

**From Religion to EFL teaching: Autobiographical study of a religious woman and
her path to becoming a language teacher**



Subproject: Giving voice to the LLEI realities: life stories and experiences.

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Abstract

Narratives help us to understand realities and contexts from the point of view of those who experience and face concrete situations that configure their identities. Therefore, this autobiographical study aims to narrate the life story of an EFL pre-service teacher by considering my life before, during, and after being a member of a religious community, as well as the path on becoming an English teacher. The data collection instruments implemented were written, oral, and multimodal narratives through which I gathered experiences and reflections upon my pedagogical positioning, and the intertwined encounter between being a language teacher and a previous religious woman whose identities were shaped by sociocultural factors. Data analysis was done using thematic analysis by defining themes connected with the constructs of the literature, and sub-themes related to the emergent reflections and intertwined identities regarding my voice as a pre-service teacher and two other participants. Findings are related not only to the spiritual field but gender, academic, professional, and personal development. Conclusions evidenced further research regarding the emerging sub-themes and other voices with similar life experiences.

Keywords: language teacher identity, spiritual identity, religious life, narrative inquiry, autobiography

Resumen

Las narrativas nos ayudan a comprender realidades y contextos desde el punto de vista de quienes experimentan y enfrentan situaciones concretas que configuran su identidad, por lo tanto, este estudio autobiográfico tiene como objetivo narrar la historia de vida de una docente en formación de inglés como lengua extranjera, considerando mi vida antes, durante y después de

ser miembro de una comunidad religiosa, así como el camino para convertirme en profesora de inglés. Los instrumentos de recolección de datos implementados fueron narrativas escritas, orales y multimodales a través de las cuales hice evidentes experiencias y reflexiones sobre mi posicionamiento pedagógico y el encuentro entrelazado entre ser profesora de idiomas y una ex religiosa cuyas identidades fueron moldeadas por factores socioculturales. El análisis de datos se realizó mediante análisis temático mediante la definición de temas relacionados con los constructos de la literatura y subtemas relacionados con las reflexiones emergentes e identidades entrelazadas sobre mi voz como docente en formación y otros dos participantes. Los hallazgos se relacionan no solo con el campo espiritual sino con el género, el desarrollo académico, profesional y personal. Las conclusiones evidenciaron una mayor investigación sobre los subtemas emergentes y otras voces con experiencias de vida similares.

Palabras clave: identidad del profesor de idiomas, identidad espiritual, vida religiosa, investigación narrativa, autobiografía.

1. Contextualization

Learning and teaching English goes beyond following a curriculum, having a good proficiency level and getting a certification, it has to do with human beings interacting in a context, because it is not the same to be a native speaker, a second language teacher, a foreign language teacher, and even a pre-service teacher in Colombia, China, or South Africa. Those different conditions are surrounded by socio-cultural issues, stereotypes, assumptions, power relationships and personal situations that make the issue not quite simple as to be able to communicate but to go directly to who the learner or the teacher is, and how he or she is perceived by others and the whole society as well. "To make sense of identity and identity formation, researchers face the daunting challenge of understanding how these strategies find narrative expression and how, in particular, they support coherence and inform action" (Bullough, 2015, p.82). The cultural background has a big impact that in this case was analyzed so it could enrich the knowledge in the academic field. Furthermore, following Barkhuizen and other contemporary authors concepts of Narrative approach, Language Teacher Identity (LTI), spiritual and religious identity and positioning as an EFL teacher will be addressed.

Experiences in English teaching and learning are rich and diverse since each history can provide understanding in this process from the perspective of their protagonists. Even more, when a person reflects and narrates his / her own perspective, he/she has to organize the experiences to represent himself/herself to others, winning awareness and contextualizing the realities he/she faces in real life. Following Barkhuizen, Benzón & Chik (2014): "a focus on narrative content can certainly contribute to a richer and more rounded understanding of language teaching and learning as lived experience" (p.6). This kind of story is worthy of research because it can change the perspective people can have about religious experiences and

pedagogical formation in a Distance Bachelor program of teaching English as a foreign language.

Nowadays, in people's imagination, there are a lot of assumptions around a woman's motivation to join and remain as a consecrated person in a religious community, formation by distance programs, and teaching English in a country as diverse as Colombia. For that reason, in this study I would like to share what it is like to be a religious woman, the kind of situations I have had to go through to understand who I am, why I enjoyed my life as a consecrated person and my experience in my current lay status. Also my effort to configure my identity and share a common life project inside the community following specific rules, commandments, and goals to reach sanctity; the integration of elements that had a strong influence on my way to understand service as a main goal to help others to improve their life quality: culture, communities, and above all learning English, and my experience to become a preservice English teacher. Stories like mine are happening all the time around the world but making them visible could help others to ask themselves deeper questions or evaluate how they define themselves as English teachers or English learners. The process of learning and teaching English takes a long part in the lives of those who are preparing themselves as teachers. We will be always trying to get the awareness of the self, but there is not a unique shape or mould to become a teacher nor a single way to teach a foreign language; previous experiences in our lives definitely influence and construct who we are.

I was born and raised in Cundinamarca and I grew up inside a Catholic family that I consider non-practitioner. I mean I have a family that follows Catholicism in their rites and traditions but that does not internalize the meaning of being Catholic. When I was a teenager, I discovered the Catholic Church as an answer for different situations and lacks that I lived at

home. Furthermore, I was so excited to join all the Catholic activities that I decided to focus my life project inside the Church and I decided I wanted to join a religious community. I was a friend of several seminarists and diocesan priests but I did not know about communities so my Parish priest was the one who introduced me to a Colombian community founded in Bogotá that aims to be an homage to The Most Holy Sacrament, this is Eucharist, through prayer, education, health services mainly for elder people, and mission *Ad gentes*.

I joined the community in 2006 at the age of 17 after finishing high school and I had my initial formation stages: postulancy and novitiate for 3 and a half years. Later, I made my first vows, this is joining officially the community for a specific period of time, but at that stage the process became difficult as I did not share certain situations that I evidenced in my different apostolates or places of mission. I asked for an experience in 2014, this is changing the community to see if there I could fulfill my life project but this was not successful and I returned to the Colombian community. After experiencing different contexts mainly as a religion teacher and facing difficulties to get the definitive bond to the community, this is the perpetual vows, and having joined the B.A. program I decided to quit religious life definitively.

In 2018 I became an English pre-service teacher of high school at a private Catholic school, where I currently work, being in the middle of my studies at the B.A. program and I started a new life. It included a reflection on the 12 years I was in the religious community, and also a set of different challenges and goals. I rebuilt my life project, because at that point the religious aspect continued being an important aspect of my life project but not the only one. I am now focused on my personal, academic, and professional development. Besides, the experiences I have had during these three years have helped me in all those dimensions as I will specify later through the paper.

The present autobiography is gathered in a narrative way through different instruments including written, oral, and multimodal narratives to discover categories and themes behind the story that helps to get a better understanding of the experiences and their influence in the present time. Furthermore, two more participants were invited to share their own narratives and perceptions of the events around my life to get a deeper perspective of them. Finally, the emerging categories take to an analysis noticing common points, voices, life experiences, different identities, and movements that are defined as development in five important life dimensions. Despite certain limitations and recommendations, the findings are useful to the ELT community as a contribution to the academic field.

2. Research statement

According to Stremmel (2014) “It is through our shared stories that we become fully known to ourselves and others, and see new possibilities for educational change” (p.2). Furthermore, “self-narratives, or the stories people tell about themselves, help us to understand the ways in which individuals situate themselves and their activities in the world” (Barkhuizen, Benzon & Chik, 2014, p.2). Therefore, in the field of narratives the authors aforementioned highlight the importance of targeting the voices of protagonists in educational contexts to portray them more humanly. That is to say, research is not only about collecting data, but it is also about understanding and interacting with people in any contexts; in this case, my life as a pre-service teacher is depicted through life experiences that configure my identity.

Besides, according to Hall & Du (1996) identities emerge from the “narrativization of the self, but the necessarily fictional nature of this process in no way undermines its discursive, material or political effectivity” (p. 4). “Interest in narratives reflects postmodern concerns with the self, identity, and individuality, arising from what Casey (1995: 216) calls a kind of “cultural vertigo” that is the consequence of “individuals vacating established social constructions of reality.” (Barkhuizen, Benzon & Chik, 2014, p.2). Here the topic of Language Teacher Identity (LTI) has had a big impact and continues to have because through narratives it is possible to access long-term experiences and the processes of construction of identity over time.

Consequently, this research proposal is framed within the Macro project "Understanding and characterizing EFL in the LLEI: experiences and phenomena in the pre-service teachers' educational context" because my teaching and learning processes have been developed in several environments that have enriched the characterization and description of my identity and likely other pre-service teachers, as cited in the research framework of the B.A program: "How the

particularities of those contexts influence TEFL and make it a unique phenomenon each time" (Bonilla, Hernández & Medina, 2017. p.7263). Furthermore, this study is also part of the research subproject called "*the voices of the LLEI realities: life stories and experiences*". It allows me as a pre-service teacher to show how my English learning experiences were determined by decisions, goals and my religious life, including the stages before and after belonging to a Colombian religious community.

Thus, the study results pertinent from the perspective of narrative inquiry, considering that stories make significant contributions to address the voices of pre-service teachers by analyzing "memories, prompt our reflections, connect us with our past and present, and assist us to envision our future" (Kramp, 2004, p.107). Furthermore, the fact that my biography has a religious background that sometimes seems obvious since it makes part of our Colombian traditions, and consequently it is not deeply addressed and understood by scholars in the field of EFL.

Another contribution to the subproject and the academic community of the B.A program is the findings underpinning the fact that from my experience as a religious woman and the perspective insight and outside the community have made me realize how my identity has been reconstructed. Crucial categories around a religious life in relation to my decision of studying English allowed me to understand the influence of religious traditions, women stereotypes, differences about gender opportunities in a professional life and the educational contexts.

To sum up my story, reflections and inner voice is a mirror of my human transformation that initiated before being a member of the religious community, the awareness of feeling questioned and constrained by the communities I belonged to and the experiences I have lived as leaving behind that condition and finding myself as an English pre-service teacher. In other

words, from being a consecrated woman in a Colombian Catholic Community to changing my role and status as a religious woman to become a pre-service teacher.

Digging up the experiences as a pre-service teacher, gave me the possibility to hold the importance of other aspects that also make part of my identity: culture, distance learning, academic development, professional growth and leadership. In this way, the study holds a timeline that involves a thirty-two year period from my experiences drawn as a religious woman during twelve years, being a religion teacher for nine years, studying English for three years, quitting the community, being an EFL pre-service teacher for three years, and sharing with people from all over the world.

Considering the previous information, the research question that leads this autobiographical study is the following one:

How do the life experiences before, during and after being a religious woman configure the identities construction of an English pre-service teacher?

From the research question, the objectives below were formulated:

General objective

To analyse the life experiences of a woman before, during, and after belonging to a Colombian religious community and their influence on the construction of her identity as pre-service English teacher.

Specific objectives

- To depict the life-story of an EFL pre-service teacher through experiences before, during and after being a religious woman.

- To establish relationships through the intersections between voices, life experiences, and identity manifestations of the English pre-service teacher for understanding the configuration of identities through the trajectories from a religious woman to a language learner and a language teacher.

3. Literature review

The purpose of this study is to analyse the experiences of a woman before, during, and after belonging to a Colombian religious community and their influence on the construction of her identity as pre-service English teacher. For that reason, the following concepts are considered fundamental for the study and are depicted taking into account the literature related to them.

3.1 Narrative approach

According to Barkhuizen, Benzón & Chik (2014) “Narrative has become a legitimate mode of thinking and writing in research” (p.1). With the increase of interest in narratives in social sciences, many academic studies in linguistics are focused on understanding how stories help to make sense of realities. In fact, narratives have been useful in fields like psychology, sociology, and education. However, recently its impact has been more noticeable. The authors give four main reasons for that kind of narrative turn: The awareness of psychological, social, and educational phenomena that cannot be studied in the same way as natural phenomena through positive methods. The postmodern concerns related to a certain “cultural vertigo” and changes of paradigms in society. The leading role of the construction of social identities and the questions of individuals about who they are and what is their place in society. And finally, the empowerment of voices both group or individual. (Barkhuizen, Benzón & Chik, 2014).

Narrative approach “is a profoundly human way of carrying out research” (Barkhuizen, Benzón & Chik, 2014, p.3). It is useful to understand concrete phenomena from the protagonists’ perspective, to be aware of aspects that are assumed or avoided in other kinds of research. Besides, each person has a voice that deserves to be known and valued and this approach makes possible to raise it. The key strength of this inquiry “lies in its focus on how people use stories to

make sense of their experiences in areas of inquiry where it is important to understand phenomena from the perspectives of those who experience them” (p. 2).

Barkhuizen (2011) highlights that narratives are co-constructed “discursive artifacts” in a context. He points to a clear relationship between narratives and identity: “In telling stories, participants are performing themselves; they are doing their identities” (p.399) and such identity is performed not only in long and elaborated narratives but also in short, daily, sometimes mundane narratives. The author emphasizes on the cognitive action implied in narrative inquiry with a definition of “knowledging” as follows: “narrative knowledging refers to the meaning-making, learning, and knowledge construction that takes place at all stages of a narrative research project, from the conception of the research project to the consumption of the research report” (Barkhuizen, 2015, p.99). Besides, there is a difference between analysis of narratives where oral, written, or multimodal narratives are used as data, and narrative analysis where storytelling is used to analyze and present research results.

3.1.1 Narratives in Language Teaching and Learning

Language teaching and learning find useful narrative content through narrative inquiry because both the stories and how the stories are narrated are great sources of data and provide a better understanding of who are language teachers and learners and the situations that surround them. (Barkhuizen, Benzon & Chik, 2014). Those narratives could be biographical, autobiographical, or even co-constructed because they could emerge in the process of the research itself and allow language teaching and learning protagonists to uncover interesting features, issues, and even dilemmas that are not addressed with other inquiries.

In general, narratives have certain elements including the main topic. Barkhuizen, Benzon & Chick (2014) highlight the following:

Narratives are spoken or written texts, are produced by people who have something to tell, are situated in time and space, involve development over time, have structures that correspond to the developments they describe, encapsulate a point that the narrator wants to get across, have purpose and meaning within the context of their telling (p.7).

However, the narratives of language teaching and learning are particular in three main aspects: They are mainly about personal experiences, the stories are told in the context of daily life, and usually, they involve aspects of the narrator identity because the person through those narratives identifies the language teaching or learning as a relevant area of his/her life.

(Barkhuizen, Benzoni & Chik, 2014, p.7). The number of narrative studies of language teaching and learning has increased during the recent years and certain patterns have emerged especially in the use of stories but the conceptualization and definition is still being shaped. The emergence and growth of this research approach shows a turn towards qualitative methodologies and sociocultural issues. Common topics are obviously related to language, but three topics are strongly connected with narratives: identity, context and emotions.

Norton (2017) defines identity as “the way a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is structured across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future” (p.81). Besides, there is not a single identity for each person because identities are “multiple, dynamic, and hybrid” (Barkhuizen, 2017, p.4). Frequently, they are overlapped and intertwined but they could be very specific at the same time, a language teacher could have at the same time an identity as a researcher, father, academic leader, community agent, etc. this is the reason why in the present study several times the term identities is preferred over identity. Besides, context has to be with the specific social, historical,

and cultural backgrounds of language teachers and learners' lives. Finally, emotions are related to feelings about interactions, experiences, roles, and processes related to language.

3.1.2 Life history and autobiographical narrative

“The auto/biographical emphasis is to see the recalled life in all its complexity, bringing to its consideration all the subtlety of the reader’s own personal experience” (Payne & Payne, 2004, p.26). However, in a more specific way, Barkhuizen, Benzoni & Chik (2014) conceptualize the language learning histories (LLHs) as “retrospective accounts of past learning” and “written stories of language learning experiences” (p.37) that in this case implies a long-term account that is the complete period of learning and teaching English, this could go beyond the whole academic life.

“Narrative inquiry is, perhaps, most empowering when it involves autobiography” (Barkhuizen, Benzoni & Chik, 2014, p.9). Such empowerment is given to the voice of the researcher who is able to manifest his or her learning experiences, the connection to other kinds of experiences and how meaningful in a specific context they were. The participants themselves are the researchers (Barkhuizen, 2015, p.101) and usually long-term experiences centered on a topic are collected as data, then reviewed, analyzed and re-interpreted (Payne & Payne, 2004). Furthermore, life history implies long-term historical events that are not necessarily chronological and can be focused on specific events that could be central and specific, the chronological order could be useful just to see how the events are connected.

In addition, autobiographical studies can contribute to the learner’s metacognitive awareness of their language teaching and learning stories. Being participants and researchers could help to figure out important elements as part of the big story, reflect how those elements

are connected, how much investment has been made in those experiences, and how in the future those key elements could be better articulated in order to get better results regarding learning or teaching a language and balance with other dimensions of life.

3.2 Language Teacher Identity (LTI)

Identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we came from', so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves. (Hall & Du, 1996, p.4).

The visibility of narratives and contexts is a concept strongly connected with the notion of identity. Identity is a concept that is related to the notion of self that is a result of interaction with others. It is constructed as a result of the decisions people make from their relationships. Besides, such a notion of self includes the sum of characteristics, values, beliefs, and behaviors that make a person different from others and at the same time consider the person as part of society. It evolves because it is a dynamic process (Gray and Morton, 2018) and people are continually participating in different environments that make them decide how to act, talk, or think.

Barkhuizen (2017) after collecting forty-one narratives of experienced researchers and language teachers that reflect on language teacher identities (LTI) in his book: *Reflections on Language Teacher Identity Research*, defines it as follows: “They (identities) are struggle and harmony: they are contested and resisted, by self and others, and they are also accepted, acknowledged and valued, by self and others” (p.4). Each chapter was written by an expert in language teaching and it is very clear that life experiences have constructed the identity of those researchers that give their insights and contributions about the matter. For this study, having such

a great variety of reflections on the field helped me to pick up those key topics related to LTIs that called my attention and helped me to shape the structure of my paper through a mindmap (see [Appendix A](#)).

LTIs are not delimited to standardized definitions, because they are very dynamic and complex as they involve the human being, the socio-cultural background, resources, and beliefs of teachers. There is not a unique identity, the LTI is intertwined with the identities as parents, citizens, members of certain communities, and thousands of possibilities that a human being can experiment and live and what is more it evolves. The identities and their overlapping and intertwining seem to avoid patterns or templates. However, as much as we are aware of the stories and identities of Language teachers we can better understand what is behind, and increase in awareness and empowerment of their voices, in my case those reflections highlighted in [appendix A](#) helped me to shape the study and then understand better my history.

Some important topics highlighted by the researchers regarding LTIs are conflicting plots and identity dilemmas that are experienced while increasing the awareness of it. “We author our identities in discourse by drawing upon historically available resources- the resources that our lives have made available to us” (Menard-Warwick, 2017, p.63). The LTI is directly related to the experiences and confrontations with those experiences in order to realize what is our role in the world beyond the classroom, EFL programs, curriculum and policies. “Understanding language teachers' identity-related dilemmas, and their manifold significance for teaching and learning can help equip language education for exciting social changes as well as daunting global challenges” (D. Nelson, 2017, p.234). Menard-Warwick (2017) highlights the importance to acknowledge where the students and teachers come from, the values behind teaching and learning English and the contexts that could be transformed by making different meanings.

On the other hand, D. Nelson (2017) states that dilemmas arise in managing different identities, personal decisions, facing challenges and conundrums, and so on. Besides, research can help us to understand how such decisions affect the person and people around: communities, educational contexts, and loved ones. Conflicting plots and dilemmas are emerging all over the world and inside every person. Therefore, learning and teaching English deserves to be analyzed to discover the incidence of those conflicting plots in the construction of new realities.

Additionally, searching for identity helps the person to be aware of the way of teaching and learning because what we do is part of what we are and our labour is influenced by the beliefs and values that are most important and relevant for each one. In my case, it has to do with distance learning education, autonomy and learner investment developed during the process. First, White (2017) argues that distance teaching, and it applies also for distance learning, is challenging since teachers and students are constantly making choices about how to be and how to act in reiterative cycles of perception, action, and interpretation where the person changes modelling or creating new identities to go from the known to the new. In fact, beyond technology and all the resources, tools, settings and practices, emerge the human being as a teacher and a learner where autonomy and investment are quite important.

Secondly, Benson (2017), defines autonomy as “the capacity of individuals to exercise control over their lives” (p.18) related to long-term goals and learning. Besides, he connects it to identity “through the idea that any sustained process of learning is also a process of becoming” (p.19), in this case a user and eventually a teacher of the language. Autonomy takes the person beyond the feeling of being a learner or teacher to the awareness and “highly individual sense” of the kind of learner and teacher he/she is or wants to become.

Finally, learner investment in learning the target language plays an important role because learning a language transforms a person and consequently his/ her relationships with others including power relationships (Barkhuizen & Strauss, 2020). Darwin and Norton (2015) have developed a model of investment in which they show the relationship between identity, capital, and ideology where the center is the investment itself. The motivation to achieve an effective learning process and better teacher performance has to do with the ideologies, systemic patterns of control, management of resources, and relationships in the classroom, institution, and community. Learners who build a positive identity are more willing to invest more and make more effort into EFL learning, whereas if the learners construct a negative identity the effort will be fewer and with less quality.

Figure 1

Illustration of a model of investment and intersectionality: Identity, capital and ideology



Note. Taken from Darwin and Norton (2015, p. 42)

3.2.1 The spiritual and religious identity of a female community member

Taking into account that this study aims to delve into components of identity and the positioning of a pre-service teacher, it is necessary to clarify that my life experiences and cultural background are both constructed around a religious life and the perspective of spiritual identity, which means the intrapersonal position of someone that is valuable to revise from literature and

discuss regarding my narrative and biographical episodes. This life-story depicts the experiences of a pre-service teacher whose life had a foundational experience as a religious woman. From that, “We are what we believe and our beliefs make us who we are. We are attached to some of our beliefs and tend to resist abandoning them for fear of losing our identities” (Barcelos, 2017, p.147). The spiritual identity is recognized through narratives (Reimer & Dueck 2012) where the person can make sense of who is himself or herself in relation with the divinity that in the case of Catholicism is God, the totally Other who “loved us first” (1Jn 4-19).

To talk about spiritual identity, it is necessary to refer to the identification with something specific, sacred, transcendent, totally other, and at the same time immanent, this is a religion. It is therefore a reference or “attachment” that contains three coherent and harmonious ideas: God, the man, the world (Ries, 1989). The spiritual identity then appears as something constitutive of humankind that makes people go beyond themselves or transcend. Besides, it relates a human being to someone different from him or her (the totally Other) that takes him or her to the maximum of possible humanity or fullness (realization of himself and with others).

The spiritual field appeared in opposition to the matter, the body, and the sensitive part of life; however, today it is an integrative element (Castillo, 2007) that is realized in experience and gives meaning not only to the future but to the present and even the past. Therefore, the spiritual identity leads the human being to the construction of interiority and the transformation of his own life and the environment to reach fulfilment. In each religion this transformation and route have their own name, in Christianity, it is called "follow-up" (Velasco, 2015). For a catholic, it is his/her personal salvation history within the salvation history of humanity to transform the world without abandoning it.

Catholics' identity is highly influenced by the model of the life of Jesus Christ and the four Gospels inside the Bible, as the story behind this narrative inquiry portrays it. In that specific identity construction, it is very important the concept of God's Will, freedom, vocation, and apostolate (mission and service inside the Church) because "the person is essentially, constitutively and formally referred to God and to other men" (Zubiri, 1987, p.478). Consequently, some men and women dedicate their lives to the service of the gospel, and they are known as consecrated or religious. They are gathered as a group inside the Catholic Church around a "charism" provided to the founder that is considered a gift of the Holy Spirit and a common mission.

Even though the spiritual experience for religious men and women is fundamental and essential, the groups we are involved in, make the identity dynamic and in constant negotiation. This could be influenced by the geographical and familiar background or decisions in different stages of life or at specific events that became meaningful. There are hundreds of communities and groups acknowledged by the Church with different missions and activities. In the case of religious women, they must struggle with power relationships in hierarchical communities, gender discrimination in a Church directed by men. There are personal struggles in their daily labours and insight their communities: A male or female member may find contradictory to obey because for communities there is always an existing rule 'must,' that implies to forcefully accept conditions, facts and situations that deny the personal desire and well-balanced human conditions with the community's argument of "you must carry out God's labour in the world" (Eze, Lindegger & Rakoczy, 2015). However, spiritual identity is as important as it assures them a sense for a person to continue living under religious and community's precepts, despite fragility and contradictions "leaders give extreme attention to work in disregard of every other aspect of

their life”, “work is no longer a joyful expression of commitment to God but rather a source of captivity that smothers every other space. In view of this experience, work becomes a means of imprisonment” (Eze, Lindegger & Rakoczy, 2015, p. 409-410).

In addition, authors haven't said much about being a religious woman and an English teacher at the same time, but Eze, Lindegger & Rakoczy (2015) affirm that in their study “some of the participants (religious women) adduced that their expertise skills are sometimes neglected by their leaders when assigning them to different apostolates (work)” (p. 411). In this case it could be assumed that a religious woman would be a religion teacher rather than an English teacher even though the person could have the skill to teach English. Religious men and women usually have intercultural exchanges during which they must learn a new language and familiarize with new customs, in order to develop their mission abroad and spread the Gospel. As this story describes it, the negotiation between a dynamic multi-dimensional identity of a religious woman, an English learner, and a future English teacher makes a mix of elements that leads me to decide on which I am searching for coherence between my beliefs, faith, language skills, and professional development as an English teacher, before I was in the religious community and after I quit.

There is no equity comparing female religious communities, in contrast with men's groups related to independence, their position and voice inside the Church, and their labor. For example, it could be common that a religious woman becomes a teacher at a primary school but not a teacher at a university, only a few of them reach positions as principals of schools but they are not interested in preparing all sisters for that. This argument is also illustrated by Barcelos (2017), who narrates her experience as a Brazilian that became an English teacher and from that, she managed the influence of her cultural background. There is still a misconception that native

speakers are better in languages, rather than foreign speakers; likewise, the myth that men can do everything better than women. Women in Catholic Church are usually forced to study what the community imposes, it is not a free professional choice and in many communities, there is no option to study at all; whereas for men study is mandatory, it is easier to get permission to develop their studies and skills or get opportunities for scholarships abroad. There is a clear disbalance about roles, resources, and opportunities.

3.3 The positioning as an EFL pre-service teacher

According to Barkhuizen & Strauss (2020): “Learners are positioned by others, including their teachers, other learners, and members of the wider society, and this positioning might not always be beneficial to them or acceptable to them” (p.10). In that struggle and process of making a place inside the academic community, the EFL pre-service teacher also makes a path to position himself or herself as a professional, talented, skilled teacher taking into account that sometimes the relationships themselves position the people and condition his / her role. Such relationships could be better managed for those who have a deeper self-knowledge and self-awareness of their history, values and aspects to improve.

Following Farrell (2017) “it is difficult to separate the personal from the professional because this is what makes us human in the classroom and in fact, makes all the difference as we interact with our students” (p.183). Therefore, life experiences are fundamental to the professional development of a teacher because as integral people we cannot segregate who we are and what we have lived once we enter a classroom. In this case, the previous pedagogical experience as a religion teacher and all the knowledge, reflections, and assumptions around it

influences the identity as a pre-service English teacher and the daily interactions with the students, other teachers and stakeholders.

Pre-service language teachers are at an important point in their construction as teachers because they are developing skills needed to become professional and getting the experience, meanwhile, they continue studying and working. Consequently, the processes and decisions during the formation time are an important part of the construction and awareness as “teachers” and their role inside and outside the classroom. As Castañeda & Aguirre (2018) affirm: “pre-service teachers’ reflections show that they are in a constant process of re-examining their practices in order to understand what happened and how to solve different situations in the classroom” (p.167).

In addition, Farrell (2017) states that self-knowledge is as crucial as knowing about research and students. Here the learning history and the reflective practice are protagonists of the construction of identity because struggles and contradictions are always present in life history. This awareness can help the pre-service teacher to consolidate his/her identity as an EFL teacher, increase creativity facing difficulties at school, and respond to the current educational challenges. Donato (2017) highlights that it is worth the research on “how one's past experiences as a language learner have an impact on the new teacher's emerging professional identity and teaching practice” (p.29). In this case, three main factors have an impact on a teacher’s professional identity: previous experiences as a religious teacher, pre-service teacher experiences in a private school, and pedagogical practicum during lockdown due to COVID-19. Those will be addressed in the data analysis.

4. Research Design

4.1 Autobiographical study through narrative inquiry

This study addresses the autobiography of an English pre-service teacher regarding the trajectories and experiences before, while and after being a religious woman to figure out how life landmarks shape the identity firstly of a religious community member and then as an EFL learner who becomes an English Language Teacher. Since this study involves the pre-service teacher as the main participant and the researcher, the methodological procedure implemented is framed as an autobiographical narrative inquiry.

Narrative inquiry constitutes an important contribution to the field of language teaching and research that highlights the importance of addressing research from the voice of teachers, educators and students. According to Barkhuizen, Benzoni & Chik (2014) narrative is fruitful in the field of education as it broadens the perspective of teachers' professional lives and careers. It allows us to dig into the inner world of those who had something to tell and express through their life stories and experiences.

Indeed, at the Universidad Santo Tomás "students and teachers have the opportunity to reflect on their own practices and those contextual factors that affect the process of teaching and learning". (Bonilla, Hernández & Medina, 2017. p.7259), so taking advantage of the process at the B.A in English, the reflection upon life stories and experiences constitutes a spotlight for the bachelor program, regarding the human dimension as a crucial one that defines a human being and how they shape the pre-service and future professional teacher. As a matter of fact, the licenciatura designed a research framework through the macro project and subproject that appeal for studies on which the voices of pre-service teachers and their life stories are significant to be investigated, that is to say, the voices of the LLEI realities: life stories and experiences.

This study makes visible the dynamism that connects research, identity and professional development from the perspective of who is experiencing the challenges in particular conditions. It also makes visible that identities are being constantly shaped by different factors and meaningful stories which are part of that configuration. Research at the Universidad Santo Tomás can be enriched by the findings of this kind of study.

4.2 Autobiographical study: Participant and trustworthiness

The participant in an autobiographical study is the person who experiences the facts, the one who narrates, and it may be the researcher too. It provides a grade of trustworthiness because this perspective involves a period conformed by life-episodes that are revisited through data collection and then analyzed through the lens of narrative inquiry, its methodological guidelines, and the literature contributions made by scholars and researchers such as Barkhuizen, Benzon & Chick (2014); Norton (2013;2015); Barkhuizen & Strauss (2020), Pavlenko (2002,2007).

According to Barkhuizen, Benzon & Chick (2014), the participant-researcher can do narrative analysis and the analysis of narrative; it depends on the interest of the researcher. Nevertheless, a story can mean different things for different people depending on the context. Criteria for trustworthiness guide the interpretation of data regarding the stories, the pre-service teacher's life-episodes through three levels explained in detail below by Barkhuizen, Benzon & Chik (2014) as citing (Denzin, 1989), who highlight that narratives can show life as lived, experienced, or told:

- “1. what “things” were like, how events occurred (findings from the sphere of the reality of life),
2. how “things” and events were experienced by the respondents (findings from the sphere of the reality of the subject),

3. how “things” and events are narrated by the respondents (findings from the sphere of the reality of the text)”. (p. 90).

As the narrator of this study, I am the protagonist who evidenced how things occurred as a member of a religious community and how the life events triggered in living the role as an English pre-service teacher. Also, I tackled the experiences of moving towards the geographical places, different local communities mentioned in the autobiography specifically in the timeline ([Appendix B](#)) and lived situations which are part of my story. This criterion accomplishes the first level of trustworthiness as it was aforementioned.

The second level determines trustworthiness from the protagonist’s position and point of view. In other words, the experiences told by the person that went through the situations. Finally, the third level is the narrative itself, which means how the story is told and how the protagonist portrays the reality of experiences and circumstances. In this way, trustworthiness guided data collection and analysis.

4.3 Data collection instruments

Narratives are dynamic as the human beings who tell them, so the use of multiple methods in data collection is frequent in narrative studies. The following table defines the data collection instruments that I used in this research proposal. I want to be specific about the levels of trustworthiness previously described because those vary regarding the collection of data.

Table 1*Data collection instruments*

Type and purpose of narrative inquiry	Instrument(s) (See appendixes)	Kinds of data and findings
(2) Oral narrative: Through interviews it is easier to access different personal perspectives inside a concrete context making it manifested through words. The two participants involved in the study are close to the protagonist; their voices mirror somehow the pre-service teacher's identity.	Semi-structured interviews: Those have a set of pre-set questions that provides flexibility and at the same time coherence. (Appendix C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Level 1: how events occurred. ● Level 3: how “things” and events are narrated by the researcher and the voices of others (recalling memoirs). Barkhuizen, Benson and Chik (2014) citing (Denzin (1989))
(1) Written narrative: it could take multiple and different forms since those are constructions. However, it is the most common way to narrate and express how a situation or experience was lived or perceived by a person.	<i>Biographical documents</i> and narrative frames: texts that help to materialize an experience making it free as the first kind of document or providing a certain structure as the frames do. (Table 2 and table 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Level 1: how events occurred. ● Level 2: how “things” and events were experienced. ● Level 3: how “things” and events are narrated by the researcher and the voices of others (recalling memoirs).
(3) Multimodal narrative: it considers the use of other text types different from oral and written as sources of information. Different kinds of artifacts can provide useful information.	Life experiences through visual data: A digital timeline through photographs. Digital resources are important since they reflect the experiences as evidence and can be interpreted from different points of view. (Appendix B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Level 1: how events occurred. ● Level 2: how “things” and events were experienced.

Note: Adapted from Barkhuizen, Benson and Chik (2014)

Barkhuizen (2020, 0:15:30–0:19:43) suggests through a lecture via Zoom given at the Auckland University in New Zealand the instruments of the table as suggested to address

narrative inquiry in the field of applied linguistics. According to the author, the elements of a story are:

1. Experiences that involve life trajectories before, during, and after being a religious woman through written narrative.
2. Reflection upon the story through written and oral narratives that depict how experiences are lived and how they are narrated, (second and third levels of trustworthiness).
3. A temporal dimension illustrated through photographs defined as multimodal narrative as they include written narrative descriptions that involve feelings and emotions behind the story.
4. A plot constituted by moments evidenced through narrative that involves characters, described time, places and space through written, oral and multimodal). Barkhuizen remarks of this feature as the “tellability” that informs contributions to the academic field; here through the themes of identity, religious life experiences, and EFL learning and teaching English.

5. Data Analysis

5.1 Thematic analysis

Barkhuizen (2020) highlights five core dimensions of narrative inquiry that constitutes the fundamental features of narrative research, “each dimension is a continuum, and any methodological action or decision would lie at some point along the continuum” (p.190) establishing the essence of the study. Dimension five is called “Analysis of narrative and narrative analysis” where the analysis of narrative includes “conventional thematic or content analysis and involves searching or coding data for themes, categorizing these, and looking for

patterns of association among them” (Barkhuizen, 2020, p.195). Themes that arise from the content of the experiences of the narrators are followed by their reflections, later those themes are organized into larger categories in order to get a deep interpretation and discussion.

Therefore, the approach that responds to the research question considering the research objectives is thematic analysis. It guides analysis through the definition of codes that reconstruct the story and help to discover categories. This study organizes data collection through a temporal division that involves trajectories as a religious woman, a language learner and a language teacher.

5.1.1 Data analysis through written biographical descriptions

This study carried out data collection and analysis through the definition of three life landmarks determined by the elements and trustworthiness principles stated by Barkhuizen (2020): (a) Experiences through life trajectories, (b) reflections upon the lived story, (c) temporal dimension and (d) the plot that involves moments, emotions, feelings and happenings. The landmarks were organized as follows:

1. Before joining a religious community (1988-2005)
2. Being part of a religious community (2006-2018)
3. After being part of a religious community (2018-2021)

The three life landmarks are presented through two sources of information. In the first place the timeline that compiles my whole life ([see appendix B](#)). The second one that used written narratives to inform experiences from the voice of the narrator depicting the development of my trajectory as a religious woman including decisions made, movements from one place to another and changes in thoughts, feelings and perspectives. The most significant events were highlighted using three different colors as it is shown in the table below.

Table 2

Written narrative through life landmarks from 1988-2021

Before joining a religious community 1988-2005	Being part of a religious community 2006-2018	After being part of a religious community 2018-2021
<p>As growing up, my father used to say that <i>"I should be a boy instead of a girl because girls do not succeed in life"</i>. At the same time he wanted my brother and me to become engineers because it was his dream. He is a technical mechanic in Spanish called "Tornero". I think he is pretty intelligent for maths and is hard-worker, <i>he encouraged us in maths and English because he used to say that "those subjects will provide us a good future"</i>. I wanted to become a chemical engineer before being close to the Catholic Church. <i>I found it hard to have a good relationship with my father since he didn't recognize the things I did. I used to be very good at school but I didn't feel support or acknowledgement from my parents. On the other hand, my mother used to say that I had to work hard and be independent so in the future I wouldn't depend on a man as she did.</i> She didn't ask me to do chores, that's why I never learned to cook in a proper way. I think</p>	<p>During 12 years (2006-2018) I heard beautiful discourses about God, holiness, community, family and so on. However, it was not coherent with many things that must be "beared" by a religious woman. <i>"You must deny yourself, you must suffer, you must work, you must resist, you must endure and perseverate otherwise you won't be happy and you'll be a loser who doesn't deserve heaven"</i>. I feel there was a dichotomy between words and deeds. For me the Gospel, constitutions and rules (even those that nowadays I think are useless or old-fashioned) of the community weren't wrong (at that moment) but I noticed that empowerment given by the authority in the community made sisters act in other ways that were not truly evangelical. <i>"You must be obedient, God's will is revealed in your superiors orders"</i>, it was not possible to express different points of view. I felt it was an arbitrary authority about academical processes (I started 4 times at university without finishing), about work beyond the physical strength and the preparation (being teacher and coordinator at 19 without any pedagogical study) and</p>	<p>After I quit the community I was accepted as English teacher in a school led by priests. <i>As a paradox I was again in the environment I tried to avoid.</i> However, I was an English teacher. Father John the school's principal used to talk in a very different way than the principals or superiors I had had. <i>He used to talk about spirituality as the basis for teaching instead of productivity. He told me that I must be first a merciful human being before being someone who follows a religion.</i> Besides, he told me that I should find myself first and be happy with who I am.</p>

<p>she never said things about school but she had big expectations about my future. <i>She used to be silent most of the time in front of my father.</i></p> <p>The discourse in the Church was different and I met several men who joined the seminary of Facatativa Diocese and father Victor Hugo. <i>I heard from them that God is love and that he wants people to be happy.</i> I wanted to share that message everywhere and I wanted more and more. I joined all the possible groups in church and spent a lot of time learning about bible, catechesis, and prayers. <i>Even though my mother laughed at me when I told her I would like to join a community, she was the only one who supported me later and helped me.</i></p> <p>I was not sure about the process to join a community or the different kinds of them but <i>I followed the advice of father Victor Hugo</i> as he was pretty close to that particular community. <i>I used to think that I would prefer being a seminarist.</i></p>	<p>about discrimination that predetermine and stereotype sisters. According to our educational background, skills and competences we were kind of classified: if you were not good at academic studies for sure you will go to the kitchen, if you are regular you can be nurse or go attending elders but if you have qualities to study even you don't know what you are doing learn while you do.</p> <p><i>Sisters used to say that we should be more productive than other people because we had everything at hand and workers had real difficulties. For superiors many times we were lazy and unproductive.</i></p> <p>“You must be poor” However I saw sisters spending, wasting, doing not reasonable businesses. Once I got 100.000 and I deliver that to my superior, months later my mom was sick and I asked for that money in order to help my mom, they told me it was not possible, they lent me the money but then mom should pay, I felt miserable... then in other house I saw how the “friend” of the superior went by plane to visit an aunt with 700.000 for a weekend. We had vacations 20 days each 3 years but there were people visiting their families 2 or 3 times per year. <i>That was not fair.</i></p> <p>“You must be chaste” I didn't have a problem with that, to be honest I had a friendship that made me doubt, but I felt it was missing openness because <i>there was nobody to talk about.</i> I managed myself and I always felt proud</p>	
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	<p>of overcoming that.</p> <p>“We are a family, a homage, a tribute to the Holy Family” that was indeed a career of convenience, interests and I would say a dysfunctional family.</p> <p>When I quit after 12 years of service I only got three clothes and a minimum salary to survive. I asked a lady, mother who had two sisters and a daughter in the community to let me live in her house and the Superior called her and threatened her telling that if she accepted me in her house she would lose her job in the Sister’s school. I felt at that moment that those sisters were liars. And when I started saying what I thought they told me I was negative.</p>	
<p>By that time <i>I used to ask myself if my life would have an impact.</i> I liked the idea of becoming an engineer but I thought that after all it won’t be useful for society. When I changed my mind to religious life <i>I thought that it could be the best decision in my life</i> serving people and being free of a lot of stereotypes and social pressures.</p>	<p>I expected to be in a family and be accepted as I am, I had a strong eagerness to achieve the sanctity but those desires were dying, I confronted myself trying to shape my identity as a religious woman and I found I was incoherent in many ways and I searched for something more radical. Then I searched for another community and it was what determined that I never would be part of the community again. “You don’t have the community identity” the sisters used to say and even though I tried my best they finally told me “You go back home, you disliked the community, you don’t fit here”.</p> <p>About study I expected to become a teacher, to have bilingual schools, to be able to teach religion in English or go as a missionary to another country where English</p>	<p>One of my biggest expectations is finishing my bachelor because it has divided my life in two and now gives me the opportunity to serve people as I consider education as a vocation too. It also means something that I have really fought to reach and in what I have tried my best. I expect to expand my academic formation. To enjoy life as much as I can, to travel and take risks. I want to do many things that I didn’t do as part of the community but being aware of the value of every moment. I think right now what really matters for me is building my own happiness and being aware that I’m valuable for who I am and not for what others think or believe about me. I’m still in</p>

	<p>would be necessary. Many sisters told me English was useless in the religious life and that it was a waste of time. They told me that a program by distance was poor and I wouldn't learn at all. The sister who gave me the permission to study was the only one with high expectations about that.</p>	<p>the process of knowing who I am but I definitely am freer and happier with what I do. In the near future I want to get my C1 certification and in a distant future I would like to live abroad.</p>
<p>I think my family is not devoted to religion but following the cultural heritage they have certain rituals and traditions. I think the most important were the sacraments: baptism, first communion and weddings are always celebrated in family. I remember the most important thing about first communion was the dress and the party. However, when I was a teenager, my mom told me that it was important to do the confirmation to avoid problems to get married. I went kind of forced but there <i>I met people who didn't care how I looked, how good or bad I was or how able to do things. I felt in the church that I was loved by God and by people just for being myself.</i></p>	<p>During the long-term experience I believe I went to different stages about spiritual life and spiritual identity. At the very beginning I was so excited and everything was so new and so beautiful that I can compare it with a romantic relationship. It was totally beautiful until I started realizing how difficult it was living in a community. Nevertheless, I was sure of my vocation and I was willing to continue until the last consequences. I started feeling alone about spiritual life and I think I didn't have somebody to share my difficulties. As much I did in apostolate and it seemed to be fruitful, I felt empty. And when I tried to talk or express myself, I felt I was not heard. Eventually, I found myself rising my voice about what it seemed unfair and what I disagree even if they did not pay attention.</p> <p>I never left the sacraments but I started feeling just like an activist without a spiritual growth. That love, happiness and acceptance from the beginning was solitude and rituals that I let others impose to me. At the end I could say that I knew a lot about God but I wasn't close to Him.</p>	<p>At the very beginning I felt I had wasted those years and I wanted to be far from everything related to Catholic Church. Now that I have reflected about the process and experiences, my spirituality is different and stronger. This is a more mature relationship in which I disagree with many of the organizational issues, I feel I have a critical point of view but I'm aware of God's love, mercy and generosity. Indeed I believe he leads me and helps me. I feel I have been fortunate and blessed in all the aspects of my life.</p> <p>I feel grateful and I trust in God but at the same time I know I must make an effort and face life.</p>

<p>I started learning English at school. <i>I always felt it was easy.</i> It wasn't an advanced level but my teachers, especially <i>Ms. Racines in 10th and 11th grade, motivated me a lot with her creativity and dynamism.</i> Once we were talking about the careers that eleventh graders would like to study. I told her that I would like to become an engineer and she told me <i>"I'm sure you'll become a teacher, and not only a teacher but an English teacher"</i>. We laughed at that moment but now it is a reality. I was always outstanding in English class. I had an old computer with an English course where I learned vocabulary and I used to search for lyrics and sing.</p>	<p>I had the opportunity to learn English in some subjects at university Minuto de Dios and in Spain with native people who worked in the same school in Madrid. <i>They always told me I was able to learn and that I was good at English.</i></p> <p>During my experience with an Indian religious community in Peru, I was able to pray in English and attend Mass. I had a lot of misunderstandings with the sisters because I couldn't follow her Indian accent at times but I learned a lot. <i>When I had the opportunity to join the university the superior told me that I had a special disposition to learn languages and she was the one who suggested something related to English.</i> Other sisters used to laugh and criticize but one day at Chicamocha park I found a man from Lebanon who asked me something in English and I could talk to him, that day the sisters saw I was able, then I got confidence and with the help of the English teachers at sister's schools I started joining classes and events in English.</p> <p><i>At university my first English teacher at CAU Bucaramanga was Mr. Serrano and I thought that semester that I would like to become like him. The second semester was totally opposite and I knew what kind of English teacher I don't want to become.</i> I enjoyed the tutoring sessions in a face to face way and I always did as much as I could to participate. I joined the Research mentorship program and there I felt I grew a</p>	<p>I was pleased with myself when the principal asked me for an international test in order to get the job and I got a B2 level because <i>I thought that my process was giving me fruits.</i> I continued attending the university because I was in the middle of my career when I quit the community. It was a personal challenge to continue and improve.</p> <p><i>I feel I learn when I teach,</i> that's why I joined the monitoring program in which I have received formation and the opportunity to help classmates in different English levels. I have taught in high school and it has been challenging every time and finally I have had the practicum at university in ICT and ASE foundation that <i>made me aware of my process and pushes me to get better results.</i></p> <p>I would like to work in a bilingual school or have the opportunity of immersion but let's wait and see. For the moment <i>I know I have a lot of things to improve but I feel so positive about English and other languages to learn and live.</i></p>
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	lot in English and in the research fields.	
	<p>While I was a religious woman, I taught religion and ethics. But as I started learning pedagogy and English as well, I try to take advantage of each opportunity. Sharing with English teachers was fundamental. They helped me with explanations, ideas and examples. They let me join English days and activities in some classes. In Ibagué I started doing the prayer in English with all the elementary school once a week and they let me develop some tasks from university with the children. I felt that teachers and students supported and encouraged me more than the sisters.</p>	<p>I feel very lucky because I got a job as an English teacher when I quit the community. It was a huge change in all aspects of life and I had to start immediately to teach in high school. It was such a challenge. Then I switch to eleventh grade what has been sometimes disappointing because I care about students' future but some of them and some families don't collaborate. I had to overcome the pandemic due to COVID-19 and start teaching online. The experience as a monitor at university helped me a lot as my own experience learning in a distance way. At the same time I took a class of ICT and practice 1 and 2 at university that definitely helped me to discover my strengths and weaknesses in teaching.</p>

5.1.2 Data analysis through narrative frame: Emotions that mirror identities

Emotions and identity are highly interconnected (Barkhuizen, 2021; Gknou & Miller, 2020; Barkhuizen & Strauss, 2020; Barcelos ,2017), the milestones or very specific details as a word or a gesture can define or determine changes in our decisions that shape who we are, how we perceive the world and how we are perceived. Writing is a good way to recognize emotions as it helps the writer to be aware of them. The following table shows specific emotions at specific moments during my life following some prompts that are located on the left; those emotions and feelings have been bolded to be used in a later interpretation.

Table 3

Narrative frame: identities and emotions

In my family I felt that about my decisions in life...	I was not supported enough or listened to but I was brave and even though I could take other paths I think I was motivated by noble principles. I felt compared to my brother and I was disappointed I was not acknowledged in positive aspects.
When I discovered my vocation as a religious woman, I felt...	happy and realized , I wasn't afraid but I think I didn't estimate the positive and negative aspects. Many people laughed (family, friends, teachers, even sisters from the community) but I was so happy that I didn't care if I was being criticized .
My emotions during my initial formation inside a religious community were...	I tried to be brave , I felt useful in many ways with my values and skills and I was eager to learn and do whatever the sisters asked me. I felt that the community was my new family because they embraced and accepted me. I felt my father so disappointed and my mother so proud of me but at the same time they were careless. I built a strong friendship with my partners.

<p>While developing my apostolate, inside the community I felt...</p>	<p>I started feeling alone, I tried my best and there was always something wrong. I discovered that living with people with people so different was hard but I felt it was my fault because I was not able to be “good” enough. Sometimes I felt guilty for not being poor as I had promised in my vows because we had everything at hand. I also felt confused because of the contradictions and bad testimonies of some sisters and superiors. I felt I was not heard and I felt they asked me to do things perfectly without supporting me. I felt nothing I did was good enough.</p>
<p>While developing my apostolate, outside the community I felt...</p>	<p>I felt loved by students, teachers and stakeholders most of the time. I enjoyed sharing with people and I tried to be very cheerful all the time. However, inside I felt alone. I only talked about this to the priests but they said I had to endure the situation or the people and be strong.</p>
<p>When I struggled with the change of community, I felt...</p>	<p>Decided because in my opinion I was going to be more radical even though it was more difficult. Then it was not successful and I felt destroyed, confused and dumb. I returned to the community and asked for a second chance but I felt the things were not right from the beginning. I felt I didn't belong anymore. I tried to overcome the difficulties but I was overwhelmed because I felt the sisters did not accept me.</p>
<p>When I decided to quit the community, I felt...</p>	<p>Sad because I felt I had failed with my life project but hopeful to overcome that situation being myself. I felt free and supported by my mother and friends, even by my teachers, students and the people I had worked with. After the first impact, I felt it was a wise decision and I felt grateful for all the things I lived and learned inside the community.</p>
<p>When I got my first job as an English teacher, I felt...</p>	<p>I felt grateful to God, life and my boss. Also, I was so grateful to my teachers at the university and everything I had</p>

	learned and I was learning. I felt really committed to do my best. I felt happy and proud I was able to give class in high school.
Being part of a distance program at Universidad Santo Tomás I feel...	I feel proud of everything I have done because I have tried my best in every subject. I feel I have taken advantage of several opportunities that the program has given me. I feel I managed to be responsible and find the best ways to put into practice what I was studying. I feel part of a community and a network.
Managing virtual classes due to COVID-19 pandemic I feel...	Challenged to overcome difficulties and be creative. I feel I have had to learn from the experience , be patient with myself and aware of the reality of students and families. I feel grateful to my own experience as a virtual learner and a virtual teacher. However, I discovered the importance of learning from colleagues and to keep working as a team.

5.1.3 Data analysis through oral narratives

Even though this is an autobiographical narrative I got the voices of two people who have been witnesses of my transition from being a religious woman and then a pre-service teacher. As Barkhuizen & Strauss (2020) and Norton (2013) affirm identities are constructed in social interaction and imply also how others see ourselves. Both people have shared with me the role as students at a distance program at Universidad Santo Tomás, one in the B.A. program and the other in the “Licenciatura en educación religiosa escolar”. I considered their perceptions worthy because one has been my friend and classmate in most of the subjects at CAU Bogotá, even though, he does not define himself as a religious person. The other person is a Catholic priest who I have known for a decade, and he was also my boss for one year and a half as coordinator of the school where I currently work.

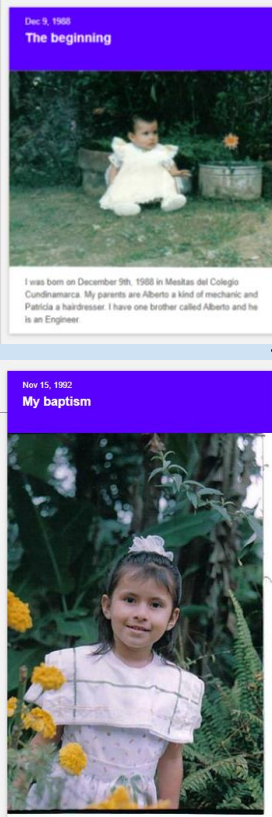
The interviews were semi-structured and centered on their perceptions about my identities as a former religious woman and a current pre-service English teacher and the decisions made. They were done by two external people who did not know the questions in the interview to assure the trustworthiness of the information. In addition, the interviews were carried out in Spanish because mother tongue help interviewees to express themselves in a richer way (Barkhuizen, Benson and Chik, 2014). These oral narratives were transcribed and organized with letters to identify how events are narrated from other perspectives. The whole transcription, recordings and informed consents are at the end of the document ([appendix C](#)) while the excerpts that have been taken to be analyzed are in [table 4](#) column 5.

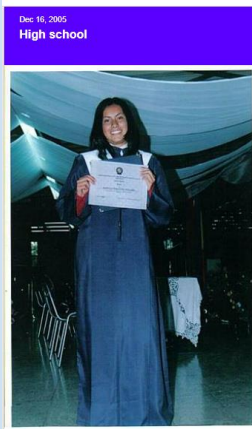
5.2 Triangulation of data

The triangulation has been done using a table trying to illustrate the process and the results going from the main themes to sub-themes and showing how information is coded to obtain final categories. The following table shows in a parallel way the data collected with excerpts that had been highlighted in table 2 and appendix C, and words bolded in table 3 because of their relevance to the study. The excerpts were numbered to use them later in the interpretation. The information follows the order in which the data was collected and follows the three colors that correspond to the three periods of time of the life trajectories: blue, before joining the community; purple, being part of the community; and yellow, after quitting the community. At the end on the right side, the final categories that will be interpreted are presented.

Table 4

Codification of written, multimodal and oral narrative

1. Stages	2. Multimodal narrative <u>(Timeline illustration)</u>	3. <u>Emerging</u> <u>Written narrative</u>	4. <u>Emerging</u> <u>feelings and</u> <u>emotions that</u> <u>shape identities</u>	5. <u>Oral narrative:</u> <u>Voices of witnesses</u>	6. Emerging themes
<p><i>Before being a religious woman</i></p> <p><i>Growing up and shaping identity through different voices that changed my life and my life-goals.</i></p>	 <p>Dec 9, 1988 The beginning</p> <p>Nov 15, 1992 My baptism</p>	<p>1. my father used to say that <i>“I should be a boy instead of a girl because girls do not succeed in life”</i></p> <p>2. I think he (my father) is pretty intelligent in maths and he is hard-worker. He encouraged us in maths and English because he used to say that <i>“those subjects will provide us a good future”</i>.</p> <p>3. I found it hard to have a good relationship with my father since he didn't recognize the things I did. I used to be very good at school but I didn't feel support or acknowledgement from my parents. On the other hand, my mother used to say that I had to work hard and be independent so in the future I wouldn't depend on a man as she did.</p> <p>4. She (my mother) used to be silent most of the time in front of my father.</p>	<p>Not supported, not listened to, compared, not acknowledged.</p> <p>Brave, motivated</p>		<p><u>1. Women stereotypes:</u></p> <p><u>Stigmatization vs Personal conviction</u></p>



5. I heard from them (the members of the Catholic Church) that God is love and that he wants people to be happy.

6. Even though my mother laughed at me when I told her I would like to join a community; she was the only one who supported me later and helped me.

7. I followed the advice of father Victor Hugo... I used to think that I would prefer being a seminarist.

8. I used to ask myself if my life would have an impact.

9. I thought that it could be the best decision in my life.

10. I met people who didn't care how I looked, how good or bad I was or how able to do things. I felt in the church that I was loved by God and by people just for being myself.

11. I started learning English at school. I always felt it was easy.

12. Ms. Racines in 10th and 11th grade, motivated me a lot with her creativity and dynamism. She said one day: *"I'm sure you'll become a teacher, and not only a teacher but an English teacher"*

Being a religious woman

Life objectives in a spiritual and human way



13. *"You must deny yourself, you must suffer, you must work, you must resist, you must endure and persevere otherwise you won't be happy and you'll be a loser who doesn't deserve heaven"*.

14. I noticed that empowerment given by the authority in the community made sisters act in other ways that were not truly evangelical.

15. Sisters used to say that we should be more productive than other people because we had everything at hand and workers had real difficulties. For superiors many times we were lazy and unproductive.

16. That was not fair.

17. there was nobody to talk about.

18. *"We are a family, a homage, a tribute to the Holy Family"* that was indeed a career of convenience, interests and I would say a dysfunctional family.

19. I felt at that moment that those sisters were liars. And when I started saying what I thought they told me I was negative.

20. I confronted myself trying to shape my identity as a religious woman and I found I was incoherent in many ways and I searched for something more radical.

Happy, realized, not afraid, brave, useful, eager to learn and do, embraced, accepted. Criticized, alone, it was hard but it was my fault, guilty, confused, not heard. Decided. Destroyed, confused, dumb, overwhelmed, unaccepted.

b). Hay algo que en ella es muy notorio y es su facilidad para el tema del estudio sobre todo los idiomas, tiene facilidad para eso... no todo el mundo tiene como ese amor por lo que hace, esa dedicación y en ella sí se refleja bastante, eso recuerdo de Alexandra...

d) ...ella estuvo en España gracias a ese liderazgo que ella siempre ha tenido. Ha tenido distintas experiencias, era la primera que estaban enviando a congresos, también en ese tiempo tuvimos la oportunidad de compartir bastante todos estos congresos de educación...

e) ...yo desde que conozco a Alexandra, nosotros tuvimos la oportunidad de conocernos en ese campo educativo y vocacional entonces pues siempre estaba como con esa mentalidad de siempre estar ahí, de siempre estar en su comunidad y no había nada que le hiciera pensar en otra situación distinta a estar en su comunidad y haciendo real ese llamado que sentía en su momento...

f) ...Alexandra es muy inquieta intelectualmente ella es muy inteligente. Ella aparte de esta licenciatura ha hecho otros estudios. No los culminó pues por la comunidad, no pudo culminarlos por sus

[2. Embracement of a religious life: From conviction to hesitation and questioning.](#)

[3. The path of an EFL teacher: Being an EFL student transformed my personal and professional perspectives](#)

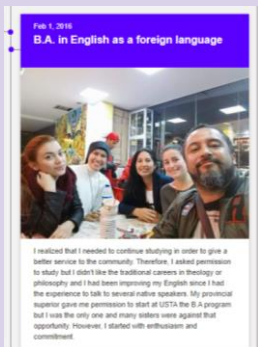




21. *"You don't have the community identity"* the sisters used to say and even though I tried my best they finally told me *"You go back home, you disliked the community, you don't fit here"*.

22. Many sisters told me English was useless in the religious life and that it was a waste of time. They told me that a program by distance was poor and I wouldn't learn at all.

23. I believe I went to different stages about spiritual life and spiritual identity.



24. I was sure of my vocation and I was willing to continue until the last consequences.

25. That love, happiness and acceptance from the beginning was solitude and rituals that I let others impose to me.

26. They (natives) always told me I was able to learn and that I was good at English.

27. When I had the opportunity to join the university the superior told me that I had a special disposition to learn languages and she was the one who suggested something related to English.

28. At university my first English teacher at CAU Bucaramanga was Mr. Serrano and I thought that semester that I would like to

cambios, por todas estas rotaciones que ellas internamente realizan. Sin embargo, esto del inglés a ella sí le apasionó...

k) ...Me llamó mucho la atención porque era la única compañera monja que yo tenía en el círculo, en las clases que yo veía...

l) ...Al principio es como muy distante, las personas que están como en ese mundo religioso a pesar de que yo no lo comparto, están como allá, como en un lugar especial... Me pareció muy buena persona que amaba lo que estaba haciendo en ese momento y que estaba muy entregada a lo que estaba haciendo en ese momento, pero sinceramente yo desde mi punto de vista yo pensaba que ella no pertenecía ahí...

m) ...pertenecer a ese grupo como tal o no pertenecer no te va a impedir servir a la gente..., yo creo que ella se salió más por el sentimiento de saber que ella no pertenece a ese lugar, que no se siente a gusto, no estaba bien, a pesar de que había hecho cosas...

become like him. The second semester was totally opposite and I knew what kind of English teacher I don't want to become.

29. Sharing with English teachers was fundamental.

30. I felt that teachers and students supported and encouraged me more than the sisters.

Learning and teaching English after being a religious woman

Giving what I have



31. As a paradox I was again in the environment I tried to avoid.

32. He (my boss) used to talk about spirituality as the basis for teaching instead of productivity. He told me that I must first be a merciful human being before being someone who follows a religion.

33. One of my biggest expectations is finishing my bachelor's degree because it has divided my life in two and now gives me the opportunity to serve people as I consider education as a vocation too.

34. I want to do many things that I didn't do as part of the community but being aware of the value of every moment.

35. being aware that I'm valuable for who I am and not for what others think or believe about me.

Sad but hopeful.
Free, supported.
Grateful, committed,
happy, proud.
I feel "part of".
Challenged, aware.

c) ...Hay algo muy curioso en el colegio y es que es la única docente que en este momento aún con todo lo que nosotros tenemos, es la que ya tiene planeado absolutamente todo..., hace cosas que muchos otros docentes no hacen, y no por cargarse un poco más de trabajo, sino porque es como debería hacerse en realidad...

e) ...No cambia, todo lo que hace parte de su ser no cambia sin embargo el estilo de vida claro que sí cambia bastante... Salir de la comunidad genera un choque, y es como adentrarse en otra realidad, en esa realidad en la que siempre ha estado, pero desconocía, pues porque estaba dentro de la comunidad. Entonces los cambios son más como eso, ella tiende siempre como a maravillarse mucho, la capacidad de asombro de Alexandra es muy profunda... ha madurado mucho...

[4. Awareness and Challenges](#)

[5. Positioning as an EFL teacher Creating...Understanding...](#)



36. I definitely am freer and happier with what I do.

37. At the very beginning I felt I had wasted those years and I wanted to be far from everything related to Catholic Church.

38. This is a more mature relationship in which I disagree with many of the organizational issues, I feel I have a critical point of view but I'm aware of God's love, mercy and generosity.

39. I feel I have been fortunate and blessed in all the aspects of my life.

40. I thought that my process was giving me fruits.

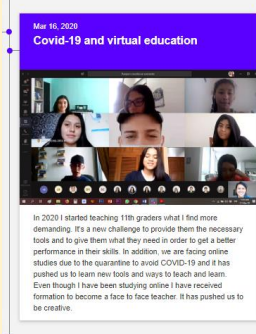
41. I feel I learn when I teach.

42. It made me aware of my process and pushed me to get better results.

43. I know I have a lot of things to improve but I feel so positive about English and other languages to learn and live.

44. I care about students' future but some of them and some families don't collaborate.

45. (Pedagogical practice) helped me to



f) ...en Alexandra es curioso que también a veces ella como que quisiera que le exigiera un poco más, entonces es esa estudiante, es esa persona que siempre procura que sus cosas sean perfectas...

g) ... yo considero profe que esto de ser maestros, de ser docentes definitivamente es una vocación. Considero que lo que realiza Alexandra en realidad lo hace por vocación, le encanta, ama esto...

i) Hay algo también por ejemplo con los estudiantes, esa cercanía le permite a ella descubrir muchas situaciones también internas... ella se acerca, gracias a eso pues tiene la oportunidad de acercarse a esa dimensión tan humana de los chicos, tan personal...

m) ...tomó la decisión de salirse y creo que hizo lo correcto porque puede ser ella misma, por fuera puede ser ella misma y puede seguir haciendo sus obras de servicio que es lo que ella realmente amaba del servicio religioso...

n) ... me parece muy responsable, muy entregada a lo que hace, como lo hizo en su labor religiosa... me parece una persona muy colaboradora, es muy pila como ya te decía, es muy inteligente, ama lo que está estudiando. No sé si fue porque logramos compaginar tanto, pero para mí fue una

discover my strengths and weaknesses in teaching.

compañera de carrera inmejorable...

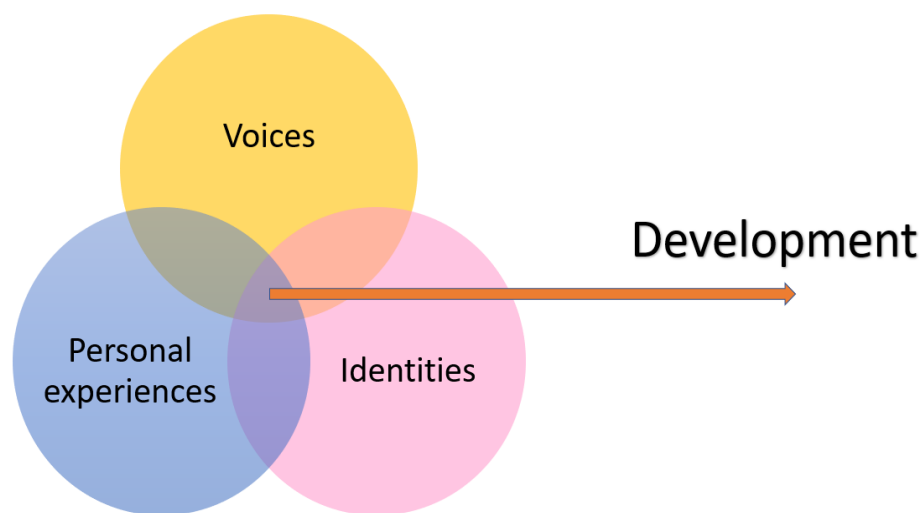
o) ...podría recalcar que Alexandra es una persona que se deja corregir en las cosas que está haciendo...

5.3 Data analysis: Interpretation of information

Following Barkhuizen's methodology figures are useful to understand how identities are shaped and how the results of the analysis show the dynamism and the movements in different aspects of life. In a recent study made in Colombia, Barkhuizen (2021, p.63) uses an interesting graph that is adapted to the particular characteristics of this study. He examined narratives from teacher educators doing a PhD degree and his findings were centered in the development as a result of the intertwined reasons and identities using a Venn Diagram. Following the author's model, three main aspects of the narratives will be analyzed: (a) voices, (b) personal experiences and (c) emergent identities. Such elements are intertwined and reveal a development and a movement that are concrete in life decisions that became milestones in my life.

Figure 2

Illustration of relationships between voices, experiences and identity



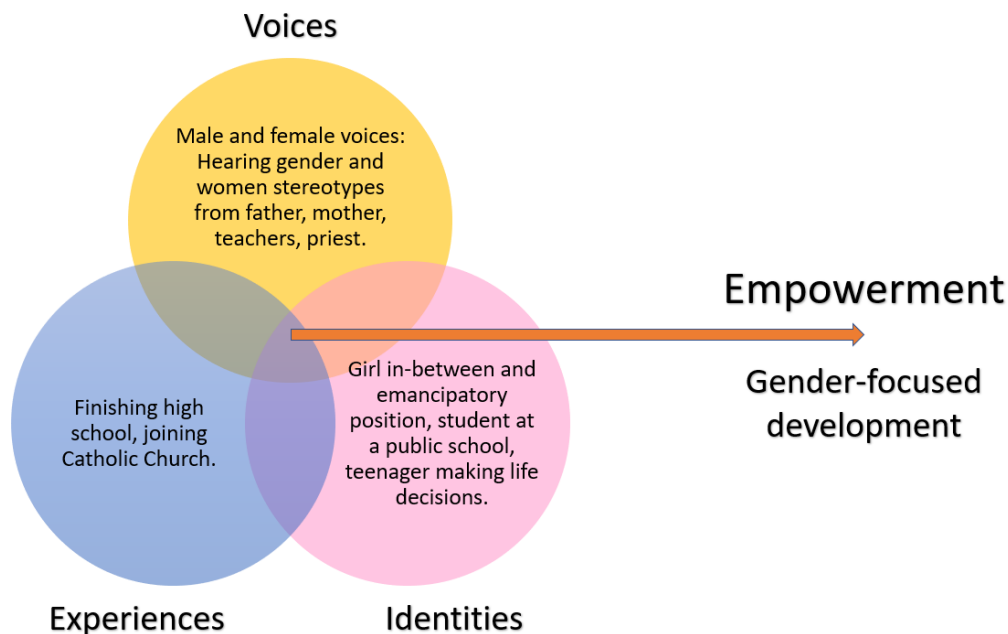
Note. Adapted from Barkhuizen (2021) p.63

The following section addressed the analysis of the emerging sub-themes according to the categorization and triangulation data described in table 4.

5.3.1 Theme one: Women stereotypes: Stigmatization vs Personal conviction

Figure 3

Theme 1 interpretation



The [first stage excerpts](#) show a girl in-between an emancipatory position and a conditioned role. It is highlighted how the influence of parents represented the identity of a woman, in contrast to the religious context which was mainly mirrored by my father's position. Whereas, my mum used to mirror the necessity of emancipating women, something that she recalled about me through her speech, lesson and advice. I decided not to believe what my father said “*girls do not succeed in life*” (excerpt 1). I tried to do my best at school and to overcome difficulties at home, especially the feeling of being invisible because “*I didn’t feel support or acknowledgement from my parents*” (excerpt 3).

As seen from the oral narrative, a strong influence on my decision making for vocation was the father (priest) who influenced and mirrored on me the possibility of being a religious woman who could practice service and help others. It was a more human position that I considered in the past as the one I wish “*I thought that it could be the best decision in my*

life".(excerpt 9), maybe because neither one of my parents encouraged me to be someone who helps others and serves, so it seemed worth it because it was more than I had received at home. Here the personal conviction that life was more than I was experiencing at home being witness to a dysfunctional marriage and hearing constantly negative positions about women, moved me to think and go beyond. However, despite the discourse of the Church, I knew from the very beginning that because of being a woman I was in a less favorable situation because diocesan priests and seminarists whom I had shared with. They had a different way of life than nuns or religious women, "*I used to think that I would prefer being a seminarist*" (excerpt 7). If I had only listened to my father without other voices as the priest, I would have felt condemned to be hopeless and unhappy since my childhood, I felt it as growing up.

I consider that chauvinist behaviors remain in our past and contemporary society, making a lot of women feeling afraid of what they can achieve. What I experienced is not the worst possible scenario; however, from some facts there are gaps between opportunities and education opportunities for boys and girls. Besides, teachers must consider how they respond to male and female students (Barkhuizen & Strauss, 2020) and avoid imposing certain adjectives or tags just because of their gender. I think education and teachers should become aware of actions that constrain or are in favor of (in)equalities. From my reflections upon this aspect, I understand the worthiness of being diverse as human beings, men and women because we have the same dignity but different gifts and skills that we must boost, acknowledge and make evident for building a better society where everyone can be the best version of himself or herself.

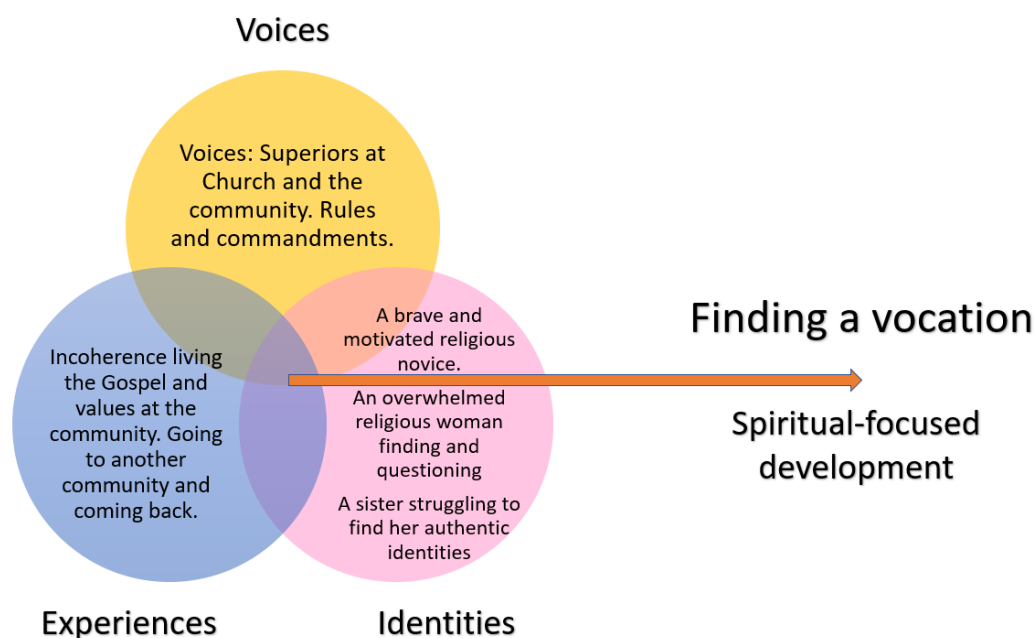
Besides, I am completely sure that being a woman is not a current impediment in the field of ELT, but "women faculty often wonder if students will respect them and accept them as experts in their fields. Or they wonder if they are expected by their students to be nurturing and

maternal, and may be regarded negatively (in evaluations, for example) if they are not” (Vandrick, 2017, p.232). We are still in the change of mentality in all levels of education and work to get empowerment and overcome all the labels, stigmatization and stereotypes imposed by culture, family or education.

5.3.2 Theme 2: Embracement of a religious life: Conviction, hesitation and questioning

Figure 4

Theme 2 interpretation



Examining narratives from [the second stage](#), being a religious woman, the religious profiles or stereotypes inside the community generated a continuous tension with the willingness to follow the religious vocation. I discovered that the religious vocation is a noble ideal for women who want to serve; nevertheless, inside the Catholic community there are not equal opportunities for men and women and this inequality is impossible to be hidden and it is seen as an “universal phenomenon” (Eze, Lindegger, & Rakoczy 2015, p.402). In addition, what I

discover from the narratives is that the sisters maintain their status and “*act in other ways that are not truly evangelical*” (excerpt 14) because of the way they manage their power relationships and the different options for members of the community such as authority positions.

Furthermore, I lost credibility towards the institution. They asked me to do something that they did not do. For example, living the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience is mandatory, but sisters lived them according to their own interpretation and it seemed that rules were only for young sisters or those who did not belong to the “elites”. Some sisters purchased expensive items, travelled to visit their families constantly and managed private friendships while they asked all to buy only the necessary items, going on vacations to visit the family every 3 years and having no special treatment with people outside the community.

Even though I tried to be a religious woman who followed the rules and the spirituality of the community because “*I was sure of my vocation and I was willing to continue until the last consequences*” (excerpt 24), they did not support me and I felt that the people outside the community were kinder and more compassionate. People like my friends at the apostolates or the university noticed that I was willing to continue as a religious woman: “*no había nada que le hiciera pensar en otra situación distinta a estar en su comunidad y haciendo real ese llamado que sentía en su momento*” (interview excerpt e) and “*amaba lo que estaba haciendo en ese momento y que estaba muy entregada a lo que estaba haciendo en ese momento*” but they at the same time noticed that “*no pertenecía ahí*” (interview excerpt l). The community as a human group of people has noble ideals, but they manage relationships based on power, subordination, and hierarchy rather than evangelical obedience.

I went to another community searching for a more radical living of the vows “*I confronted myself trying to shape my identity as a religious woman and I found I was incoherent*

in many ways and I searched for something more radical” (excerpt 20), but it did not work since my physical condition and some assumptions of the new community did not allow me to stay there. I chose the Indian religious community because they view poverty as something really serious and they carry out a wonderful mission between the poorest of the poor all around the world. There the physical effort was too much for me since I was not strong enough to manage heavy domestic and humanitarian tasks and I hurt mainly my back and got some circulatory problems. The sisters I had shared with in Colombia were totally different because they were more used to Latin American behaviours rather than the sisters who were in charge of initial formation in Peru. It was shocking to be part of a community from India compared with a Colombian one, mainly because, even though we belong to the same Catholic Church, the concept of being religious changes dramatically from one country to another one.

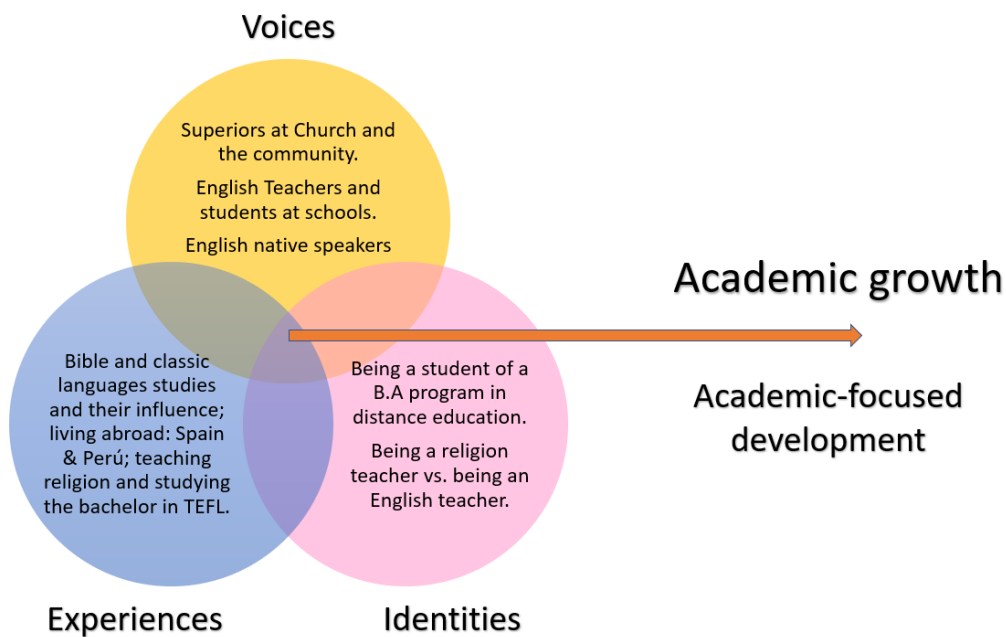
Consequently, coming back to the first community was a challenge to live a more mature spiritual identity and try to overcome the previous difficulties, but the sisters never forgot that and said: *“You don’t have the community identity”* and although, I tried my best but they finally told me *“You go back home, you disliked the community, you don’t fit here”* (excerpt 21).

It could be said that you do not need to follow what others do and that the prior identity would be as Eze, Lindegger, & Rakoczy (2015) called “Imitators of Christ identity”, but reflecting on what I experienced, I understood that it is not necessary to live in a denigrating situation to be coherent with religious ideals such as sanctity, service and happiness. To stop living like this was a new conviction I realized, after the previous experience, that I was strong enough and determined in my decision to quit the community because “the more central a belief and more connected to their emotions, the more influential it is to their identities”. (Barcelos, 2017, p. 147) and I wanted to build a new identity.

5.3.3 Theme 3: The path of an EFL teacher: Being an EFL student transformed my personal and professional perspectives

Figure 5

Theme 3 interpretation



English learning empowered my knowledge and education, which transformed my religious vocation to the one of a teacher. Inside the community only a few sisters acknowledge the importance of studying and learning English whereas the majority were reluctant to do it. They used to say: *“English was useless in religious life and that it was a waste of time. They told me that a program by distance was poor and I wouldn’t learn at all”* (excerpt 22). I was the first sister and the last I think that joined the program. Studying at Universidad Santo Tomás gave me new perspectives, humanistic education, and knowledge to become a teacher and researcher. I noticed that teachers and classmates sometimes were puzzled and curious about me because I was the only nun (interview excerpt k). Many times, they asked me if I was studying theology or philosophy. However, instead of feeling criticized, I felt embraced and able to be open. Other people noticed

that I was passionate about my studies (interview excerpt f) and on the contrary to the sisters' community, I found enormous support from the ELT community inside and outside the University.

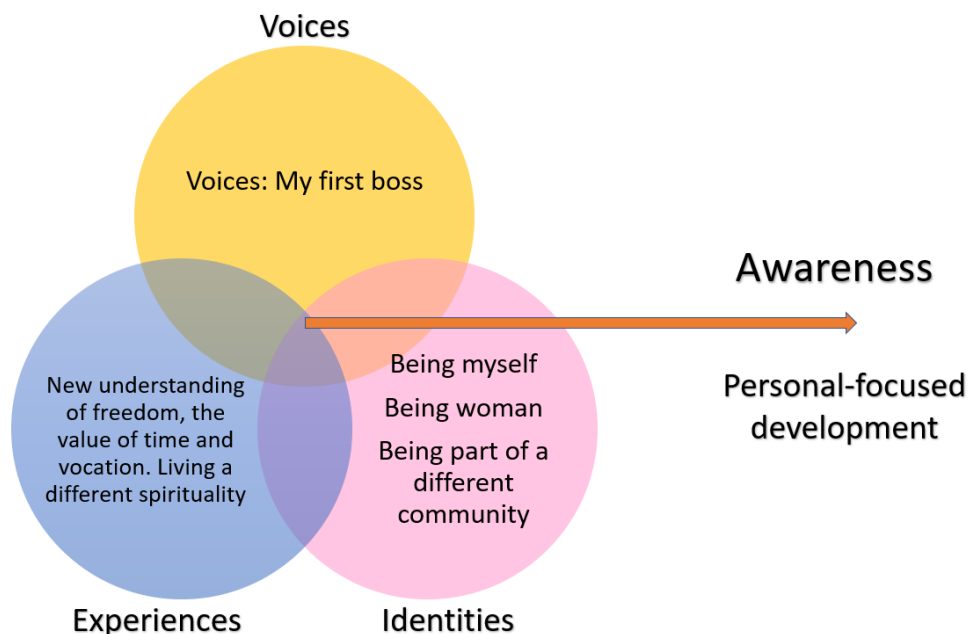
Studying Greek and Hebrew, living cultural exchanges and sharing with English teachers and students in the places where I worked as a religion teacher encouraged me to turn my life around and join the B.A program in TEFL. "*They (natives) always told me I was able to learn and that I was good at English.*", "*Sharing with English teachers was fundamental*", "*I felt that teachers and students supported and encouraged me more than the sisters*" (excerpts 26, 29 and 30).

Then something started to change, I wanted to put into practice what I learned, but I was forced to continue being a religion teacher as it was my job and my mission at that time. To be a religion teacher was juxtaposed with the fact of being an English teacher. Through time, I started to integrate English in my religion classes while interacting with students and teachers: I started teaching prayers and songs in English, using some resources in English as clips or short readings to engage students who were not interested in religion but in English, giving them an extra grade for this kind of exercises that were not mandatory. Besides, English teachers were always kind and ready to explain things that I did not know or share with me resources. This overlap had a lot of investment and gave me a study methodology to take advantage of my bachelor studies. Barkhuizen & Strauss (2020) highlight: "How people imagine themselves in the future relates very much to how they understand who they are in the present" (p.10).

5.3.4 Theme 4: Awareness and Challenges

Figure 6

Theme 4 interpretation



Being outside the community opened new scenarios and opportunities in all the aspects in my life. The experiences while being a religious woman raised awareness about the importance of spirituality, service and vocation rather than acting just following others' opinions or concepts learnt. I felt confused as I was living a new reality outside the community, but I was also aware of the importance of my experiences and life story. Beautiful people taught me important lessons as my first boss who used to tell me that: *"I must first be a merciful human being before being someone who follows a religion."* (excerpt 32). This is a continuous challenge when you face real life outside the religious community where you do not own but you have all the securities, I mean inside the community you are not worried about where I am going to live, what I am going to eat or how I am going to get money to get the things I need, because there you do not receive a salary but all your basic needs are covered.

About living my spiritual identity, I position myself as a member of the Catholic Church with a critical view. You can be a religious person but it does not guarantee that you can be a spiritual one and now I consider that being spiritual is more important than just being religious because rites and prayers do not assure you are living the Gospel at all. On the other hand, trying to live values and the right way of life is not easy in a society like ours but it is possible with continuous effort. I am still active in the community, that is to say, the Parish and the school. There I acknowledge that I was a religious woman and I do not feel criticized or stigmatized because of that. It is rather a plus because I can contribute from my experiences: education in values, knowledge, cultural background, creativity, commitment, and spirituality. I recognize that being part of a community was an important part of my life and it is still part of my history and who I am currently. Barkhuizen & Strauss (2020) say “we are always positioning ourselves, as subjects, in our relationships with others and the world” (p.9), so the dynamic process continues and my personal development for sure will take me to many different scenarios where I will try to continue doing my best.

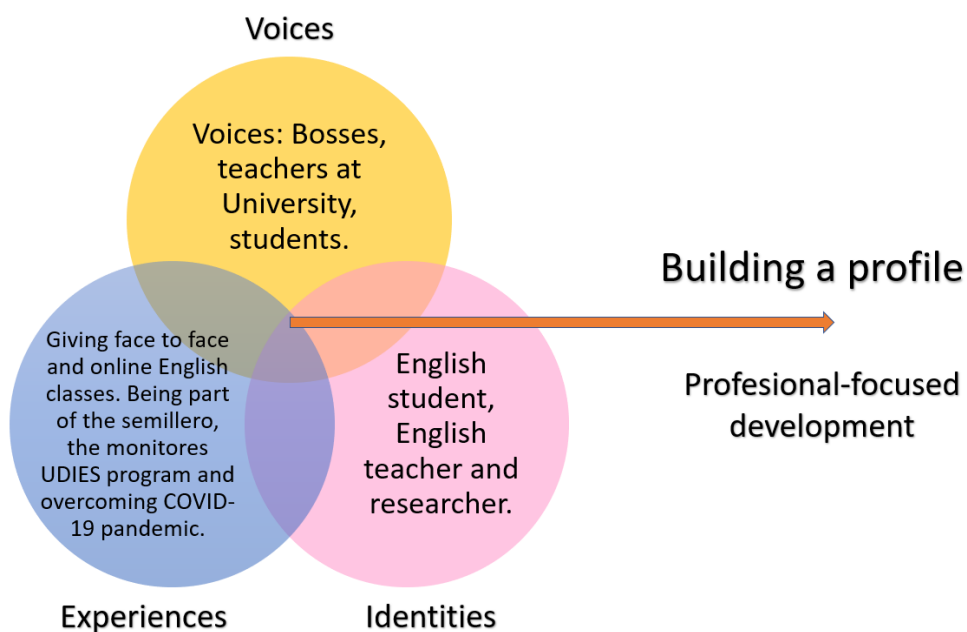
Nowadays, I feel really grateful. It means not only being grateful for the experiences but also for the importance of the present moment and the openness to new milestones and decisions in order to be faithful to me and to God. “*I feel I have been fortunate and blessed in all the aspects of my life*” (excerpt 39). In addition, it means that I have to be wiser and decide to think about myself and think about the impact of my actions on others. I am responsible for myself, my personal growth and my new personal goals. Even though others say “*ha madurado bastante*” (interview excerpt e) I keep working on myself and I have to be aware of the voices I listen to and obey. Being a woman who works and studies in a society like Colombia implies other challenges like power relationships, equality in work and education opportunities, gender discrimination,

among others, and it is still necessary to continue working against stereotypes in a wide range of scenarios.

5.3.5 Theme 5: Positioning as an EFL teacher

Figure 7

Theme 5 interpretation



Regarding learning and teaching English, I think this has been a very productive stage because of the freedom to put into practice what I have learned in a real context. The ability to reflect on who I am, what I am able to do and how I can keep improving is a plus for the process of learning and teaching English. “It is important for second language teachers to be able to bring these professional identities to the level of awareness so that they can reflect on their usefulness”. (Farrell, 2017, p. 184). In this case, the switch between being a religion teacher that was something partially imposed and now an English teacher as something I had chosen myself gave me a feeling of empowerment and success that pushed me in my professional development. When I got my job as an English teacher “*I thought that my process was giving its fruits*”

(excerpt 40). It was quite different to be seen as a teacher and not as a religious icon and manage to have good relationships with students, stakeholders, and bosses without being the “authority” of the school or someone who must follow a religious role. I try to be devoted, responsible, and organized and others notice it (interview excerpts c,f,o).

Not everything has been easy, but the investment has been essential as it is necessary to make a big effort to advance in the academic and professional fields. I got the experience of being an online teacher before the pandemic with Monitores UDIES program which allowed me to learn how to manage a virtual platform and be prepared in a different role. It was a big advantage because I discovered that there were a lot of aspects that need to be improved and that I need to learn. Then the classes at FASE foundation as a pre-service teacher and the ICT course which I took as part of my training as a teacher, gave me the opportunity to teach to different populations who were in different contexts. The most difficult part has been the online classes during the pandemic, they made me struggle but helped me to be creative and committed to my students and their processes. I have learned to be empathic because even though I had the experience most of my students did not know how to learn online and they have also taught me during this situation.

With this “I have come to recognize that learning and teaching practices are intertwined with social relationships, institutional practices, and ideologies that extend well beyond classrooms and schools—and that learners’ and teachers’ identities are implicated.” (Barkhuizen & Strauss, 2020, p.21). Currently, I am aware of my weaknesses but I am working on them and I want to continue studying and teaching English as this is what makes me happy. I am aware that if I improve in my language proficiency and my pedagogical practices the ones who are going to benefit will be the others and that is my contribution to building a better society.

6. Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the experiences of a woman before, during, and after belonging to a Colombian religious community and their influence on the construction of her identity as pre-service English teacher through the Narrative inquiry. The results of this research provide supporting evidence that Narrative inquiry has the advantage of being able to uncover something new because each person will never have the same perspective of a life experience. The experiences told as stories and the awareness that they arose in this autobiographical study have shown that the construction process of my identity as an English pre-service teacher has been influenced by voices from people who surrounded me, life experiences, and the trajectories that they have triggered as a consequence. In this case, the fact that being part of a religious community has influenced all the dimensions of my life and this analysis has helped me understand that this event was not only a role I play in society but a gender, spiritual, academic, personal, and professional development that I have been through.

This study has determined that the different identities are overlapped and intertwined and also have a strong relationship with emotions, the own perception of the facts, and the empowerment that we give to others' voices. It was a process of discovering how my own voice was recovered and strengthened, and how I am positioning as an ELT teacher with a service vocation. The trajectories that were highlighted in the narratives gave as a result the five themes that helped to establish the relationships with a correspondent analysis.

One limitation of this study is that the research has reached a descriptive stage and the experiences will not be the same for people who had similar ones. It is possible that other students of the B.A. program could have a similar background and their narratives could be totally different. Although the present research cannot determine the influence of belonging to a religious

community and the consequences as a paradigm, it seems useful to point out patterns with results of similar studies. In addition, as every single story is unique, we cannot generalize from this study the spiritual, gender, or personal aspects of students. Instead, more studies about gender stereotypes and students' configuration of identities need to be done to find common points and connections that help us to transform our pedagogical practices. Besides, it would be interesting to further study taking into account the observation of the pedagogical practice and the classroom relationships. It could be useful to determine how those categories and themes that have been analyzed in this study are present in the classroom practices and how students are configuring their identities as well.

In terms of future research, it would be useful to extend the current findings by examining other experiences related to spiritual identities and LTIs. Much work remains to be done before a full understanding of the extent of LTI's construction is established, and the narrative inquiry confronted to the Exploratory Action Research. It is necessary to continue making connections between investment, emotions, and identities by listening and analyzing biographies and autobiographies. Furthermore, the development in the different areas of pre-service and in-service EFL teachers can help us to get important reflections on the influence of different factors and the decisions this community faces in different situations at different stages of their lives, their academic, or professional development.

Despite the limitations, autobiographical studies in this field help to go deep into LTI as something real and important in all the aspects of life including what we do as professionals. Voices of the LLEI realities, in this case, a trajectory of emancipation and transformation has helped me to grow in my personal and academic development. It hopefully will also enrich the program itself helping their members to think about their role inside the B.A. program, to work to

overcome stereotypes, to go beyond the academic field having a wider comprehension of the reality that their members go through in this case the construction of different identities, and to raise other voices with other similar or not stories that help us to communicate and empower the voices of the LLEI about topics that are in the spotlight like gender, equality, diversity, justice, and so on because of their importance in society construction and language teaching and learning.

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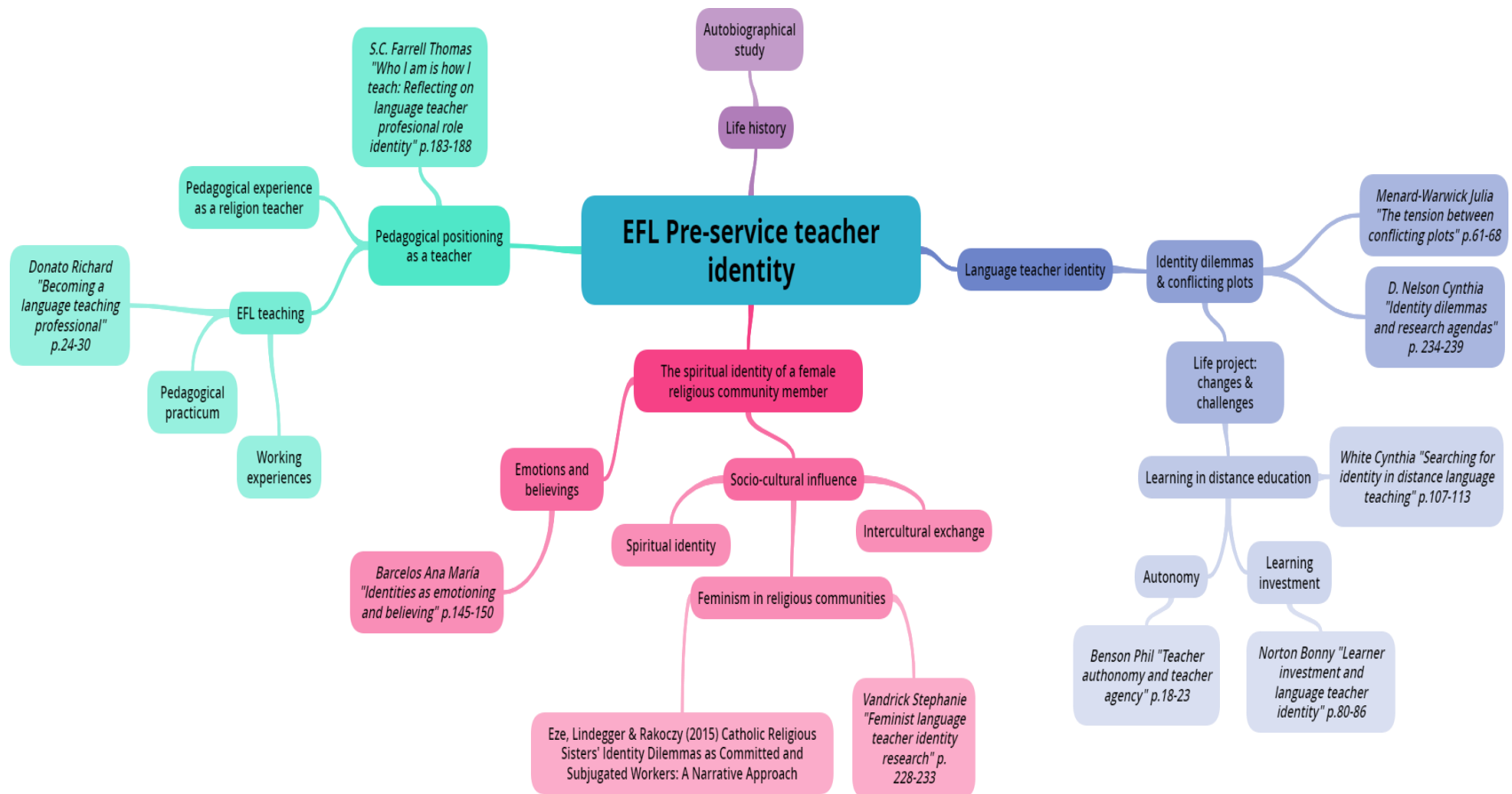
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Appendix

Appendix A Mindmap: Understanding LTI identities

Brainstorming from Barkhuizen, G. (Ed.) (2017). *Reflections on language teacher identity research*. N.Y: Routledge.

<https://www.goconqr.com/es/mindmap/24052250/EFL-Pre-service-teacher-identity>



Appendix B timeline: My life story

<https://www.timetoast.com/timelines/2282336>

Appendix C Interviews

Appendix C1

Interview 1

Date: May 28th 2021	
Objective: To evidence the perspective of a witness of the researcher's life trajectories.	
Participants: Interviewer Sandra Milena Rodríguez sandramilenarodriguez@ustadistancia.edu.co Interviewee Wilson Ramiro Cuesto Rivera wilsoncuesto@ustadistancia.edu.co	
Time length: 00:18:34	Where: Via Google Meet
Recording link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_nSMeEgwxLEYbqMoBqa8Xi7sq-iNXPgf/view?usp=sharing	
Note: excerpts in purple are about being a religious woman and excerpts in yellow about being a pre-service teacher. Letters have been added to facilitate finding information.	
<p>Transcription:</p> <p>Teacher Sandra Milena: Bueno y desde esa trayectoria ¿es decir ella era adolescente? creería yo</p> <p>Padre Ramiro Cuesto: a) Alexandra tenía en ese tiempo como 22 años cuando le conocí, sí, 21 o 22 años.</p> <p>Teacher Sandra Milena: ¿Qué recuerda dentro de la historia de vida de ella en ese entonces? ¿qué empieza a desencadenar pues digamos las experiencias que usted conoce o las que ha visto de cerca con ella? ¿Qué hechos digamos resalta de ese momento?</p>	

Padre Ramiro Cuesto: b) Bueno de Alexandra siempre he resaltado o bueno por lo que se destaca ella digamos es su organización. Hay algo que en ella es muy notorio y es su facilidad para el tema del estudio sobre todo los idiomas, tiene facilidad para eso. Entonces siempre en ella se destaca mucho eso porque es muy organizada, porque le encanta el estudio, eso hace que también genere impacto en quienes están a su lado. Porque no todo el mundo tiene como ese amor por lo que hace, esa dedicación y en ella sí se refleja bastante, eso recuerdo de Alexandra. Siempre he tenido, desde que he conocido a Alexandra y también en todos sus campos es muy organizada en su labor, es muy organizada en su vida, eso rescato de ella y lo reafirmé también cuando estuvo trabajando con nosotros. De hecho, aún trabaja con nosotros, solo que yo ya no estoy ahí en el colegio.

Teacher Sandra Milena: Perfecto, Padre, y usted que es sacerdote en algún momento pensaría yo, pues usted me lo confirmaría, ¿vio un reflejo de la vocación de ella desde su vocación y su ejercicio como docente?

Padre Ramiro Cuesto: c) Sí claro, siempre porque a ella se le ha facilitado mucho ese trabajo pedagógico, siempre, por lo mismo de su organización, ama lo que hace, prepara cualquier cosa, lo más mínimo ella procura siempre prepararlo. Con ella no pasa nada desapercibido. Hay algo muy curioso en el colegio y es que es la única docente que en este momento aún con todo lo que nosotros tenemos, es la que ya tiene planeado absolutamente todo. Entonces al inicio de las clases, que de hecho nos ha servido para guiar a otros docentes, ella pasa una programación y se cumple la programación, a no ser que tengamos algún cambio ya directamente desde la institución. Entonces eso facilita muchas cosas, el poder acercarnos a los padres de familia cuando llegan a hacer un reclamo, que “¿por qué mi hijo tuvo que hacer este trabajo si nunca le habían dicho?” Entonces se presenta la programación que se les presentó el primer día de la clase. Entonces a ella se le facilita mucho eso, hace cosas que muchos otros docentes no hacen, y no por cargarse un poco más de trabajo, sino porque es como debería hacerse en realidad. Entonces sí, a ella siempre se le ha facilitado eso y le gusta.

Teacher Sandra Milena: Vale, como que refleja un liderazgo importante.

Padre Ramiro Cuesto: Sí, correcto.

Teacher Sandra Milena: Si digamos hacemos una comparación entre este liderazgo que ella acentúa en el ejercicio docente, ¿podríamos decir que ese mismo liderazgo en otros escenarios o a través de otras experiencias se reflejaba cuando ella formaba parte de una comunidad religiosa?

Padre Ramiro Cuesto: d) Sí señora, de hecho, pues eso a ella le abrió varias puertas, no sé si lo sabes, ella estuvo en España gracias a ese liderazgo que ella siempre ha tenido. Ha tenido distintas experiencias, era la primera que estaban enviando a congresos, también en ese tiempo tuvimos la oportunidad de compartir bastante todos estos congresos de educación. Siempre teníamos esa oportunidad de cruzarnos en ellos porque ella siempre era a quien mandaban para que representara la comunidad. Entonces en su comunidad, también se destacó por ello.

Teacher Sandra Milena: Perfecto padre, y no sé si usted tuvo información, creería yo que sí porque entiendo que tienen una relación fraterna bastante significativa, cuando ella toma la

decisión de hacer la transición, o se generan los eventos de tal manera que ya no está en la comunidad ¿hay algunos cambios que usted observa? ¿cuál es su percepción de ese paso? porque creo yo que una era la vida de ella cuando formaba parte de la comunidad y si bien hay algunas características como persona humana que ella conserva, otras cosas cambian imagino no sé o si no cambian tanto cuando ella ya está fuera la comunidad ¿qué percibe usted?

Padre Ramiro Cuesto: e) Lo esencial de ella no cambia. No cambia todo lo que hace parte de su ser no cambia sin embargo el estilo de vida claro que sí cambia bastante. Ella no espera, o sea yo desde que conozco a Alexandra, nosotros tuvimos la oportunidad de conocernos en ese campo educativo y vocacional entonces pues siempre estaba como con esa mentalidad de siempre estar ahí, de siempre estar en su comunidad y no había nada que le hiciera pensar en otra situación distinta a estar en su comunidad y haciendo real ese llamado que sentía en su momento. Cuando ella sale claro, primero el choque de salir. Ellas, distinto a nosotros, siempre están como muy muy guardadas si tú ves digamos nosotros los sacerdotes salimos sin cuello cuando vamos a ir al banco, o si vamos a hacer deporte lo hacemos en traje de deporte, ellas no. Ellas van al banco, van al médico, siempre van con el hábito, si tienen que hacer deporte tienen un traje de deporte para ellas incluso hasta con velo algunas, entonces esa estructura está.

Salir de la comunidad genera un choque, y es como adentrarse en otra realidad, en esa realidad en la que siempre ha estado, pero desconocía, pues porque estaba dentro de la comunidad. Entonces los cambios son más como eso, ella tiende siempre como a maravillarse mucho, la capacidad de asombro de Alexandra es muy profunda, entonces ella ya empieza a mirar, a observar, también a sentir muchas otras cosas, qué bueno que van también cambiando su forma de pensar respecto a lo que bueno, “cuidado con esto, no pero esto no está mal” ya empieza un poco a ver desde otra realidad que también le ha servido bastante, pues porque madura, ha madurado también bastante en todos sus campos, eso ayuda bastante, el salir de allí, el estar en esta realidad que aunque siempre ha estado allí ha sido un poco desconocida para ella. Porque es toda la vida de ella, ella estuvo mucho tiempo, creo que fueron 12 años en la comunidad.

Teacher Sandra Milena: Padre entiendo que usted también desarrolla sus estudios en la Santo Tomás ¿cierto?

Padre Ramiro Cuesto: Sí señora.

Teacher Sandra Milena: En ese proceso de crecimiento y maduración de Alexandra y pues también teniendo en cuenta el desarrollo profesional que usted ha tenido, o formativo en la universidad, ¿el realizar los estudios de la licenciatura en inglés para Alexandra habría generado algún tipo de influencia en ella? ¿cómo lo percibe usted? ese paso de Alexandra por la Santo Tomás así desarrollando este programa académico.

Padre Ramiro Cuesto: f) Bueno, definitivamente sí incide mucho en la vida de Alexandra el programa académico, bastante. Como te decía hace un momento Alexandra es muy inquieta intelectualmente ella es muy inteligente. Ella aparte de esta licenciatura ha hecho otros estudios. No los culminó pues por la comunidad, no pudo culminarlos por sus cambios, por todas estas rotaciones que ellas internamente realizan. Sin embargo, esto del inglés a ella sí le

apasionó, o sea le apasionó tanto que pues no le importaba incluso tener que organizar sus horarios en la comunidad para poder cumplir con lo que tenía que cumplir. Más que cumplir, para poder alcanzar sus logros personales porque siempre le ha gustado mucho.

Esto a ella le ha facilitado la vida en muchas cosas, o sea, pues aparte de que es organizada a ella también le ha ayudado la estructura de la universidad a organizar también su ejercicio docente, su vida personal. Lo que yo te decía, nosotros en la universidad, por mi experiencia, hay algo que yo admiro mucho de la universidad y es el orden de los docentes y la capacidad que tienen nuestros docentes. La gran mayoría de nuestros docentes, hay algunos con los que uno sufre a veces un poco, pero ese ejercicio lo hace a uno un poco más pulcro, más cuidadoso en cada una de sus acciones formativas.

Alexandra es una de esas personas que lleva al pie de la letra cada uno de los procesos de la universidad, es muy cuidadosa con lo que hace, es muy cuidadosa con cada una de las cosas que se propone, de hecho, en Alexandra es curioso que también a veces ella como que quisiera que le exigiera un poco más, entonces es esa estudiante, es esa persona que siempre procura que sus cosas sean perfectas. Y entonces los procesos de la universidad y el proceso como tal de la licenciatura en inglés en ella sí han incidido bastante, primero porque le abre un campo, ella en ese proceso, ella también puede ver que puede hacer posibles muchas cosas, para su realización personal y bueno considero que definitivamente el proceso de la universidad sí ha incidido bastante en la vida de Alexandra.

Teacher Sandra Milena: Vale perfecto y tal vez en ese ejercicio como docente de inglés aparte de la organización y el liderazgo que ella tiene en la preparación de clase, también del conocimiento en el idioma ¿hay otra cosa más que usted quiera resaltar padre?

Padre Ramiro Cuesto: g) yo considero profe que esto de ser maestros, de ser docentes definitivamente es una vocación. Considero que lo que realiza Alexandra en realidad lo hace por vocación, le encanta, ama esto y a diferencia de muchos otros, yo lo puedo decir con conocimiento de causa, yo he manejado docentes, he estado entre ellos y he visto que muchos están ahí porque no hay nada más que hacer, tanto en el campo del gobierno, todo lo del campo público, como nosotros el campo privado. Entonces creo que es eso Alexandra hace esto porque ama lo que hace y son pocos los docentes que están dentro de ese rango, tengo que decirlo tristemente lo digo con un poco de dolor, pero sí creo que Alexandra ama lo que hace, está ahí por vocación, le encanta, le fascina, solamente sumaría eso profe.

Teacher Sandra Milena: Pareciera que el de la vocación religiosa pasamos a la vocación plenamente docente de inglés ¿cierto padre?

Padre Ramiro Cuesto: h) Sí, claro profe, lo que pasa es que ahí está la cohesión de los llamados a servir profe, definitivamente nosotros los religiosos estamos aquí porque de una u otra manera también somos maestros independientemente de que estudiemos o no, entonces en Alexandra se ha venido cultivando ese ejercicio pues desde siempre, por lo que te dije ella estuvo en la comunidad 12 años, eso es otro modo de servicio, otra forma de servir y ella lo ha encontrado en esto y siempre lo ha hecho bien. Y al igual ellas, las hermanas donde estaba Alexandra, pues la mayoría son docentes o sea dan clases. Entonces ella siempre ha cultivado

desde los 16, 17 años Alexandra siempre ha estado en ese ejercicio, entonces es otro plano del servicio, sin embargo, es el mismo llamado a servir.

Teacher Sandra Milena: No sé Padre si quisiera mencionar algo más porque pues digamos que lo que teníamos estimado ya lo hemos abordado pues ha sido muy interesante realmente escucharlo.

Padre Ramiro Cuesto: i) ¿Qué más podríamos decir? Yo creo que en lo que he dicho está todo. Lo que puedo de pronto también sumar es que ella siempre está adelante de los procesos, siempre está adelante en los procesos, siempre ha estado como ese pasito adelante. Esto es una anécdota un poco con Alexandra. Mi otro compañero quien en ese momento era el rector en el colegio, somos muy cercanos y él también está ahorita aquí en Girardot, ya lo cambiaron, estamos aquí, y qué día conversábamos que a Alexandra decirle: “venga, necesitamos que nos haga este planeador, necesitamos que nos arregle esta malla, y con colorcitos” para muchos eso es una carga, para ella es un hobby, o sea ella es feliz haciendo eso y nosotros pues qué día nos reíamos de eso que ella sí “por favor organízanos tal cosa” y ella “sí” con todo, si es con colores, lo que sea, ella siempre está. Entonces es ahí lo que nosotros siempre hemos destacado de Alexandra, al igual no he sido solamente yo sino el equipo de sacerdotes que hemos tenido que ver con Alexandra que no es uno sino son muchos y siempre han destacado eso de Alexandra.

Que ella ponerla a leer un libro de un día para otro para ella no es una carga, ella es feliz haciéndolo, a ella le fascina todo eso. Hay algo también por ejemplo con los estudiantes, esa cercanía le permite a ella descubrir muchas situaciones también internas, tú sabes que en el aula de clase y más ahorita con los chicos hay muchas cosas, entonces ella se acerca, gracias a eso pues tiene la oportunidad de acercarse a esa dimensión tan humana de los chicos, tan personal, que también en nuestra labor docente es muy importante y entonces eso de que los chicos vean que su maestra o su maestro le subrayó, mira aquí está mal, esta redacción está mal, oye podrías hacerlo de esta manera, pues eso también hace que los chicos empiecen a dar lo mejor de ellos, porque si tú presentas un trabajo y nunca recibes una retroalimentación, ah bueno sí lo presenté y sacaste 5.0 pero y ¿eso qué? Entonces cuando recibes ese 5.0 también como oye podrías mejorar esto o si no recibes el 5.0 y recibes el 4.0 y tienes esto. Para Alexandra esto es muy bonito, ella lo disfruta bastante y de ahí también su anhelo de seguir estudiando porque ella es muy inquieta en ese sentido profe.

Teacher Sandra Milena: Padre pues muchas gracias Ha sido muy interesante escucharle sus percepciones sobre la historia de vida de Alexandra

Padre Ramiro Cuesto: Muchas gracias a ustedes por la invitación

Appendix C2

Date: June 28nd 2021	
Objective: To evidence the perspective of a witness of the researcher's life trajectories.	
Participants: Interviewer Fabian Camilo Romero Umaña fabianromero@ustadistancia.edu.co Interviewee Leonardo Alfonso Ardila Cuellar leonardoardila@ustadistancia.edu.co	
Time length: 00:10:57	Where: Via Google Meet
Recording link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1g032mAI8ZziF_i7hdC0lfM2wG9e06OY/view?usp=sharing	
Note: excerpts in purple are about being a religious woman and excerpts in yellow about being a pre-service teacher. Letters have been added to facilitate finding information.	
<p>Transcription:</p> <p>Camilo Romero: Leonardo buenas noches, mucho gusto como ya lo decía Alexandra soy Camilo Romero, soy estudiante también de la Santo Tomás, de la licenciatura en educación religiosa y ella me ha pedido el favor de dirigir esta entrevista como parte de su proyecto de investigación narrativa. Me voy a permitir realizar las preguntas que hacen parte de su instrumento de investigación para que usted pueda colaborar con las respuestas pertinentes. La primera pregunta es ¿cómo conoció usted a Alexandra?</p> <p>Leonardo Ardila: j) A Alexandra la conocí después del primer año luego de haber entrado a la Universidad nosotros estudiamos licenciatura en lengua extranjera inglés. Yo entré no recuerdo bien en qué año, pero a Alexandra la conocí un año después de que entré y fue compañera mía en algunas clases de primeros semestres, como de segundo, tercero.</p> <p>Camilo Romero: ¿Cómo llegaron a hacerse amigos? Porque ciertamente llevan ya un proceso de algunos años de amigos, entonces me parecería interesante conocer un poco cómo llegaron a ser como ese clic para empezar esa amistad.</p> <p>Leonardo Ardila: k) No sé, muchas veces las relaciones de amistad no se dan como muy planeadas que digamos. Nos vimos en las clases, empezamos a interactuar, ella aún en ese tiempo era monja, no sé cómo se dice exactamente, pero en ese tiempo nosotros empezamos a interactuar. Me llamó mucho la atención porque era la única compañera monja que yo tenía</p>	

en el círculo, en las clases que yo veía. Siempre me ha llamado mucho la atención el tema no tanto religioso pero sí como teológico, yo no soy creyente, pero me encanta mucho el tema teológico y con ella comenzamos a conversar muchas veces de ese tema y tal vez teníamos en ocasiones posiciones enfrentadas y a veces teníamos posiciones acordes, estábamos de acuerdo en muchas cosas y a partir de ahí, de esas conversaciones y ella también tiene una forma de ser muy especial, ella es muy chévere, muy atenta, es muy dada a los demás, entonces de ahí logramos hablar más seguido y pues con el grupo de muchachos que estábamos ahí en las clases y pues logramos ya después afianzar una relación de amistad más poderosa digámoslo así, ya nos hacíamos juntos para las clases, ya se iban dando algunos lazos que hicieron la amistad un poco más fuerte y pues hasta el momento muy bien, hasta el día de hoy es una muy buena amiga.

Camilo Romero: Ahora que usted lo menciona cuando decía que ella inicialmente en la carrera era religiosa, era monja, ¿Qué concepto tuvo usted de ella cuando todavía era religiosa? ¿cuál fue la impresión que le dio en su momento?

Leonardo Ardila: l) Al principio es como muy distante, las personas que están como en ese mundo religioso a pesar de que yo no lo comparto, están como allá, como en un lugar especial, así uno no comparte la misma religión son personas que están como distantes como en un lugar especial. Uno las ve como unas personas que se dedican a algo que es muy difícil para mi forma de ver las cosas y que a pesar de que yo no lo comparto se merecen toda mi admiración. Yo no sería capaz de hacer por ejemplo una cosa de esas. Entonces a pesar de ese distanciamiento que había como te digo, logramos hacer una muy buena relación. Al principio la veía como distante, pero al tiempo de ir la tratando me di cuenta de todas las cualidades que tiene Alexandra, de las buenas cualidades, de las malas también porque nadie es perfecto. Entonces al principio como te digo alejados, pero ya al pasar el tiempo nos fuimos acercando un poco más. Me pareció muy buena persona que amaba lo que estaba haciendo en ese momento y que estaba muy entregada a lo que estaba haciendo en ese momento, pero sinceramente yo desde mi punto de vista yo pensaba que ella no pertenecía ahí por ciertas actitudes y cosas que ella me contaba, sentía que ella no pertenecía a ese mundo, pero pues igual ella estaba involucrada ahí y totalmente respetable.

Camilo Romero: Y ahora usted me dio paso justamente para la siguiente pregunta: ¿Qué piensa de la decisión que ella tomó de salirse de la comunidad?

Leonardo Ardila: m) De hecho, yo era una de las personas que le decía que ella no pertenecía ahí, por su forma de ser y por su forma de ver las cosas ella no pertenecía como a ese mundo. Ella me decía “pero ¿qué hago? Si es que yo he estado ahí un poco de tiempo” y no sé qué y “yo quiero servir, yo quiero hacer muchas cosas que están relacionadas con el mundo religioso” y yo le decía, pero Alexandra para servir a la gente no necesitas necesariamente, valga la redundancia, estar ahí en el convento, puedes hacer tu servicio, tu labor social, tus obras benéficas, las puedes hacer indistintamente que estés ahí o no. O sea, pertenecer a ese grupo como tal o no pertenecer no te va a impedir servir a la gente. Y no sé si lo hizo porque yo se lo dije, yo creo que no, yo creo que ella se salió más por el sentimiento de saber que ella no pertenece a ese lugar, que no se siente a gusto, no estaba bien, a pesar de que había hecho cosas, ella me contaba que había hecho cosas muy bonitas y que la había pasado muy bien, como cuando uno siente que uno no pertenece a cierto lugar. Y tomó la decisión de salirse y

creo que hizo lo correcto porque puede ser ella misma, por fuera puede ser ella misma y puede seguir haciendo sus obras de servicio que es lo que ella realmente amaba del servicio religioso.

Camilo Romero: Ya que ha tenido la experiencia de compartir con Alexandra en todo lo que es el ámbito laboral y el ámbito académico también, ¿qué concepto tiene de ella como docente de inglés y como estudiante de la licenciatura?

Leonardo Ardila: n) Como docente no tengo un concepto muy amplio porque desafortunadamente no he compartido eso, yo trabajo en una cosa totalmente distinta a la docencia, entonces no he tenido como tiempo de compartir con ella un espacio como docentes los dos, ni ella ha sido docente mía. Hemos compartido un poco como docentes, pero en lo poco que hemos compartido que han sido dos prácticas que hemos hecho, dos prácticas en la universidad, me parece muy responsable, muy entregada a lo que hace, como lo hizo en su labor religiosa. Y ella es muy pila y sabe muchísimo del tema que trata la licenciatura, me parece que tendrá fallas como el mal genio y bueno ciertas cosas que tiene por mejorar, pero como docente, como esencia docente muy buena. Como estudiante, como compañera mía, eso sí te puedo decir porque pues estudiamos toda la carrera me parece una persona muy colaboradora, es muy pila como ya te decía, es muy inteligente, ama lo que está estudiando. No sé si fue porque logramos compaginar tanto, pero para mí fue una compañera de carrera inmejorable.

Camilo Romero: ¿Hay alguna experiencia significativa con respecto a la enseñanza o el aprendizaje del inglés con relación a Alexandra que desee mencionar? De pronto de lo que han podido compartir, de lo que usted ha visto, de lo que han vivido.

Leonardo Ardila: o) No tendría una experiencia puntual, de muchas que pasamos, no podría recordar una puntual, pero sí podría recalcar que Alexandra es una persona que se deja corregir en las cosas que está haciendo, yo le digo mira esto no es así o hazlo así o asá y me dices sí sabes que sí está bien. Eso es muy valioso para cualquier persona, pero más para un docente y para un estudiante, aceptar que en ocasiones la embarramos o aceptar que en ocasiones hacemos las cosas mal y aceptar los consejos y reflexionar acerca de lo que un compañero o un profesor o un familiar nos dice para hacer un proceso de análisis y de mejora de lo que estamos haciendo y eso lo tiene ella.

Camilo Romero: Estas son las preguntas que Alexandra me pidió el favor que le hiciera en esta entrevista, pues agradecerle por su participación y ciertamente esperemos que sea de gran ayuda para el desarrollo de su proyecto de grado también.

Appendix C3 Informed consents



Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés Subproject Voices of the LLEI: Life Stories and Experiences Docente en formación: Leidy Alexandra Barreto Manrique

En el marco del proyecto investigativo que será presentado como trabajo de grado de la docente en formación Leidy Alexandra Barreto Manrique, el cual se titula, *“From Religion to EFL teaching: Autobiographical study through trajectories from a religious woman to a language teacher”*, se presenta el formato de consentimiento informado, mediante el cual se pide explícitamente su autorización para participar en la realización y recolección de información mediante una entrevista vía Google Meet, la cual tiene por objetivo tener una conversación alrededor de unas preguntas que serán compartidas vía email, previamente al momento de la reunión virtual. Dichos interrogantes y los temas de la entrevista se enfocan en los procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera inglés y su percepción sobre la experiencia con la participante y autora de la investigación, Leidy Alexandra Barreto Manrique.

A través de este consentimiento informado, Usted:

- Expresa su acuerdo para participar en la entrevista virtual y autorizar la grabación y transcripción de la misma.
- Autoriza que sus respuestas sean interpretadas por la docente Leidy Alexandra Barreto Manrique e incluidas como parte del análisis y resultados del proyecto titulado: *“From Religion to EFL teaching: Autobiographical study through trajectories from a religious woman to a language teacher.”*
- Confirma su participación y como padre de familia (en el caso que así sea) autoriza la realización de la entrevista, recolección y manejo de datos obtenidos para fines investigativos en el contexto de este proyecto, de la Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés y propósitos académicos de la docente Leidy Alexandra Barreto Manrique, entre ellos, desarrollo de proyecto de grado, sustentación del mismo, ponencias y divulgación académica en el Centro de Recursos para el Aprendizaje y la Investigación CRAI, y otros medios de divulgación científica, académica, pedagógica, investigativa.
- Finalmente, autoriza su acuerdo con los términos establecidos y presentados en este formato.

Nombre: Wilson Ramiro Cuesto Rivera
C.C. 1069732561

Firma:

Fecha: 28 de Marzo 2021

Docente en formación: Leidy Alexandra Barreto Manrique
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Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés
Subproject Voices of the LLEI: Life Stories and Experiences
Docente en formación: Leidy Alexandra Barreto Manrique

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A través de este consentimiento informado, Usted:

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- Autoriza que sus respuestas sean interpretadas por la docente Leidy Alexandra Barreto Manrique e incluidas como parte del análisis y resultados del proyecto titulado: *“From Religion to EFL teaching: Autobiographical study through trajectories from a religious woman to a language teacher.”*
- Confirma su participación y como padre de familia (en el caso que así sea) autoriza la realización de la entrevista, recolección y manejo de datos obtenidos para fines investigativos en el contexto de este proyecto, de la Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés y propósitos académicos de la docente Leidy Alexandra Barreto Manrique, entre ellos, desarrollo de proyecto de grado, sustentación del mismo, ponencias y divulgación académica en el Centro de Recursos para el Aprendizaje y la Investigación CRAI, y otros medios de divulgación científica, académica, pedagógica, investigativa.
- Finalmente, autoriza su acuerdo con los términos establecidos y presentados en este formato.

Nombre: Leonardo Alfonso Ardila Cuellar
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