was not able to have a "free" time. If they had free time, they needed to justify activities and cover by them doing something related to the administrative chores. As said before, these teachers felt a relief from repeating protocols and classes they had already memorized. In the following excerpts, participants expressed the joy they felt while doing different activities at the language institute.

> I don't care calling students to ask them questions about the institutions or filing. Actually, I love doing these activities because I can relax and enjoy some timeout of my class.
>
> (**Participant 4. Focus group. November 22nd ,2018)**

Participant four expressed the relief she felt by doing different activities that did not demand a specific protocol to follow. Even though, calling or filing is not really considered a teaching activity, or does not belong to the profession of a teacher per se, this participant did not

find any problem in doing so, since she felt that she could escape from the limiting methodology and protocols she had to follow when being observed. This stage could be related to be in "back stage" letting the 'self' take part of the activity in order to do it in a joyful way (Goffman, 1959). This is to say that teachers by holding multiple identities were able, consciously, to choose different identities while working at the language institute in order to fit in the contexts. Teachers knew about the demands from the language institution and so, adopted activities that were not teaching themselves to avoid facing that protocol of the teaching practice they had to follow at all times. The next participant holds a similar opinion in regard to doing administrative activities.

> When I do administrative activities, I feel refreshed to continue teaching. I feel energetic again to finish the day. I don't care either if I have to replace the receptionist sometimes. I know it's totally out of my duties but I prefer that than teaching there.
> (**Participant 3. Focus group. November 22nd ,2018)**

This participant agreed with participant four in the fact that by doing activities different from following protocols or the methodology, they could feel refreshed and free to be themselves. They found in administrative activities a way to distract themselves of the struggle they suffered by being observed in class. This environment, as defined by them, is limiting the methodology because they cannot not make decisions or modify anything. In other words, they could not fit who they were as teachers. In the previous subcategory, I could identify the two set positions participants negotiated with to cope with the teaching activity; holding 'the face' while being observed in class and the 'self' while being teaching just with the students in class, without the supervision from the boss. These two stances teachers handled allowed teachers to reflect upon their role as teachers at the language institute and their real role as teachers constructed along the

time. This identity construction took teachers to accept and accommodate doing different activities that were not related to teaching, escaping from that set teaching.

Thus, these two participants found in doing other activities not related with teaching, a way to escape from the institutional policies. Teachers did not care about doing activities that were not connected to teaching as long as they changed the context to look for some freedom. They argued that by doing so, they could feel refreshed to go back to the classes with more energy. They also affirmed that they got exhausted by repeating protocols and classes. These participants adopted different identities at this language institute since teachers inhabit multiple identities (Gee, 1996). Meanwhile teachers accepted to do different administrative activities, they held the identity of the profession each administrative activity demanded without any refusal to escape from the teaching context they disagreed with; for instance, answering phones, programming students to take classes, filing documents from students, filling up reports and formats among others.

When calling students, for example, they felt that even though that was not part of what being a teacher was, by doing so, all teachers could do their best in order to continue being given the option to escape from the limiting methodology they had trouble with. When filing different documents, they believed that they had time to relax. These identities were constructed consciously in the way that they knew they were teachers who could carry out different activities without restricting themselves to just their 'pre-fabricated' teaching role.

Through these different activities teachers were able to establish a balance between who they were as English teachers and the different activities they had to do for the purpose of continuing working at a language institute. They had been working for a long time at this kind of institution, they had always done the same kind of activities to handle the job. By finding the balance they could negotiate their identity with the institutional identity without finding a conflict,

because they were aware of who they were and how to act depending on the activity they were in charge of doing. They were able to adopt a binary position to cope with the institutional policies; the way they would like to be perceived by others and how they recognize themselves as English teachers (Goffman, 1959). When teachers affirmed that they felt relief when doing administrative activities, they may seem to have allowed the policies to shape them as the way that they accommodated to be the teacher the institution wanted. However, in order not to face the pre-established methodologies or the protocol in their teaching activity, they exercised it with agency.

Another important aspect that was recurrent in participants' narratives, was the idea that teachers consciously found a balance between how to deal with the institutional policies, and how to manage that hidden self when teaching that is part of their identity.

As it was mentioned before, teachers struggled to cope with what the institution required by reflecting upon the benefits it could bring not only to them but also to students. Teachers were conscious about the different arrangements established, and so they became agents to select the 'self' or 'face' while performing in the 'front stage' or 'back stage' (Goffman , 1959). Their moral reasoning played an important role, since they thought the role of a teacher was a professional with a vocation, someone who was in charge of changing peoples' vision of education, people who tried their best to make teaching meaningful.

In this fashion, teachers allowed the accommodation toward 'administrative duties' to be able to continue adopting the face, which refers to the position they held while being observed, following the protocols and complying with the demands from the institution, but at the same time adopting the self, which is the way they perceive themselves as teachers (Goffman, 1959), while not being observed, by carrying out their authentic materials and making decisions in their

classes to enrich their them and to help students because that is their professional view of teachers, according to them, that is what is correct to do. (Ball, 2015).

Beyond finding administrative activities a relief that helped some teachers escape from a framed teaching, it was also a way to negotiate oppressive institutional policies. Teachers showed agentive roles in not just accommodating to policies but also in using them as a mechanism that help them maintain 'friendly' relations with the system despite their disagreements with it. In the following excerpt there is evidence of a participant's view in which he changed his role as teacher to an activity that was not related to teaching and felt good since he escaped from the framing teaching he disagreed with.

> Personally, I love doing different things, I don't like being in a routine doing the same things, teaching the same things every day, so I prefer changing my role as a teacher but there are other people that prefer being in their classrooms so, it depends on each one.
> (**Participant 1. Focus group. November 22nd ,2018)**

The next teacher shared her opinion about another activity teachers were sometimes asked to do, which was to call students to ask some questions related to the service provided at the language institute:

> P2: Yeah. The other day I had the opportunity to do some things related to the institute, so I had to call some people to ask them some questions and to ask them some surveys, and that was a little bit refreshing because I was not teaching classes all the time, so when I had to start with the classes again, I felt more energized.
> (**Participant 2. Focus group. November 22nd ,2018)**

Here I could evidence that the teacher found a struggle with the "teaching" referring to the protocols and the repetitive methodology that framed her into a mechanic teacher reproducing texts and playing tracks. This teacher did not care about adopting another role because she felt that by doing it, she could feel more energized to start with her classes again. This conscious act of adopting another role and identity allowed her to reflect upon how limited

she felt while teaching, something she loved but turned into a mechanical job (Guerrero, 2009). The following excerpt also exemplifies it:

> P2: I mean, my role as a teacher is more like and operator. I mean, I have to follow the content, the classes are already organized, I just have to play the tracks and of course elicit speaking to make the coordinator happy... to avoid it I do whatever administrative activity they need.
>
> **(Participants 3. Semi-structured interview- August 17th, 2018)**

Participant two expressed what his role was in the language institute by following the protocol and the methodology. He felt as a machinist since as everything was already made, you only had to reproduce the material. This position also discussed by Ball (2015) when he argues that teachers tend to lose sight of values, principles and morality considering that they are not allowed to think or act autonomously in their teaching activities. Since teachers felt contradictions between what they were asked to do and what they consider should be done in their teaching context (Golombek, 2017), they adopted another identity to do administrative activities to stop struggling, at least for a short time, with the enclosing policies that prevented them from being the teachers they consider themselves.

Another space in which teachers exerted their agency by negotiating with policies was in the teachers' meetings. These meetings took place every month and were held by the coordinator of the branch. During these meetings the coordinator shared changes in the institution. Participants at these meetings hold the two stances they negotiated with, self-performed and hidden self, as a conscious act and a mechanism to continue working at the language institute, since before adopting the changes as new protocols, they expressed their opinions by trying to suggest alternatives for those changes they disagreed with. In the following excerpts there is evidence of these positions that teachers' expressed in their narratives.

> Meetings should be spaces to learn. I mean we don't have academic trainings, we assist these meeting just to see changes that make the academic part worse and worse. I always

> let them know what I think about it, of course they don't like it. Anyway, we have to do what they say.
>
> (**Participant 4. Focus group. November 22nd ,2018)**

Participant four expressed that she is critical about the changes the institution implements since she disagreed with the decisions the institution made and that appear to ignore teachers' opinions. This participant also showed how evident it was that the institution avoided listening to teachers' opinions against change, which aligns with seeing education in terms of productivity rather than as a place to transform realities through education (Ball, 2015). As discussed in my literature reiew chapter, these other activities teachers had to do in the language institute shaded their work as a profitable task that required extra administrative duties to fit an economic model. Teachers saw meetings used by the directors as spaces to communicate changes in regard to more protocols that they needed to apply without taking into account their perceptions about those changes.

In this context, the participant agreed with the fact that she also needed to express her opinion toward the methodology because that is part of who he was as an English teacher. Participants in general, seemed to be people that liked to reflect upon education. They saw discussions as perfect for meetings to contribute to the enrichment of education, which differs from the language institution view, since they framed teachers based on following the protocol grading them from 1 (The teacher does not follow the protocol) to 5 (the teacher follows completely the protocol).

Since the theory of performativity, explained by Ball (2003), refers to seeing teacher as numbers, as producers of performance, they could be measured by their productivity in terms of a number that can define their teaching. In this case, participants had expressed their frustration when being evaluated since not following the protocol takes points out of their score, as well as

not following the methodology. However, it was evidenced a refusal position they adopted (Ball, 2015), which refers to show a resistance stance not to become the kind of teachers the systems create. In the following narrative, the next participant talked about how he sometimes she refused to follow the system:

> Well, something I usually do in my class to look for videos to complement the topic students are supposed to learn. Besides, I bring up my bank of activities and do a lot of communicative activities and finally I check the written exercises. But, of course I never mention the protocol because it doesn't seem real neither to me, nor to them.
>
> **(Participants 3. Semi-structured interview- August 17th, 2018)**

Participant three expressed that he developed different activities in his classroom to avoid mentioning the protocol or following the methodology per se. By doing so, the participant refused to follow the system and 'perform' the institution demands. The teacher exercised agency by choosing his own activities and changing either the methodology or the class, or the order it was supposed to be developed. And by doing so, the teacher let that inner teacher take part in teachers' teaching context showing their hidden self that is a fundamental part in their identity.

All in all, participants showed the opposite of what teachers in this field tend to think. According to participants' narratives, they think that teachers working at different kind of institutions, such as, schools, universities or even other language institutions, usually think that teachers who work at these private language institutions are mediocre since they have everything done to just replicate. They also said people usually consider these teachers are not "real teachers" due to the fact that they do not have the chance to design or to integrate things teachers at other places as schools are able to do. But, in this research project, teachers also expressed that even though people think this kind of jobs are easier than working at schools, they still change things at work (in a hidden way) to be coherent with who they are as teachers. As Goffman

(1959) defines it, teachers refused being self-performed and when being asked to do different activities rather than 'teaching' they adopted another role to find a recess from the institutional policies they found a dissonance with.

Their narratives revealed that they have constructed their identity from the moment they started looking for a career to study, in that moment they had a totally different perspective of who a teacher was, but after studying and even having their first job, those experiences helped them re-construct that identity into a vocational vision of teaching, where they did not care about having an established protocol or methodology to follow, they still changed things to continue being who they were as teachers.

Undoubtedly, as part of a system, teachers are humans who needed to work and based on this they negotiated and responded to institutional policies by holding strategically the face (being observed) where they obeyed the institutional polices and requirement and the self (not being observed). These concepts coined by Goffman helped to see that when teachers let the inner teacher shine in terms of designing, adapting or changing those policies based on their identity. Negotiation is an aspect that emerged as they exercised agency in their teaching activity when not being observed and at the same time allowed themselves to be shaped by the policies. For example, when they accepted to do administrative activities totally different from teaching.

The categories presented through this chapter allowed me to answer my research questions and expound how the objectives were accomplished. In the following chapter, I expose the conclusion to the analysis and my interpretation of this research study, as well as the implications for the field of teachers' professional development and teacher education.

Chapter 6. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter, I present the conclusion that emerged from analyzing and interpreting the findings, which shed light on teachers' identity construction, since teachers working in the field of private language institutions is a phenomenon that has not been explored in depth. This interpretation leads me to answer the research questions what is the impact of a language institution experience in teachers' construction of their identities? how do EFL teachers working at a private language institution see themselves as teachers? And how do EFL teachers negotiate institutional policies in their practice when working at a private language institute?

This study intended to explore and analyze how teacher working at a private language institute construct their identity mediated through activity. To undertake this aim, teachers were asked to participate in sharing their narratives in regard to their professional development through the time. Throughout this experience, they expressed their opinions by answering some questions about their teaching experience working at a language institute, how policies could have influenced them or their teaching and the negotiation they established to handle the job. Moreover, they participated in a focus group, where situations and scenarios where presented in order to identify set positions from the reflections of the participants.

From their opinions I was able to analyze that teachers' identity construction transited from the past experiences; facing that identity constructed with the identity they had to display while working at the language institution. It was possible to observe that institutional policies impacted teachers in the way that they had to construct an artificial teacher who did not represent themselves. They experienced a dispute between following the policies and behaving

based on who they were as teachers. From such dispute, the teachers performed according to the actors and activities involved.

Despite the fact that people hold multiple identities depending on the context they are being part of (Gee, 2001), participants found a binary position to handle working at a language institute where they were asked to follow a protocol and pre-established methodologies. This binary position consisted on behaving in specific ways based on being and not being observed by their bosses. Teachers consciously made decisions upon their performance, acting the way they wanted to be seen (as following protocols). However, when no being observed, they would let their inner teachers shine in classes.

Another identity that teachers adopted, in order to escape from the framing teaching, was taking the roles of other professions, while doing administrative activities to avoid teaching under limiting rules and procedures. These teachers exercised agency in regard to their teaching activity when they were not observed but at the same time to avoid following the protocol, they accommodated to carry out activities that were not associated to teaching per se. They complied with what the systems requires from them, and at the same time they do not let that model change who they are as teachers, to change who they are as teachers, to change that identity that they have constructed through time. In this fashion, teachers refused, adopted or modified policies to fit who they considered they were as English teachers.

The negotiation they found was a strategy they assumed to cope with the predicament they experienced between obeying the policies or following their inner teachers. This strategy helped them manage the situation. Additionally, it made them reflect upon the role of English teachers at this kind of institutions and their view of who an English teacher really is.

Finally, I conclude that even though policies tend to frame teachers, our identity must play an important role in our teaching development since that identity defines us as professionals who pretend to let our inner self take part of in our decision-making when teaching. Conditioned discouses and determined performances cannot totally frame teachers, on the contrary, teachers' autonomy allows them to perform according to their beliefs, professional formation, and agency as a way to let their own identity free. They do not allow theselves to become robots or machines that follow procedures and can be defined by numbers. Instead, and in the light of this study, it is seen that teachers stand as professionals in charge of transforming peoples' lives through education. A salient factor to highlight from this research project is how teachers were creative enough in their teaching experiences, despite the adversity of the system adversity and by being creative and refusing the system, they were able to be transforming agents. I strongly believe that the control mechanism does not permit development.

This research project demonstrated, on the contrary, that institutional policies become a straitjacket that sometimes limit and frame teachers. That being said, this framing teaching from policies should be taken into account in order to generate more flexible mechanisms that allow teachers to exercise agency for students to be benefited from freedom in teaching.

In regard to policies per se, this study can become as a resource for language institutes to consider their decision making by taking into account teachers' identity construction, due to the fact that teachers are the ones in charge of exercising the practices in the classroom. Teachers must be seen as the core of the decision making in the education field. Policies should not be designed by professionals who are not in the field of education because the vision they have of education is usually as a good that can be purchased. Instead, policies should be designed based on the contex they plan to be applied and by professionals who know about education.

Chapter 7. LIMITATIONS AND ISSUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

It is necessary to state that this study, as well as other studies, involved a series of limitations. The first kind of limitations had to do in terms of time since some of my participants had other jobs in the afternoon, so it was difficult for them to attend the meetings I proposed. Alternatively, weekends were used to get together in their chosen settings finding spaces to carry out the interview. Moreover, the focus group was another limitation in this research project, provided that participants neither have a lot of time to attend meetings away from home, nor wanted to answer any question related to their jobs at the language institute because they were afraid of compromising their job. They wanted to keep their opinions as confidential as possible, because they knew that by being totally honest, the company could have made decisions in regard to their permanence in the job and since they had different projects in mind before quitting, they still needed to continue their job even though they struggled with many aspects at the language institute.

Another limitation found at the beginning of the data collection was that my participants were so exhausted of the aspects related to the language institute that by the time I started wondering about their views, opinions and positions toward the institutional policies and their role as teachers, they seemed overwhelmed and they sometimes just wanted to stop talking about their working place and everything related to it, in order not to get frustrated or stressed out.

Regarding invitations for further research, this study did not consider teachers working at public institutions or university teachers. It is suggested to study the impact of institutional policies at public institutions, as well as universities in teachers' identity construction. This is

justified by the fact that teachers have more freedom in their teaching practices, but at the same time are framed into different policies that may impact their identity construction.

Finally, this study can serve as an invitation to create a community of practice among teachers from different teaching contexts such as private and public schools, universities and language institutions for them to reflect upon how institutional policies contribute to their identity construction.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. PRELIMINARY QUESTIONNAIRE



Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas
Maestría en Lingüística Aplicada a la Enseñanza del Inglés
Research project: "Exploring EFL Teachers' Identity-in-Activity at a Language Institute.
Jesica Paola Rendón Alfonso



QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire has the purpose of gathering your perceptions in regards to your professional experiences as an EFL teacher at a private institute. The information provided in this interview will be confidential and used for research purposes only.

Nickname: _____

1) How long have you been teaching English?

_____
_____

2) What is your academic trajectory?

_____
_____
_____

3) Was being an English teacher your first option when you chose your major? Why?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

4) Have you ever worked at a public institution?

_____

5) How do you describe the experience of working at this private institute?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

6) How do you describe your role as an English teacher at this private institute?



Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas
Maestria en Lingüística Aplicada a la Enseñanza del Inglés
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Jesica Paola Rendón Alfonso



7) What do you consider this private institute should take into account in order to improve the English teaching and learning processes?

8) How do you consider your experience attending academic meetings at this private institute is?

9) How important are academic meetings in the EFL field? Why?

APPENDIX 2. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

UNIVERSIDAD DISTRITAL FRANCISCO JOSÉ DE CALDAS
MAESTRÍA EN LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA A LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS
RESEARCH PROJECT: EXPLORING EFL TEACHERS' IDENTITY-IN-ACTIVITY AT A LANGUAGE INSTITUTE
RESEARCHER: JESICA PAOLA RENDÓN ALFONSO

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

DATE:
PLACE:
LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:
INFORMANT'S PSEUDONYM:

INTRODUCTION

I appreciate your willingness to talk to me today. My name is Jesica Paola Rendón Alfonso and I am a master student at Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas. Today, I am going to ask you some questions about your thoughts in regards to your experience working at a language institute and your role as an English teacher, as well. Your personal information will be kept confidential and all the information you give me today will be used for research purposes only. If there is anything that you want to ask me during the conversation, please do not hesitate to do so. Our conversation will be audio recorded for the later transcription.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Who I am as an English teacher:

1) Can you please tell me how long you have been teaching English?
   - Please, tell me what kinds of institutions have you worked in?
   - Tell me your feelings while working at this institution in terms of the methodology and your role as a teacher?
   - In your opinion, which institution do you consider has provided you with professional growth?

2) When did you start having the idea to be an English teacher?
   - Can you please tell me what your first option was when you chose your career?
3) Please tell me how you see yourself as an English Teacher in this moment.
   - How different is your vision of yourself as an English teacher from the moment you decided to become and English teacher?
4) How do you feel about being an English teacher so far?
   - What is your motivation to continue working at this institutions? What would you change?

Ideas of teaching and teachers:

1) Who do you consider an English teacher is?
   - How different is that view of teacher to who you have become?
2) Who is an English teacher in this institute?

- How do you see this profile matches the idea of being a teacher that you explained before?
- To what extent this institution has filled up your expectations?
- Can you please tell me the criteria established by the institution in order to admit students?
- What is your opinion about the the filters (if there are some) the institution uses?

3) What do you consider is the profile of an English teacher working at this institute?
   - Which aspect would you include that is not established by the institutions requirements? And why?
4) How have you grow professionally at this language institute?
   - How can teachers grow professionally at this institution?
5) To what extend do you consider the methodology applied by this institute is challenging your knowledge as an English teacher?
6) If you had the chance to change something about the methodology or materials implemented by this institute, what would it be? Justify your answer.
   - Is there a possibility to apply activities different from the ones established by the institution? If so, what do you do different from what is established?

7) In your opinion, what do you consider is the role of textbooks?
   - can you describe the procedure you develop in a specific class? Does it usually change or not? How do you feel about it?
   - Can you please think of an experience in which you consider a class was successful, please name the factors that made that class successful.
   - Please, think of a class you consider was not successful for you. What happen? What went wrong?

Projections of who I will be as professional:

1) Can you please tell me the reasons why you are working at this institute?
   - How long do you plan to work at this institution? Why that amount of time?
   - Why would you change jobs?

2) How do you see yourself as an English teacher in 5 years?
   - Do you think is there any contribution from the experience you have had at this institute in order to develop this plan?

APPENDIX 3. CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSIDAD DISTRITAL
FRANCISCO JOSÉ DE CALDAS

MLAEI

The Principal Investigator:

Jesica Paola Rendón Alfonso. Jeka3611@hotmail.com. Mobiles: 573175831584

Advised by Dr. Ximena Bonilla. ximenabvonilla@gmail.com

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the information that you need to consider in deciding whether to participate in this study.

Project title

EXPLORING EFL TEACHERS' IDENTITY-IN-ACTIVITY AT A LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

I would like to invite you to participate in this research project which forms part of my dissertation research. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in anyway. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear for you or if you would like more information.

Project Description

This project is about exploring EFL teachers' Identity-in-Activity at a language institute. The study seeks to understand how EFL teachers perceive themselves and how their identities are portrayed while working at a language institute. On this bases, your participation will involve answering questions about your opinions and experiences about working at a language institute.

Confidentiality of the Data

Participants involved in the study will include teachers working at a language institute.

Participation is voluntary. You do not have to take part. You should read this information sheet and if you have any questions you should ask the researcher. You should not agree to take part in this research until you have had all your questions answered satisfactorily.

UNIVERSIDAD DISTRITAL
FRANCISCO JOSÉ DE CALDAS

MLAEI

If you accept to take part of this research, you will be given this information sheet to keep and will be asked to sign a consent form. Your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the project at any moment. You may also decide to withdraw the data provided before it is processed. As participant in this research, you will be required to take part in a questionnaire, two narrative interviews and a group discussion. In the questionnaire and the interviews, questions will be addressed to personal experiences rather than providing universal knowledge. In other words, your answers do not imply true or false answers but illustrations of your lived personal experiences as a EFL teacher. The interviews will approximately be 30 minutes each. Since those answers might involve very personal information, anonymity will guarantee your integrity. In the case that modifications to these conditions are deemed necessary, a follow up consent form will be used for you to approve or withdrawal of taking part of the project.

Since the group size for sample collection is small, your confidentiality will be guaranteed. Everything will be anonymized and you will not be recognizable in any publications resulting from this study.

Any previous relationship you have had with the researcher will not have impact all on your current position since there are now no institutional links between the two parts. Your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw the unprocessed data should too if you choose to do so.

There are no direct benefits to taking part in this project. However, in the long term the information I collect in this study attempts to analyze how educational practices are being developed in the light of the general aims of education in Colombia. The outcomes of this study also look for understanding how those educational practices contribute to the (re) construction of teacher identities at a language institute. I will provide you with a summary of a final report describing the main findings and conclusion.

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering taking part in this research project.

I have read and agreed to participate in this research study

_____

Teachers' signature

_____

Cédula de ciudadanía.

APPENDIX 4. EXAMPLE OFF MATRIX INTERVIEW

PARTICIPANT 1			PARTICIPANT 2		
ACTIVITY			ACTIVITY		
Choosing my career	Being an English teacher at a language institute	Visualizing my future	Choosing my career	Being an English teacher at a language institute	Visualizing my future
PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE	PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE
"I had the option of either studying managment or languages but I never thought I could be a teacher"	"Nowadays,I really love what I do, I care about SS learning processes, I listen to students, I try to understand their necessities"	"I would like to be a teacher on my own because I like it and not because of the salaray.I'd like to work for a NGO or a volunteering program"	"I didn't want to be a teacher. I just wanted to learn English to work on doing something different. I wanted English for being an interpreter, but I couldn't afford to pay that carrer"	"I love it right now. Having the experience of seeing students speak the language and interact ina second language has changed my vision; I feel I'm contributing to fulfill student's goals"	"I would like to work at a university level or teaching Spanish in another country"

PARTICIPANT 3			PARTICIPANT 4		
ACTIVITY			ACTIVITY		
Choosing my career	Being an English teacher at a language institute	Visualizing my future	Choosing my career	Being an English teacher at a language	Visualizing my future
PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE	PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE
"Before working as a teacher, I was a pastry chef. Then, I realized I needed to do something more profitable and I decided to study something related to English"	"At this moment I'm looking for something different. Even though I try to do the things in the best way, I do mybest, prepare my classes, I think I could contribute to this field by developing softwares or games for people to learn English with"	"I really want to work on the develoment of some online tools, video games, sofware applications. I would like to focus more on that than on teaching"	"When I was thinking about choosing my carrer I thought about doing something related to English, because I took some English courses, but I never thought I would be a teacher, I have never liked teaching children. I associated being a teacher to teaching only children"	"In this moment, I enjoy and love what I do. I always try to do my best, to make sure SS learn in my classes and to help them understand in a dynamic way"	"Education in Colombia is not what I thought it would be. I would love to work as a teacher in another country, somewhere where institutions value who you are and what you do"

APPENDIX 5. FOCUS GROUP SCENARIOS

FOCUS GROUP	
RESEARCH QUESTIONS	• How do teachers construct their identity in the frame of a private language institute?
	• How do EFL teachers working at a private language institution see themselves as teachers?
• How do EFL teachers negotiate institutional policies while working at a private language institute?	
Do you feel identified with this situation? Can you tell me about any similar experience that you have lived? How has it happened? What circumstances do you think you have considered to determine your behavior? What is your opinion about it? how have you felt about it?	
The teacher follows the protocol and the methodology. His class was a success.	
The teacher is observed by his boss to assess his class where there is a pre-established procedure. The teacher doesn't usually follow the protocol completely, but since he is observed, he follows it.	
The teacher is not being observed so, he follows the methodology in a different order. He uses alternative material in his classes and provides the students with extra exercises to help them have a successful class.	
A teacher thinks the books used to teach are vital in his class. He feels that without the book the class wouldn't be successful.	
The teacher works 8 hours shift. this is why he feels he is a teacher only when he is at his work place. Out there, he is someone else.	
The teacher before finishing the university thought that by teaching, he was going to try his best to change education. Working at an institute he totally forgot about it. Sometimes he feels he is not actually teaching.	
After working at an institute for some years, a teacher thinks he'd better starts looking for something different. He actually thinks working there is just transitory.	
A teacher at an institute is pleased by working there, since he has several benefits that other teachers don't at other institutions such as schools.	
A teacher at an institue, who is also a mother, gets home to spend time with her family. She keeps thinking about her job.	
A teacher working at an institute considers that doing administrative activitities is not part of his job as a teacher.	
A teacher at an institute is chosen to evaluate the veracity of the PEI (Proyecto Educativo Institutional). He thinks that many things happen in his work place, but other don't.	
A teacher working at an institute has to assess students. He follows the pre-establised protocol because he considers that's how things should.	
A teacher working at an institute is booked to attend a meeting. He is eager to participate and contribute by talking about academic issues. He comes up with strategies and possible solutions to academic problems.	

APPENDIX 6. MATRIX FOCUS GROUP

FOCUS GROUP	
ACTIVITY	**FEELINGS-REACTIONS**
Following the protocol	Feeling like a robot ////////
Enriching methodology	Incorporate activities toimprove learning.////////////////////
Refusing to use the protocol	Feeling uncomfortable with a step from the methodology ///
Being observed in class	You have to follow it as it is /////
Changing who the teacher was	They feel that by being observed that teacher wasn't him/her //
Being evaluated by their performance	Feeling like a rmachine /////
Not being observed	Freedom to be themselves //////
Ating in class	pretening/assuming a different voice ///
Working as machines	Mechanization of the teachers' profession ///////
Reflecting upon teachers' role	Feeling resctricted from bein real teachers /////
Following the methodology	Limited by the methodology
Doing administrative activities	Refreshing activities/ Escaping from the methodology /////
Attending meetings	Refreshing activities/ Escaping from the methodology /////